

KENNETH KNOWLTON JR.*

A CRITICAL PROLEGOMENA
VALUE-FORM & THE NECESSITY OF A HISTORICAL SUBJECT

Abstract:

This work serves as a critical prolegomena for the development of a dialectical materialist relational ontology. Through an immanent critique of Moishe Postone's interpretation of the Hegel-Marx relation and his disavowal of reading Marx ontologically, I demonstrate the necessary connection between Marx's ontological presuppositions, epistemological framework, and his political-economic critique. My claims focus on the theoretical relationship between certain transhistorical assumptions and their relevance for a critical analysis of the historically specific social form of capital. In combining value-form analysis with Marx's original epistemological reconfiguration of subject-object relations, as well as his relational ontology, I defend the necessity of retaining, methodologically, a historical subject – the “class of producers” – through which the project of revolutionary social transformation is envisioned.

Keywords: Dialectical Materialism, Epistemology, Marxism, Materialist, Relational Ontology, Value-Form

This work serves as a critical departure for the development of an ontological foundation in Marx and Engels, specifically, a dialectical materialist relational ontology. Here, I bridge the ontological and epistemological implications of Marx's critique of political economy. In this regard, I claim that Marx's revolutionary criticisms are premised on certain transhistorical assumptions, which, as a result of their ontological ground, retain the methodological capacity toward precise analysis of historically specific social forms.

One of the more sophisticated arguments against reading Marx ontologically stems from Moishe Postone. Postone directly approaches the issue of the epistemological problematic of subject-object relations and the problem of the transhistorical in Marx's work, as they pertain to Marx's critique of political economy and his difference with Hegel, and thereby rejects the necessity of a historical subject on these grounds. Drawing on Marx, among others within the Marxist tradition, I provide an alternative view. I claim that Marx's original formulation of the epistemological problematic of subject-object relations and his dialectical analysis of the relationship between the transhistorical and the historically specific prove the necessity of a historical subject and a dialectical materialist ontological ground, both of which are pertinent to the project of revolutionary social transformation.

After summarizing what he finds to be the difference between Hegel's conception of Spirit and Marx's conception of the subject, Postone concludes: «...Marxian theory neither posits nor is bound to the notion of a historical meta-Subject, such as the proletariat, which will realize itself in a future society»¹. As a result, and against what Postone vaguely calls “Traditional Marxism”, the rejection of a “meta-Subject” in Marx represents a «a major shift in critical perspective from a social critique on the basis of “labor” to a social critique of the peculiar nature of labor in capitalism»².

* Linfield University.

¹ Postone (1993), p. 77.

² Ivi, p. 78.

Postone's goal is to establish a specific discontinuity between Hegel and Marx for elucidating the historical specificity of Marx's critique of capital. In that regard, there can be no transhistorical element to Marx's categories, for Postone, since the historically specific character of Marx's critique is premised on his move «away from the subject-object paradigm and epistemology to a social theory of consciousness»³. Departing from the subject-object paradigm marks the central difference between Hegel and Marx, in Postone's view, since there is a shift away «from the knowing individual (or supra-individual) subject and its relation to an external (or externalized) world to the forms of social relations» and thus, «[t]he problem of knowledge now becomes a question of the relation between forms of social mediations and forms of thought»⁴. There is much value in the latter insight and Postone's insistence on the peculiar expression of labor in capitalism. Postone is hinting at the relational dimension of Marx's thinking by emphasizing its historical character. Consequently, Postone identifies the analytical power of studying social mediations as expressive of forms in their relational and historical context. For him, this marks the difference between the «early» and «mature» Marx: «In his early works, Marx's categories are still transhistorical»⁵. However, Postone argues that the transhistorical element is substituted in Marx's mature work for «[t]he centrality of the historical specificity of the social forms». Additionally, the insistence of historical specificity «coupled with [Marx's] critique of theories that transhistoricize this specificity, indicate that [transhistorical categories cannot directly elucidate]... the critique of political economy»⁶. Does Marx's insistence on historical specificity, however, assume the abandonment of both subject-object relations and a transhistorical conception of labor in his critique of capital?

To defend his claim, Postone analyzes an oft-quoted passage by Marx:

[Value] is constantly changing from one form into the other without becoming lost in this movement; it thus transforms itself into an automatic subject...value is here the subject of a process...its valorization is therefore self-valorization...Value suddenly presents itself as a self-moving substance which passes through a process of its own, and for which the commodity and money are both mere forms⁷.

Postone finds here the principal differentiation between Hegel and Marx in terms of the subject. Marx, according to Postone, «characterizes capital as the self-moving substance which is Subject»⁸. Postone thusly asserts that Marx's «historical Subject» does not pertain «...to any social grouping, such as the proletariat, or with humanity»⁹. Instead, Marx's «Subject» is «a conceptual determination of [the] fabric [of modern society]»¹⁰, consisting of «objectified relations, the subjective-objective categorial forms characteristic of capitalism...the specific character of labor as socially mediating activity»¹¹. Marx's «Subject», then, is capital itself as an «automatic subject» that objectifies social mediations. Contrary to «the socialist tradition» – which, according to Postone, views «capitalist relations as extrinsic to the Subject, as that which hinder its full realization» – Marx rather «analyzes those very relations as constituting the Subject»¹². In this way, «capital as the historical Subject», Postone asserts, «indicates that the totality has become the object of [Marx's] critique»¹³. Capital is «Subject» and totality «object». Postone's Marx

³ Ivi, p. 77.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ Ivi, p. 74.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ Marx (1973a), p. 255. As quoted in Postone (1993), p. 75.

⁸ Postone (1993), p. 75.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ Ivi, p. 76.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² Ivi, p. 78.

¹³ Ivi, p. 79.

is a critic of the form of capitalist totality, a form whose substance is value. This leads Postone to a political conclusion:

Marx's assertion that capital, and not the proletariat or the species, is the total Subject clearly implies that the historical negation of capitalism would not involve the realization, but the abolition, of the totality.... Marx's conception of the historical negation of capitalism in terms of the abolition, rather than the realization, of the totality is related to his notion that socialism represents the beginning, rather than the end, of human history, and to the idea that the negation of capitalism entails overcoming a determinate form of social mediation rather than overcoming social mediation *per se*¹⁴.

