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On the Philosophical Foundation of the Concept of Labor in Economics*

by Herbert Marcuse

1.

To attempt a fundamental definition of the concept of labor appears superfluous because there is a tacit agreement in economic theory to avoid a "definitional" concept of labor as such and to conceive of labor only as economic activity: the praxis within the economic dimension. "The general concept 'labor' has received such an indeterminate content through its ordinary uses that it is hardly possible to unequivocally demarcate it. It is precisely this situation that gives the representatives of economics the right to utilize a specific economic concept of 'labor' that is not derived from a general concept of 'labor' but, rather, through another procedure."¹ A concept of labor so limited does not appear to prejudice decisions concerning the place, meaning, and function of labor in the totality of human existence; the economically relevant differentiations of labor (as for example, the distinctions between supervisory and supervised, free and unfree labor, and the types of labor in various branches of production) can all be placed within the range of the economic concept of labor. Thus, the elaboration of a "general" concept of labor does not seem to be required by economic theory.

Yet, this "definitional" economic concept of labor (which is not derived from or guaranteed by a "general" concept of labor) immediately turns up in the center of economic theory: "The concept of labor has entered political economy in three basic groups of problems: in the theory of value and prices, the theory of factors of production, and the theory of costs."² Furthermore, in all three groups of problems, labor is a *fundamental* concept and the actual cornerstone of the whole problematic: labor is an "ultimate," or at least one of the "ultimate," factors of production, as well as the basis of value, prices, and costs. At this point, the lack of a definitional determination of a general concept of labor becomes obvious.

The state of the problem is further complicated by the fact that the economic concept of labor has decisively influenced the conception of the essence of labor in general—including labor outside the economic sphere. It has forced reflection on the essence and meaning of labor as such in a definite direction—hence labor in the primary, authentic sense is held to be *economic* activity, while the activity of, for example, politicians, artists,

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1. Elster, *Vom Strome der Wirtschaft I* (Jena, 1931), pp. 146 f.

2. H. Nowack, "Der Arbeitsbegriff der Wirtschaftswissenschaft," in *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie* . . . , Volume 131, 1929; p. 513.

researchers, and priests is characterized as labor only in a derivative and somewhat uncertain sense, and is generally put forth as fundamentally opposed to economic activity. This narrowing of the concept of labor has, however, gone further, even within economic theory itself. For the concept of labor is here increasingly limited to supervised, unfree activity (whose conceptual model is the labor of the wage earner)—even where the concept of labor in economics should be defined in the context of the basic concepts of that science. For example, Max Weber³ wants to deal with labor only as “direction-oriented labor” (and not “directing” activity); and Gottl⁴ formulates his concept of labor from the outset as the counter-concept to “creative performance” (e.g., the entrepreneur’s), as “an activity that merely fills time, and of which everyone is always capable,” “measurable in terms of time,” as the “everyday form” of human action whose most distinct type is “factory activity.”⁵

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

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

3. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen, 1921), p. 62.

4. *Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft* (Jena, 1931), pp. 31 and 446.

5. “Arbeit als Tatbestand des Wirtschaftslebens,” in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft* . . . 1923, pp. 293f, 296f, 307.

establish the actual inner connection of labor and economic activity in the economy. Over thirty years ago, Marx undertook a philosophical discussion of basic concepts, and he himself began with a philosophical discussion of labor. From a completely different perspective, the study of various economic systems of various periods has thus transcended economic theory itself, precisely by using the concept of labor.

The modern *science of labor* seeks to deal with its full complexity. However, when it takes its technical dimension, it undertakes the task of a philosophical foundation. For the science of labor in its technical dimension: it is seen as a part of Psychology, however (and especially in the social sciences), cannot adequately deal with the following investigation hopes to in the totality of human existence as such. Yet the study of this phenomenon, its fundamental character, shall come back to this in regard to the *Lastcharacter der Arbeit*). Because of the complete absence of, such a basic concept (1932), Giese fails to accomplish the study of a number of possible problems as the study of the concept of labor turns up and is not able to clear their necessary and factual character. A shift conceptualization that contains the basic doctrines is expressed already in the study of the concept of labor: accordingly, labor corresponds to a purposive act directed toward occupationally-determined biological and technological energy.

Within economic theory itself the study of the concept of labor becomes evident. When the concept of labor becomes evident, the questions related to labor are raised, especially the questions of labor and its effects on the labor market. The mental unfolding of the factual character of human existence remain, for the study of labor (we are speaking here only of problems that have been mentioned in the footnotes. The study of the treatment of the problem of labor and its effects on the labor market).

Within philosophy, we find in

6. In the essay “Arbeit und Ethik” (1923/24).

erized as labor only in a derivative and generally put forth as fundamentally narrowing of the concept of labor has, economic theory itself. For the concept d to supervised, unfree activity (whose e wage earner)—even where the concept ined in the context of the basic concepts Weber³ wants to deal with labor only as not "directing" activity); and Gottl⁴ m the outset as the counter-concept to entrepreneur's), as "an activity that one is always capable," "measurable in form" of human action whose most

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

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

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

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

6. In the essay "Arbeit und Ethik" (*Schriften zur Soziologie und Weltanschauungslehre*, 1923/24).

on the essence of labor and its unfolding into the concrete spheres of historical existence. It was taken up and further developed on the broadest basis by Marx, especially in the writings of 1844-45; and it appears in the social theory of Lorenz von Stein, where the description of the social order begins with an inquiry into "the essence of labor." In the following investigation of the concept of labor we shall delve into these three inquiries after we first briefly describe the concept of labor in the science of economics.

2.

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

7. *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie*, Vol. 112, 1919; also in *Vom Strome der Wirtschaft*, *op.cit.* Cf. also Nowack, *Der Arbeitsbegriff*, *op.cit.*

8. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, pp. 148f.

9. *Gesellschaftslehre* (Stuttgart, 1856), p. 99.

10. Marx and Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, I., Abt. III, pp. 157, 168.

processes" in *Capital*, this is one that is in no way sufficient for a foundation for all concrete concepts of labor in *Capital*: "As the creator of use-values, man is a condition of human existence in nature, and thus human life."¹¹ The transition from the "form of unre-
—all these are philosophical moments of labor.

We have only discussed the concept derived from Hegel in order to show its essential distinction from the concept of labor that appears here as a definite human existence, as an abiding element of the whole of man's *being* and "world." Here labor is precisely a single activity comprehends and presents every activity always concerns one's self; it takes place in partial regions of the world; every single activity is founded on a definite object [*Tun*]. And it is precisely the doing that is being in the world: it is that through which what one is, comes to one's self [*Da-seins*], winning one's "permanent world "one's own." Labor here is not directed at objects, nor through its goal, but it happens to the very human existence.

We want to follow the indications of labor and seek to focus on the essential human existence in the world. We want to demarcate this praxis: through which the world is constituted as stressed in the philosophy of labor; something happens with man and through which that the "result" is an essential object that "objectifies" himself and the object. And this relation between labor and object indicates, e.g., the fact that every activity is before it some objectivity to be

11. *Kapital*, Volksausg., ed. K. Kautsky, pp. 133, 136, *passim*. To be sure, "activity," but as such it is for him explicit (p. 134) and not the whole process.

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processes" in *Capital*, this is only an "abstract" determination of labor, that is in no way sufficient for economic theory. But it remains the foundation for all concrete concepts of labor in Marx and is explicitly operative in *Capital*: "As the creator of use-values, as useful labor, labor is therefore a condition of human existence independent of all social forms; it is eternal natural necessity that mediates the material exchange between man and nature, and thus human life."¹¹ Labor as "mediation," "objectification," transition from the "form of unrest" into the "form of being," and so on¹²—all these are philosophical moments taken over from Hegel's concept of labor.