Postone is certainly right to insist on Marx's criticism of capital as a historically specific criticism, namely, from the position of labor, not as such but as expressed through the objectified social mediations through which labor appears under capital. Postone is also correct in pointing out that, politically, the "overcoming of a determinate form of social mediation" is what remains at stake and not "the overcoming of social mediation *per se*". To be sure, insofar as there is such a thing as sociality, then, no matter what form through which it expresses itself – any given social form – there will remain social mediations. The problem certainly resides in the peculiar forms of social mediation that perpetuate and maintain forms of domination under capital. Whatever the value of Postone's many insights – specifically in terms of the analysis of the value-form – there are some issues with his above account.

First, the longer passage by Marx from which Postone derives his conclusion is telling. There, Marx addresses value as process; namely, as self-valorization. This marks the relationality through which Marx envisions value: value is a self-moving substance constitutive of forms of materialization *qua* commodity, money, and the like. To be sure, the material expression of the forms of value at given moments in the movement of self-valorization is predicated on the more general processual self-realization of capital itself. However, Postone's interpretation conflates value and capital. Notice that Marx is referring to value and not capital in the passage, but Postone's first interpretive sentence inserts capital as a substitute for value. Here, we have to be very careful and rigorous with the complexity of Marx's method of abstraction. Is capital simply value? Are they synonymous in the way Postone presents? In the immediate passage following Marx's quote, Marx writes:

As the dominant subject of this process, in which it alternately assumes and loses the form of money and the form of commodities, but preserves and expands itself through all these changes, value requires above all an independent form by means of which its identity with itself may be asserted. Only in the shape of money does it possess this form¹⁵.

We should take note of Marx's specification: «As the dominant subject of this process». What process is Marx referring to here? The process of self-valorization, which is the essence of capital. Capital's processual becoming is predicated on the determinate motion of valorization, which is always a self-valorization within the historically specific matrix by which it constitutes itself; as Jules Gleeson and Elle O'Rourke assert, «[r]ather than being natural or reliable, value is revealed to be processual and relational»¹⁶. Insofar as valorization is itself a relational process, it expresses itself in relation to different objects throughout moments of this very process¹⁷. The relationality inheres in the historically

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ Marx (1973a), p. 255.

¹⁶ Gleeson and O'Rourke (2021), p. 14.

¹⁷ The various moments are realized *temporally*, they are the temporal expression of exchange-becoming-value and value-becoming capital. See: Rubin (2017), p. 149.

specific form of the social process itself, where relations instantiate a specific form of connection through which peculiar “attributes” take shape in accordance with the specific relations in question¹⁸. Therefore, value takes on forms relationally: the money-form, commodity-form, and so on. Valorization, as an objective process of capital, unfolds determinately within and through a totality, a capitalist totality, through which it gains an objectivity of its own as a result of the unfolding process in which it enters into definite social relationships: «[T]he substance of value, and thus value-objectivity, is something only obtained by things when they are set into relation with another thing in exchange»¹⁹. We mustn’t forget, however, that this occurs at a specific level of methodological abstraction in Marx; namely, at the level of value becoming capital through its self-sublation in various forms, forms that distinguish themselves at different moments of capital’s circuitry and, in so doing, reflect back unto the valorization process itself: as Zhang Yibing notes, «[v]alue is the relational means of the reflexive agreement of commodities in exchange»²⁰. In this sense, it is self-evident that in “this process” capital is the subject: capital is the subject of valorization. Its object, then, is the forms within the totality through which it can valorize itself, i.e., forms of exploitation, expropriation, and so on. But, again, is the subject capital or value?

Capital is the process of valorization; it is the subject of its own unfolding at a higher level of abstraction: the «dialectical process of [capital’s] becoming is only the ideal expression of the real movement through which capital comes into being»²¹. Value is only ever expressed through forms: «Value passes through different forms, different movements in which it is both preserved and increases, is valorized»²². Consequently, forms of value are constituent parts of the process of capital but never fully encompasses capital itself, as Marx makes clear, «value in general [...] [is] transformed into capital»²³ – because capital as the general process of valorization exceeds value, is its result, and, therefore, is also the precondition of the appearance of value: «All the production relations within which the process moves are therefore just as much its products as they are its conditions»²⁴. Capital is the processual²⁵ deity which extricates the soul – value – of subject-objects appearing within the capitalist totality, objectified by it, and thereby becomes the dominant social mediation through which these subject-objects become reified and bearers of abstract value: commodities, money, nature, and the social human body. This is the dialectical logic of the unity of opposites Marx employs, one predicated on transformative movement. Marx writes:

Capital, as self-valorizing value, does not just comprise class relations, a definite social character that depends on the existence of labor as wage-labor. It is a movement, a circulatory process, through different stages... [h]ence it can only be grasped as a movement, and not as a static thing²⁶.

Capital is not merely value, though it cannot be conceived independently of value: capital is the general process through which value realizes itself, i.e., is a result as self-valorizing value²⁷. Capital, in this way, is an abstraction – or is only grasped in its essence through

¹⁸ Heinrich (2004), p. 54.

¹⁹ Ivi, p. 53.

²⁰ Yibing (2014), p. 442.

²¹ Marx (1973b), p. 310.

²² Marx (1993a), p. 185.

²³ Marx (1969a), p. 157.

²⁴ Marx (1969b), p. 507.

²⁵ It is processual in its going *beyond* self-preservation, for «mere self-preservation, *non-multiplication of value contradicts the essence of capital*» (Marx, 1973b, p. 310).

²⁶ Marx (1993a), p. 185.

²⁷ «Every pre-condition of the social production process is at the same time *its result*, and *every one of its results* appears simultaneously as its pre-condition» (Marx, 1969b, p. 507).

abstraction – but an abstraction endowed with material consequences²⁸ through the way in which it appears in its own movement, and it appears in various forms as value of a historically specific kind; hence, value-form. At this level of abstraction, then, capital is a subject and totality an object. But capital too becomes an object, objectifies itself, becomes the object of social domination, and dissolves itself through its own metamorphosis into its various constituent parts, forms of value, which are themselves objects in relation to subjects, the subject-objects of sociality, social human bodies. This does not fully encompass Marx's critique, however, and is only one dimension of the processual and relational expression of a historically specific social form, the capturing of the movement of capital.

Thus, to turn back to the epistemological question of subject-object relations, Marx is not breaking away from subject-object relations as such, but rather tearing asunder – through a dialectical materialist analysis of political economy – the subject-object paradigm in its representational form, where subject and object are divorced absolutely; as Bolgh asserts: «[For Marx] it is the separation of subject and object which is problematic»²⁹. Consequently, the subject-object takes on novel epistemological form, namely, a dialectical form through the application of a relational and systematic approach which recognizes the movement of capital itself. The remarkable precision of Marx's analysis resides in the transformative dimension retained in his categories at different levels of abstraction, where subject is itself object as much as the object is itself subject – what highlights either element depends on the level of abstraction and object of investigation with which we are dealing – a materialist dialectical logic premised on process and relation. Indeed, within the circuit of capital, the process through which value valorizes itself, capital is an “automatic subject”, but precisely in such a way as to be its own object, insofar as that on which it depends for its own self-valorization are also subjects it objectifies and to which it is an object, and this enacts value's transformation into capital: «this process is a process of self-realization. Self-realization includes preservation of the prior value, as well as its multiplication»³⁰.

As Marx said of David Ricardo, the problem seems to be that Postone «does not carry true abstract thinking far enough and is therefore driven into false abstraction»³¹. Capital is both subject and object. It makes of itself a subject through the contributions of social agents and their institutions crystallized in a historically specific form. Postone's insight regarding the objectified social mediations involved in this process is certainly correct: it is a consequence of the alienated form of capitalist social relations of production and reproduction. Capital's becoming-subject is predicated on the de-personalization of social relations – an alienation – through which its own motion is constituted as self-valorization; wherein, as Isaak Rubin explains, «[t]he structure of the commodity economy causes things to play a particular and highly important social role and thus to acquire particular social properties»³². In this way, capital is in fact an object, a dominating object, an object that imbues itself within social mediations, rigidifying its role as an object of social domination, an object which – as equally a kind of subject – compels an obedience to its very logic, the logic of self-valorization. To be sure, Marx emphasizes the relational implication by means of identifying the essence of capital and thereby designates the reified shape through which capital objectifies social relations:

The more one examines [capitalist relations of production] its nature as it really is, the more one sees that in the last form it becomes increasingly consolidated, so that

²⁸ «In speaking of an *abstraction* as a *reality*, we mean it is *not* primarily a cognitive phenomenon. It emerges *behind our backs* out of the dynamics of the capitalist process, as one of the mediations of class. *It goes as deep as production*» (Flower, 2021, p. 246).

²⁹ Bolgh (1979), p. 160.

³⁰ Marx (1973b), p. 311.

³¹ Marx (2010a), p. 72.

³² Rubin (2017), p. 6.

independently of the process these conditions appear to determine it, and their own relations appear to those competing in the process as objective conditions, objective forces, aspects of things, the more so as, in the capitalist process, every element, even the simplest, the commodity for example, is already an inversion and causes relations between people to appear as attributes between things and as relations of people to the social attributes of things³³.

Marx here outlines the theory of reification as tied to capital's process of self-valorization, where capital exceeds its purely economic dimension and exemplifies its social intervention as a mediation through which social consciousness (a historically specific social consciousness) becomes itself, i.e. becomes reified through a relationally situated historical ground premised on reification. Consequently, things, objects, become the locus of sociality, objects conceived in terms of value that mask the relational and processual character through which value appears and by means of which it transforms into capital. Thus, Rubin asserts, «[t]his means that "value" does not characterize things, but human relations in which things are produced»³⁴. Social subjects, then, conceive their very subjectivity in relation to this value, to these objects as fixed attributes. Similarly, they are compelled to view themselves in terms of a measurement of value – value as socially necessary labor time – to which their life is reduced as purely instrumental: «I am a thing whose life-value is the acquisition of more value»; the teleology of capital dominates the alienated form through which ontologically purposive activity is mediated. Here, then, the representational form of the subject-object paradigm is truly instantiated as the historically specific form of representational thought, social consciousness dominated by the thought of atomism, mechanism, and the assumption of fixity bestowed onto both people and things. Capital's reification is, at once, its naturalization, which transhistoricizes itself: «A form of life», Bologh writes, «in which concepts and individuals appear as things without history»³⁵. In subject being separated from object, epistemologically, their transformative ontological metabolism is stripped from them. Consequently, Marx notes, «[one] does not perceive that the production relations themselves, the social forms in which he produces and which he regards as given, natural relations, are the continuous product...of this specific social mode of production»³⁶. The problem, for Marx, is this kind of transhistoricizing, one premised on an irrational abstraction resulting from a representational form of the subject-object paradigm (itself premised on fixity), where capitalist relations of production are naturalized, «encased in eternal natural laws independent of history...on which society in the abstract is founded»³⁷. The representational form of the subject-object paradigm simply cannot comprehend the processual and relational character of social becoming amid a historically specific form, for, as Marx reminds us, «the different relations and aspects not only become independent and assume a heterogeneous mode of existence, apparently independent of one another, but they seem to be the direct properties of things; they assume a material shape»³⁸. Indeed, the immediate form by which relations appear under the capitalist mode of production, undermines the relational essence through which such appearance occurs – mystifies the appearance of the historical specificity of these social relations. Marx notes:

A social relation of production appears as something existing apart from individual human beings, and the distinctive relations into which they enter in the course of production in society appear as the specific properties of a thing – it is this perverted

³³ Marx (1969b), pp. 507-508. Also, see Rubin (2017), p. 6.

³⁴ Rubin (2017), p. 69.

³⁵ Bologh (1979), p. 160.

³⁶ Marx (1969b), p. 514.

³⁷ Marx (1973b), p. 87.

³⁸ Marx (1969b), p. 514.

appearance, this prosaically real, and by no means imaginary, mystification that is characteristic of all social forms of labor positing exchange-value³⁹.