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

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

11. *Kapital*, Volksausg., ed. K. Kautsky (Berlin, 1928), Bd. I, p. 10.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 136, *passim*. To be sure, Marx determines labor also as "purposeful activity," but as such it is for him explicitly only a "moment of the process of labor" (*ibid.*, p. 134) and not the whole process.

constitutive moment for the whole praxis of human existence, a "task" posed for human existence as such. Its task is the "mediation" and "appropriation," etc., of objectification. Only by fulfilling this task can human existence become "for itself" and come to itself. (It is precisely this threefold unity of doing, objectification, and given task which is implicitly in the very meaning of the word labor, as Grimm's dictionary indicates. In all of its meanings it aims at a threefold phenomenon: the laboring [*Arbeiten*], what is labored upon [*Gearbeitete*], and what is to be labored for [*zu-Arbeitende*].) Thus, in consideration of the phenomenon of labor, we must always keep an eye on all three moments: in our analysis of labor as doing we must focus simultaneously on what happens to the objectification and on the task to which human existence submits itself in this doing.

3.

An obvious way to delineate the concept of labor is by means of another human activity often used as a counter-concept to determine labor: *play*.¹³ In what follows, we shall briefly summarize the characteristics that provisionally allow us to define play in explicit reference to the character of labor that we shall later develop:

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

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

the player achieves an infinitely greater objectification than in the most part of labor.

In regard to the meaning and goal of *oneself* and not with objects (which is one's freedom on the objects, going beyond them).¹⁴ If we want to express in even more explicit terms the meaning of the life of man, then we can indicate that it is not of objects: we speak of forgetting oneself and recuperating oneself.

This indicates a further characteristic of the direct counter-phenomenon. Within play there has no duration of permanence: "between" the times of other activities there is no existence. But as life occurs in play, it is in and by itself: it is essentially non-derivative away from itself toward another activity, relaxation, self-recuperation *from* rest, consciousness, etc., and it is all this, tension, etc. Thus, on the whole play is a self-contained activity, which is its source and goal, and this is expressed through the characteristics of regularity.

On the foundation of ethnological research play is older than labor: "Play originates gradually from entertainment to service and production for use. Even with the primitive [*Naturvölkern*]... dance still precedes it..." It is Bücher's great contribution to have shown that play has in no way exclusively or even primarily motives nor is it primordially rooted in nature (to which we will return). However, his distinction between play and labor can give rise to danger in a natural sense, within the totality of human existence, eternally "earlier" than play: it is the principle of play insofar as play is preparation for recuperation *for* labor. Aristotle's¹⁶ distinction between play and labor is valid: all play is *ἀναπαύσεως χάριν*; it is thus, *ἀσχολία* (non-leisure, labor in the b

14. Karl Groos speaks of a "feeling of freedom" (*ipse feci*), *Die Spiele der Menschen* (Jena, 1899).

15. *Entstehung der Volkswirtschaft* I, 1899.

16. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139a.

whole praxis of human existence, a "task" such. Its task is the "mediation" and objectification. Only by fulfilling this task can "itself" and come to itself. (It is precisely this objectification, and given task which is implicitly labor, as Grimm's dictionary indicates. In fact a threefold phenomenon: the laboring [Gearbeitete], and what is to be labored for in the consideration of the phenomenon of labor, we have three moments: in our analysis of labor as usually on what happens to the objectification an existence submits itself in this doing.

3.

The concept of labor is by means of another counter-concept to determine labor: *play*.¹³ I will briefly summarize the characteristics that play in explicit reference to the character of play:

(a) Play is not also be concerned and occupied with an object which has a completely different sense and a different form from that which it has in labor. While play is directed toward objects, toward their immanent lawfulness (in contrast to specific objectification), nor towards what is to be done [Sachhaltigkeit] (in the way that labor is directed toward its object in the handling, use, and production of it). It objectifies this "objective" content and lawfulness in its own will: the "rules of the game" (in contrast to the rules of the game; and can be used ad hoc for single cases). In contrast to labor and their effects, and the actuality of the game is usually forced constantly to deal, thus temporarily suspended. For once, one does not play; one places oneself beyond them and one is what is decisive: in this self-positing [sich-hinwegsetzen] one comes precisely to oneself which is denied in labor. In a single toss of a ball,

as the counter-concept to labor, we cannot allow the analogy to arise from the play of children. It is still highly questionable if play does not fulfill a role similar or corresponding to labor. (See "Der Begriff der Arbeit," in *Jahrbücher für*

the player achieves an infinitely greater triumph of human freedom over objectification than in the most powerful accomplishment of technical labor.