Capital's abstraction and its mystified appearance reifies the form by which social subjectivity experiences and thereby considers relations between things. This "perverted appearance", however, is "prosaically real", i.e., is the objective consequence of a historically specific set of relations of production – the mystification is not merely imagined, but decisively objective and the objectivity of its appearance as mystified remains necessary to the reproduction of capital and its corresponding relations of production. The appearance as mystified, then, masks the essence of capital at the phenomenal level which requires a relational method to comprehend: «All science would be superfluous if the form of appearance of things directly coincided with their essence»⁴⁰. This is the problem of the representational conception of the subject-object paradigm: the epistemological consequence of divorcing subject from object results in an absolute separation between essence and appearance, severing the relationship between the concrete and abstract. This is overcome in Marx via the relational ontology already present in Hegel and takes on a dialectical materialist character⁴¹. Postone merely asserts that Marx overcomes the subject-object paradigm by demonstrating that, for Marx, capital is the historical subject as opposed to any social agent. However, this only means that Postone implicitly reinscribes a *representational reading of Marx*. In disavowing the ability to recognize a social agent as a historical subject, Postone renders capital representationally, for as the historical subject capital becomes the agent over-against the "class of producers" that is the mere bearer of its objectification. Class struggle becomes represented as fixed, without motion, comprising lifeless non-subjects. Indeed, Postone seems to ignore the fundamental role class plays in the coming-to-be of capital as subject. Instead, it remains necessary to demonstrate the dialectical element of the subject-object paradigm that Marx brings forth, and without which the revolutionary potential of critique is made invisible. Marx does not overcome the subject-object paradigm by abandoning it, but rather by making it dialectical. In so doing, the centrality of working-class struggle, the political moment of critique, becomes all the more vivid.

Beyond the examples above drawn from the late *Theories of Surplus Value*, we can find the dialectical (and relational) employment of the subject-object paradigm at a different level of abstraction just as much, and with equal philosophical weight, in Marx's Paris Manuscripts of 1844. There, Marx writes: «The sun is the object of the plant – an indispensable object to it, confirming its life – just as the plant is an object of the sun, being an expression of the life-awakening power of the sun, of the sun's objective essential power»⁴². Exemplifying the transformative dimension through which subject becomes object and vice-versa, Marx hints at an ontological foundation through which phenomena become observable in their particular context. In other words, the transformative dimension inheres in every individuated subject-object insofar as it is a real object. Precisely because of this methodological specification, a materialist dialectical logic (relational in character) does not reduce the historical specificity of any given phenomena by transhistoricizing it. On the contrary, as a result of certain transhistorically grounded relational qualities of a given subject-object, one can truly identify its historically specific character. This, of course, is possible only by situating the human species-essence as itself a part of nature, as its own object, in a transformative relationship to other objects in nature, an ontologically metabolic determination which constitutes and underlies the dialectics of sociality itself.

³⁹ Marx (1979), p. 49.

⁴⁰ Marx (1993b), p. 956.

⁴¹ For an account of the methodological semblances between Hegel's *Science of Logic* and Marx's *Capital*, see Lebowitz (2009), pp. 69-98.

⁴² Marx (1961), p. 157.

Jindrich Zeleny notes: «All objects are active as natural objects, objectively acting natural essence, and the same time passive essence, since they are exposed to the objective effects of other natural objects»⁴³. The specification of subject qua subject or object qua object depends only on the level of abstraction with which a scientific investigation is dealing, and does not, as a result, remove the dialectically relational ontological ground of the subject-object as such⁴⁴. Thus, in the context of a transhistorical ontological basis of the human species-essence, social and historical specificity is by no means lost, contrary to Postone, but rather is materialized in its unity and difference with its own historical ground. «With Marx», Zeleny notes, «things, phenomena and qualitative characteristics are themselves grasped as things which develop from other things and are transformed into something else»⁴⁵. Zeleny captures here ontological relationality as the transformative mediation of the historical, wherein the objects themselves are transformed through the changing character of sociality and, thereby, obtain their historically specific character. Zeleny describes this Marxian position thusly: «Every real form is understood as being in the process of alteration; then, not only are appearances transitory, alterable, fleeting, only divided from one another by conditional limits, but also the essences of things themselves»⁴⁶. In fact, this conception of essence, as derived from Hegel,⁴⁷ is precisely how Marx overcomes the representational “substantialist-attributive”⁴⁸ view underlying Ricardo whose «materialist, substantialist logic is determined by his conception of fixed essence». Marx, on the other hand, advances «from fixed essence to fluid dialectical essence»⁴⁹. It should be noted that this dimension of Marx’s critique of Ricardo is simultaneously an overcoming of the mechanical, representational, “social materialism”⁵⁰ underlying classical political economy. Through the incorporation and inversion of Hegel’s dialectical logic and a nuanced exposure to classical political economy, Marx develops a truly dialectical relational ontology of significant critical value that retains the revolutionary element of both abolishment of existing conditions and, against Postone, the realization of a new social form.

The dialectical presentation and understanding of the subject-object paradigm manifests its theoretical complexity premised on different moments in which different forms of effect, reciprocal effects, «on the basis of the developing essence»⁵¹ of a given subject-object are materialized and, therefore, their historical specificity identified. Such identification is possible precisely because the relationality through which Marx approaches causal relations between (changing) subject-objects as varying forms of effects is premised on an ontological conception of dialectical motion⁵². Marx’s recognition of the ontological nature of objective contradiction as the relative motion inhering in every form, «is the innermost property...of the relational and developmental ontological structure of Marxian theory»⁵³. Against Postone’s assertion that the overcoming of the subject-object paradigm is pertinent to Marx’s critique of political economy, I suggest that it is Marx’s dialectical conception of relational subject-objects – as part of a processual and relational

⁴³ Zeleny (1980), p. 125.

⁴⁴ Regarding a discussion on their materialist method concerning relations between things, Engels makes clear that at different levels of inquiry, one must approach the peculiar character of the relations involved *at that level* – not as such. See, Engels (1977), p. 226.

⁴⁵ Zeleny concludes recognizing its Hegelian origin: «They are, to put it in Hegelian terms, understood as “themselves-becoming-another”» (Zeleny, 1980, p. 18).

⁴⁶ Ivi, p. 18.

⁴⁷ Ivi, p. 33.

⁴⁸ “Substantialist-Attributive logic” is used by Zeleny to describe *representational thinking*, where entities are viewed as *fixed* substances with pre-determined attributes – the *opposite of a relational ontology*.

⁴⁹ Ivi, p. 24.

⁵⁰ Yibing (2014), p. 1, pp. 32-33.

⁵¹ Zeleny (1980), p. 77.

⁵² Ivi, p. 75.

⁵³ Ivi, p. 29.

ontology – that is most pertinent, since it maintains the historical as relevant to the critique of capital while not transhistoricizing qualities of the latter onto the former.

This theoretical re-articulation of subject-object relations characterizes the immanent fluidity of the categories in the Marxian system: «The core of the Marxian conception of the elasticity of concepts and the supersession of fixation in ideas [...] is [...] a new relationship of relative and absolute, and [...] a new objectivity, the relationship of objects in objective reality to the process of perception»⁵⁴. Zeleny marks the phenomenological dimension necessary to the achievement of historical specificity in thought itself. For, despite a social consciousness dominated by the reification tethered to capitalist relations of production, it remains possible for a subject – a social human body – to come-to-know the forms by which they are mediated, to logically comprehend the mediations of domination that pervade their immediacy; and, in that way, to practically act against them through a novel form of self-realization; indeed, a revolutionary one. Against Postone, then, Marx does not only inherit Hegel's "knowing subject" but materializes the very ground of its knowledge and the conditions of its knowledge; i.e., grounds knowledge production⁵⁵. The theoretical validity of this grounding which engenders rigorous historical specification is itself premised on certain transhistorical elements that must be presupposed. The transhistorical element pertains to the ontological foundation of the human species-essence, its sociality. For example, Marx writes:

Whatever the social form of the production process, it has to be continuous, it must periodically repeat the same phrases. A society can no more cease to produce than it can cease to consume. When viewed, therefore, as a connected whole, and in the constant flux of its incessant renewal, every social process of production is at the same time a process of reproduction⁵⁶.

Indeed, the essence of sociality is the production and reproduction of its form. Social production exceeds itself, is the ontological excessive result of the activity of social human bodies. This excess of sociality is reproduction: the excess of social production is social reproduction. And, social reproduction as an excessive result is the transformative component of social production. This qualitative feature is the ontological basis of all sociality. Thus, the ontological ground of human sociality is applicable universally and transhistorically, and in this precise sense remains an objective precondition of social analysis and/or critique. To develop a critique of the historically specific character of any given society, to disclose the problematic forms through which its social mediations operate, requires – of epistemological necessity – a common and general feature through which specificity can be determined.

It is hopefully obvious, however, that this does not mean that every Marxian category is transhistorical. But to eliminate the relevance of the transhistorical dimension featuring in certain categories, to disavow an ontological foundation in Marx, is to lose the salience of both the negative (critical) and positive (revolutionary) dimensions of his work⁵⁷.

As a result of this ontological component in Marx's structural-genetic analysis of capital, we can also provide a criticism of Postone's political conclusion with regard to the "negation of capitalism" conceived in terms of "the abolition, rather than the realization, of the totality" and the notion that such negation "entails overcoming a determinate form of mediation rather than overcoming social mediation per se".

⁵⁴ Ivi, p. 20.

⁵⁵ Postone writes, «[w]hereas Hegel's Subject is transhistorical and knowing, in Marx's analysis it is historically determinate and blind» (Postone, 1993, p. 77).

⁵⁶ It is clear that Marx is making a general, *transhistorical*, claim here because later in the same page he *specifies*, qualitatively, a historical difference: «If production has a capitalist form, so too will reproduction» (Marx, 1973a, p. 711).

⁵⁷ Zeleny (1980), pp. 45-70.

Postone is correct in asserting that abolishing the social mediations peculiar to capital is not the abolishment of social mediations per se. Nonetheless, the issue of supposing abolition over-against realization remains remarkably one-sided, especially if the historical subject is conceived of as capital. Who, then, for Postone, achieves the abolishing? Is it capital itself that dissolves itself, abolishes itself, through crisis? What guarantees, one might ask, the realization of socialism after such abolition? Could it not be the case that some other antagonistic and alienating political apparatus arises in the wake of capital's abolishment rather than socialism? What directs this hypothetical post-capitalist development?

We may be reminded here of Marx's critique of Bruno Bauer and consider its applicability to Postone's political conclusion. In a critical analysis of Bauer's conception of substance, Marx writes:

Instead of real people and their real consciousness of their social relations [...]. [Bauer] has the mere abstract expression: self-consciousness, just as, instead of real production, he has the activity of this self-consciousness, which has become independent. On the other hand, instead of real nature and the actually existing social relations, he has the philosophical summing-up of all the philosophical categories: substance; for Bruno [...] erroneously regards thoughts and ideas [...] as the basis of the existing world⁵⁸.

Instead of the consideration of the real, ontological basis of sociality, social human bodies, Postone has only value. He may be forgiven, so to speak, given that in capitalist society value is, in like manner, its primary substance. However, this is true only if we regard the abstraction and idea of capital, its thought determination, as the "basis of the existing world". To be sure, the process through which actually existing social relations reproduce themselves is determined by capital whose substance is value; or, more correctly, self-valorization. Capital's substance as value, however, is determined only at a level of abstraction where capital has become subject, a historical subject, and thus is merely the "abstract expression" of it.

But, one might ask, what is the substance of value? Labor – not just any labor, but a qualified aspect of labor in a historically specific form, as Engels asserts, «[i]t is not labor that is bought and sold as a commodity, but rather labor-power»⁵⁹, labor as value-producing labor,⁶⁰ commodified labor, which is itself measured by value⁶¹ (socially necessary labor time).⁶² And what is labor, if not an activity performed⁶³ by real, actually existing, social human bodies, subject-objects of which sociality is comprised?⁶⁴ «We arrive, therefore», Marx explains, «at this conclusion[:]. A commodity has a value, because it is a crystallization of social labor»⁶⁵. We must thoroughly consider this issue for Postone raises a real theoretical and practical problem. Postone is considering the overcoming of capital, of the capitalist totality. But, the capitalist totality is a capitalist sociality, a sociality dominated by capital and its corresponding dominance of social mediations through reification. And capital has, as its object, another subject, the subject-object of sociality whose activity qua social labor is dominated by the object, capital, which is the subject of its own process⁶⁶. Thus, the methodologically relevant issue cannot be who is

⁵⁸ Marx and Engels (1976), p. 108.

⁵⁹ Engels (1993) p. 101. Also, see Engels (2010a), p. 190; and, Marx (1973a), p. 1068.

⁶⁰ Through its contact with capital. Marx (1973b), p. 298.

⁶¹ Heinrich (2004), p. 55.

⁶² Interestingly, Postone does recognize this in Marx, and specifically in terms of a discussion on substance. Nonetheless, Postone proceeds to the point where labor loses its revolutionary potential. Postone (1993), p. 75.

⁶³ And this performance is *necessarily temporal*, an instance of the temporality of capital that *regulates* the process of social production. Shaikh (1981), p. 270. Also, see Marx (1977), p. 30.

⁶⁴ In *Value, Price, and Profit* Marx notes the historically specific *social* character of both value and labor, exemplifying the *relational* dimension of his analysis. Marx (2010b), p. 121.

⁶⁵ Marx (2010b), p. 122.

⁶⁶ This becomes very clear in the wage-labor relation. See, Bologh (1979), p. 161.

or is not the subject or object, and instead what is the form of the transformation of an historically specific sociality through overcoming a specific subject-object, capital, by means of the revolutionary activity of a different subject-object, the “class of producers”. Put differently, for Marx, what is at stake is not merely the substantive ground of a subject or object, but the determinate relational process of the movement of a historically specific totality.

This transformation requires an “abolishment”, undoubtedly, but equally requires a realization, the becoming real of something new, insofar as realization is itself immanently tied to abolishment. Both the abolishment and realization of something new requires actions on the part of real social subjects. However, not all subjects want something new, for they are not homogenous subjects, but real subjects that exist in differentiated relationships to one another, through each other – in terms of the mode of production proper as well as their social life, since the former necessarily conditions the latter – and thus actually exist in accordance with their social positionality. To divorce abolishment from realization, as Postone does, is nothing but the symptomatic result of divorcing value from the subjects who create it and those who exploit and expropriate them, and who, in so doing, maintain and perpetuate – not always of their own accord but as a result of «the mute compulsion of economic relations [which] seals the domination of the capitalist over the worker»⁶⁷ – the existing order of things.

It is worth briefly considering the correspondence between my two criticisms of Postone. Insofar as abolishment and realization are dialectically tethered, so too are the historical specificity of capitalist relations of production and non-capitalist relations; in fact, it is precisely the peculiarity of capitalist relations themselves to include within them the historical persistence of non-capitalist relations as historical residuals.

In *Theories of Surplus Value*, Marx discusses the labor of “handicraftsmen” and “peasants” in capitalist society. He explains how they engage in neither “productive” labor nor “unproductive” labor, and that despite presenting themselves as «sellers of commodities» and while also being «producers of commodities», their «production does not fall under the capitalist mode of production»⁶⁸. Ironically, it is precisely the fact, according to Marx, that the presence of non-capitalist production relations exist under the capitalist mode of production which makes of capital a historically specific and complex mode of production: «And here we come up against a peculiarity that is characteristic of a society in which one definite mode of production predominates, even though not all productive relations have been subordinated to it»⁶⁹. Marx further notes that the reification of social mediations under capital are so intensified that different productive relations appear (ideologically) as capitalist relations «even where the relation is in direct contradiction to it»⁷⁰.

The economic law⁷¹ of capital, however, is predicated on the continuous subsumption of non-capitalist relations of production existing under capital, which compels an obedience to the logic of valorization, such that the «handicraftsman or peasant who produces with his own means of production will either gradually be transformed into a small capitalist who also exploits the labor of others, or he will suffer the loss of his means of production [...] and be transformed into a wage-laborer»⁷². Indeed, this determination of capital means precisely that capitalism can and does comprise itself through the existence of non-capitalist relations of production alongside capitalist relations⁷³. Simultaneously, it attempts through implicit coercion by means of becoming the dominant

⁶⁷ Marx (1973a), p. 899.

⁶⁸ Marx (1969b), p. 407.

⁶⁹ Ivi, pp. 407-408.

⁷⁰ Ivi, p. 408.

⁷¹ One should keep in mind here the historical character of this economic law. Engels (1975), p. 161.

⁷² Marx (1969a), p. 409.

⁷³ For a review and critical analysis of debates on this issue, as it applies to debates on primitive accumulation as on-going, see Brass (2011).

object of social mediations to bring non-capitalist relations under its scope: «This is the tendency in the form of society in which the capitalist mode of production predominates»⁷⁴.

This “tendency” of capital’s coercive domination to subsume non-capitalist relations is the dialectical inversion of capital’s indifference to those very relations, which is precisely why capital’s universalization, as the dominant mode of production, does not necessarily homogenize every extra-economic element but only subdues them if they are relevant to the valorization process; those subjects not actively relevant to capitalist relations of production are merely a surplus population, and capital is indifferent to whatever way in which they may subsist.

This indifference coincides with the subjugation of the technological toward valorization. Marx notes, «[c]apital can produce surplus labor only by positing necessary labor, i.e., by entering exchange with the worker»⁷⁵. In so doing, capital structures the peculiar relation between laboring activity and self-valorization. In its tendency toward accumulation through self-valorization, capital’s tendency is «to produce as much labor as possible, just as it is its tendency to reduce necessary labor to a minimum»⁷⁶. The technological development of the productive forces results in a quantitative increase in production while reducing the amount of necessary labor required for that production (this is relative surplus value)⁷⁷. This means also that capital must create an absolute dependence of labor on it: capital becomes the object of the social subject, insofar as the social subject is a social subject under capitalist relations of production even if they are not directly involved in the process of production. «It is therefore», Marx concludes, «the tendency of capital to enlarge the working population as it is to posit a part of that population as a surplus population, = a population which is initially useless, until such time as capital can utilize it»⁷⁸. Non-capitalist relations of production, those social subjects who transgress the representational epistemology of capital itself are tolerated and allowed to persist as they wish precisely because they are useless in the eyes of capital. They become “problems” relegated to the State.

With Marx, we can now see the necessity of a historical subject(-object), the human species-essence in its manifold heterogeneity – a heterogeneity that persists even within the domination of capital’s universalization – for the purpose of considering both the abolition and realization of a novel society. In this sense, at a different level of abstraction – namely, at the level of postulating social transformation – Marx does not simply theoretically construct a subject but identifies an already existing subject, a set of real subject-objects: the “class of producers”, even those producers that are considered a “surplus population” for capital. Indeed, the working class as a historical subject is not a theoretical but a practical result of the actually existing social relations immanent to the historical specificity of capital. In specifying the level of abstraction, however, we reveal the subject of a specific process: the revolutionary transformation of society, its abolishment, has as the subject of this process the class of producers.

Marx infamously asserts: «[W]e call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things»⁷⁹. However, to such abolition a realization is dialectically immanent: «a practical movement, a revolution»⁸⁰. For Marx, «the revolution is necessary», precisely because «the class overthrowing [the ruling class] can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew»⁸¹. Communism is indeed the beginning, as Postone notes, but that beginning is itself an abolition of that against which it begins, that which it abolishes, that which it negates.

⁷⁴ Marx (1969a), p. 409.

⁷⁵ Marx (2010c), p. 16.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁷ Marx (1968), p. 548.

⁷⁸ Marx (2010), p. 16.

⁷⁹ Marx and Engels (1976), p. 49.

⁸⁰ Ivi, p. 60.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*.

The materialist negation of the negation – the negation of the reified form of capital's negation of human life, of the social human body – is itself the positive emergence of a new sociality enacted by the "class of producers".

There are two important points here. First, the new society is not divorced from its historical ground, from that which it emerges in the process of abolishment – to think this would amount to a purely utopic ideal, regarding which Marx is very critical. In *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx writes:

What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has developed on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges⁸².

To emphasize abolishment over-against realization, as Postone argues, is to promulgate a passivity without creativity in which the inevitability of abolishment is simply presupposed. There, thus, exists a tremendous failure to recognize that the very process of abolishment itself is already premised on the futural realization of a new sociality. Abolishment is premised on the realization as already immanent to it: the tendency toward abolishment of existing conditions is already the realization of society anew in embryonic form. Moreover, such realization emerges through abolishment still dealing with the "birth marks" of the old society, i.e., their social mediations, but now critically understood.

This leads us to the second point; namely, that for Marx this transitional moment is premised on a historical subject, the class of producers, whose revolutionary potential is itself premised on retaining the ontological ground of being a "knowing subject". Indeed, for both abolishment and realization to occur at all a knowing and practical subject is necessary, one that can recognize the problematic dimensions of the social mediations that dominate their social existence, that recognize itself as an object, its objective subjectivity, and, more importantly, can actualize its revolutionary potential by do something about it⁸³. In this way, Marx's integration of the relational ontology of Hegel is indeed retained, though simultaneously endowed with the historical specificity, amid the heterogeneity of social formations, through which and in which the human species-essence has historically found itself.

We need not rely on other texts to disprove Postone's assertion that Marx is concerned merely with abolition. In *Capital*, Marx directly undermines Postone's thesis. Describing the historical process of formal subsumption and the transition to capital Marx notes that «a complete economic revolution is brought about»⁸⁴. This takes on two determinate expressions. In the first, the subsumption process «creates the real conditions for the domination of labor by capital»⁸⁵. Then, through capital's becoming dominant in a contradictory and antagonistic manner, it incidentally «creates the real premises of a new mode of production, one that abolishes the contradictory form of capitalism»⁸⁶. Insofar as an alternative society is possible, it cannot but emerge from its historical conditions, i.e., the conditions of capitalist production. However, precisely as a result of the contradictory form of capital, its own development «thereby creates the material basis of a newly shaped social process and hence of a new social formation»⁸⁷.

This brings us to the truly non-reductive character of Marx's work. In the above quoted passage from the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx mentions that the emergence of a new society still must deal with the social mediations from which it is originating "in

⁸² Marx (1999), p. 529.

⁸³ Engels (2010b), p. 307.

⁸⁴ Marx (1973a), p. 1065.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*.

every respect". What Marx calls the "collective appropriation" of the products of society is the instantiation of a novel set of social relations which assume a distinct expression of novel forms of the appropriation of social life. This is not a mere change in the mode of production, but equally a change in the mode of appropriation of social existence, i.e., a change predicated on Marx's ontological grounding of the human species-essence which has expressed itself in a historically specific form but has already existed in other forms – since other forms, other production relations, still exist under capitalist relations – and can transcend the social form of capital. The realization of a new sociality is the positive result of abolition as an immanent transcendence, as the "early" Marx asserts: «Communism as the positive transcendence of private property, as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man»⁸⁸. The appropriation of the human essence is not a return, but a new beginning, where the mode of appropriation takes on a new creative-aesthetic shape in terms of social life. This is precisely not a doctrinal program that displaces the social particularity of a given social formation under a dogmatic rule. On the contrary, it includes the creative-aesthetic dimension of the social particularity of each social formation in question, now oriented toward the creation of a social-form that allows for this universality to express itself heterogeneously. Istvan Mészáros notes that this immanent, «[p]ositive transcendence...[and]...its realization can only be conceived in the universality of social practice as a whole»⁸⁹. The realization of a new social form concerns the universality of social practice as a whole. It does not only concern labor, the mode of production – even if that is inarguably a major and necessary concern – but the transformation of social practice as a whole, i.e., a rearticulation of social life in novel form. A social practice, not only universal in character but the very essence of human species, is appropriation. A focus on appropriation includes labor but also discloses the heterogeneous particularizations of sociality itself, expressed in various forms which constitute social life. An immanent transcendence of capital, then, concerns the integration of sociality with a critical lens toward all the forms that constitute it, and in this way, as Ollman notes, «[c]ommunism is the time of full, personal appropriation»⁹⁰.

The appropriation of human life is self-possession, the appropriation of human species-essence over against forms of alienation; the appropriation of the human species-essence is the resurrection of appropriation itself, i.e., of creative-aesthetic activity in the manifold of its real possibility. In this sense, it is neither a return nor a redemption: it is the engendering of real possibility of integrative sociality, the realization of freedom through the social; the social, moreover, that is cognizant of its fundamental, ontological, metabolic relation to nature. Marx renders the possibility of practical social transformation in theory by means of a relational ontology that, against Postone, is necessarily dependent on both a transhistorical underpinning – as well as a historical specificity concomitant to it – and realization through abolition, a realization predicated on the self-realization of a determinate knowing subject-object, the social human body. For Marx, the self-realization of the human species-essence, then, is the enactment of freedom, which «presupposes», as Carol Gould notes, «the overcoming of both natural and social necessity»⁹¹. The overcoming of these necessities, Engels notes, «could become possible, could become a historical necessity, only when the actual conditions for its realization [are] there»⁹². Indeed, the conditions for abolishment are, simultaneously, the conditions for the realization of something new, which makes of both an immanent necessity.

To be sure, novel modes of appropriation, the construction of new social mode of being, are a positive exercise that cannot be achieved without a conception of a subject, itself an object – indeed, a determinate becoming subject-object, which can appropriate itself as

⁸⁸ Marx (1961), p. 103.

⁸⁹ Mészáros (1970), p. 161.

⁹⁰ Ollman (1971), p. 95.

⁹¹ Gould (1980), pp. 125-126.

⁹² Engels (2010c), p. 321.

social, appropriate its own-most sociality, and engender the possibility of realizing creative-aesthetic activity in novel forms. That is, when, Engels notes, «the capitalist mode of appropriation [...] is replaced by [a novel] mode of appropriation...direct social appropriation, as means to the maintenance and extension of production [and] direct individual appropriation, as means of subsistence and enjoyment»⁹³. It is in this relational envisioning of social particularity combined with social singularity as expressing the positive universality of the human-species essence, as appropriation (as creative-aesthetic activity), where it becomes possible, as Marx notes, to make real the «complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e., human being)»⁹⁴; for the realization of the ontological social element over-against the individualization of capital, is where, Engels asserts, «[t]he struggle for individual existence disappears»⁹⁵. Moreover, this claim to human sociality contains implicit within it an ecological claim, in as much as a «fully developed humanism equals naturalism»; and therefore characterizes «the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man»⁹⁶. The struggle against forms of social domination – the implications of which are not merely ideological in character, are not merely problems of social consciousness, but equally problems of the metabolism of the human-nature relation, i.e., ecological problems – has brought sociality itself to the ecological limit of the possibility of its self-realization. Indeed, the resolution of the conflict between “man and nature” should not be read as a collapse of the distinction between two kinds of metabolic processes (the social and the natural)⁹⁷. On the contrary, Marx and Engels aim to show the political necessity of changing a mode of production that sees nature as merely an object to be exploited. A transformation of this kind is premised on a relational and processual comprehension of the distinct forms of motion peculiar to nature and sociality, respectively. Thus, there is no static reconciliation, but an emphasis on a novel mode of social being that takes seriously the basic way in which it relates to a socialized nature – and, this basic, universal relation concerns the question of appropriation.

Bibliography

- Bolgh, R. (1979), *Dialectical Phenomenology: Marx's Method*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston.
- Brass, T. (2011), *Labour Regime Change in the Twenty-First Century: Unfreedom, Capitalism, and Primitive Accumulation*, Brill, Leiden.
- Engels, F. (2010a), “Anti-Duhring”, *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 25, Lawrence & Wishart, London.
- Engels, F. (2010d), “Dialectics of Nature”, *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 25, Lawrence & Wishart, London.
- Engels, F. (2010c), “Engels to Karl Kautsky Sept. 12, 1882”, *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 46, Lawrence & Wishart, London.
- Engels, F. (1975), “Engels to F.A. Lange, March 29, 1865”, *Marx-Engels Selected Correspondence 1844-1895*, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
- Engels, F. (1977), “Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Part One, F. Duncker, Berlin, 1859 (Review)”, Eng. trans. by S.W. Ryazanskaya, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
- Engels, F. (2010b), “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific”, *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 24, Lawrence & Wishart, London.

⁹³ Ivi, p. 320.

⁹⁴ Marx (1961), p. 102.

⁹⁵ Engels (2010c), p. 323.

⁹⁶ Marx (1961), p. 102.

⁹⁷ In *Dialectics of Nature*, Engels writes: «Man, too, arises by differentiation. Not only individually... but also historically» (Engels, 2010d, p. 330).

- Engels, F. (1993), "Preface to the First Edition", *Karl Marx Capital, Volume II*, Eng. trans. by D. Fernbach, Penguin Books, London.
- Flower, A. H. W. (2021), "Cosmos Against Nature in the Class Struggle of Proletarian Trans Women", *Transgender Marxism*, ed. J.J. Gleeson and E. O'Rourke, Pluto Press, London.
- Gleeson, J., O'Rourke, E. (2021), "Introduction", *Transgender Marxism*, J.J. Gleeson and E. O'Rourke eds., Pluto Press, London.
- Gould, C. (1980), *Marx's Social Ontology: Individuality and Community in Marx's Theory of Social Reality*, MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Heinrich, M. (2004), *An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital*, Eng. trans. by A. Locascio, Monthly Review Press, New York.
- Lebowitz M. (2009), *Following Marx: Method, Critique and Crisis*, Brill, Leiden.
- Marx, K. (1977). *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Eng. trans. by S.W. Ryazanskaya, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
- Marx, K. (1973a), *Capital, Volume I*, Eng. trans. by B. Fowkes, Penguin Books, London.
- Marx, K. (1993a), *Capital, Volume II*, Eng. trans. by D. Fernbach, Penguin Books, London.
- Marx, K. (1993b), *Capital, Volume III*, Eng. trans. by D. Fernbach, Penguin Books, London.
- Marx, K. (1999), "Critique of the Gotha Programme", *Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd edition, ed. by R. Tucker, W.W. Norton & Company, New York.
- Marx, K. (2010a), "Economic Manuscript of 1861-63", *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 32, Lawrence & Wishart, London.
- Marx, K. (2010c), "Economic Manuscript of 1861-63 (conclusion)", *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 34, Lawrence & Wishart, London.
- Marx, K. (1961), *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow.
- Marx, K. (1973b), *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, Eng. trans. by M. Nicolaus, Penguin Books, London.
- Marx, K. (1969a), *Theories of Surplus Value, Part I*, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
- Marx, K. (1968), *Theories of Surplus Value, Part II*, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
- Marx, K. (1969b), *Theories of Surplus Value, Part III*, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
- Marx, K. (2010b), "Value, Price and Profit", *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 20, Lawrence & Wishart, London.
- Marx, K., Engels F. (1976), *The German Ideology*, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
- Mészáros, I. (1970), *Marx's Theory of Alienation*, Merlin Press, London.
- Ollman, B. (1971), *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Postone, M. (1993), *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Rubin, I. (2017), *Essays on Marx's Theory of Value*, Eng. trans. by M. Samardzija and F. Perlman, Black Rose Books, New York.
- Shaikh, A. (1981), "The Poverty of Algebra", *The Value Controversy*, Verso, London.
- Yibing, Z. (2014), *Back to Marx: Changes of Philosophical Discourse in the Context of Economics*, Eng. trans. by T. Mitchell, Universitätsverlag Göttingen, Germany.
- Zeleny, J. (1980), *The Logic of Marx*, Eng. trans. by T. Carver, Rowman and Littlefield, New Jersey.