In regard to the meaning and goal of play, the person playing is with himself and not with objects (which are other than himself): one expresses one's freedom on the objects, going along with or playing around with them.¹⁴ If we want to express in everyday language the function of play in the life of man, then we can indicate specific kinds of events typical of the ego and not of objects: we speak of self-distraction, relaxing oneself, forgetting oneself and recuperating oneself.

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

On the foundation of ethnological studies, K. Bücher¹⁵ has claimed that play is older than labor: "Play creates technique, and passes only very gradually from entertainment to something useful... Art is older than production for use. Even with highly developed primitive peoples [Naturvölkern]... dance still precedes every important labor or follows it..." It is Bücher's great contribution to have clearly indicated that labor has in no way exclusively or even primarily arisen only from "economic" motives nor is it primordially rooted in the economic dimension (a point to which we will return). However, his formulations of the relations between play and labor can give rise to dangerous misunderstandings. In the structural sense, within the totality of human existence, labor is necessarily and eternally "earlier" than play: it is the starting point, foundation, and principle of play insofar as play is precisely a breaking off from labor and a recuperation for labor. Aristotle's¹⁶ concise formulation of the relationship between play and labor is valid: all play is not a self-contained *telos* but is ἀναπαύσεως χάριν; it is thus, according to its *telos*, directed toward ἀσχολία (non-leisure, labor in the broadest sense) and part of it. Παύειν

14. Karl Groos speaks of a "feeling of freedom" that dominates play, of the appearance of "ipse feci," *Die Spiele der Menschen* (Jena, 1899), p. 502.

15. *Entstehung der Volkswirtschaft* I, 17th edition (1926), p. 29.

16. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1176b 33 f, and *Politics*, 1339b 16.

ὁπωζ σπουδαζη: reduced to a formula, this is the essential foundational interconnection between play and labor.

From the standpoint of play, laboring doing is primarily characterized by three moments: its essential duration, its essential permanence, and its essential character of being a burden. Of course, all three moments pass beyond individual laboring processes (as individually "purposeful activity") toward laboring doing as such, toward its meaning and function in the totality of human existence. That is, duration, permanence, and burden do not characterize the particular laboring processes, but the human doing that is expressed in the particular processes, lies at their basis and allows them to arise.

So understood the *duration* of labor means that the task which labor poses for human existence can never be fulfilled in one or in many individual laboring processes. Thus, this task corresponds to an enduring being-at-work and being-in-work, and orienting and directing the whole human being toward labor (which occurs also when a life only fulfills itself in a single labor or in a single activity; for the enduring directedness of one's existence to labor must not be mistaken for an enduring activity!). On the other hand, play is essentially particular, without duration and happens only temporarily, at times. In regard to the process of human life one can speak of "life as labor" but not of "life as play."

The *permanence* [Ständigkeit] of labor can be provisionally defined as follows: that something should "come out of" labor which, because of its meaning and function, is more enduring than single laboring processes and is part of a "universal" process. What is worked-on or will be obtained by labor will be worked into the "world" of the laborer, just as it has been obtained by labor from this very same "world." It should either be itself something "solid" that is still there after the ending of particular laboring processes and is there for others: an "object" (in the widest, still to be clarified sense). Or else it should endow the laborer himself with permanence: to create and maintain a place in the world for him. In the history of the problem this character of labor is treated as "objectifying" [Vergegenständlichung]: labor is objectifying doing; in labor, human existence objectifies itself—it becomes actual, existant, historical "objectivity" [Objektivität], which acquires an objective form in the becoming [Geschehen] of the "world."

The burdensome character of labor is the most susceptible to misunderstanding.¹⁷ It is already a basic error to attribute it to specific conditions in

17. The burdensome character of labor is almost always considered in economic theory—it even enters into many definitions of labor, e.g., in Roscher and Alfred Weber (compare Elster, *op.cit.*). Just as frequent, however, are the attempts of economic theory to present the burdensome character of labor as inessential to it. As supporting evidence, reference is made to those laboring techniques which allow the transformation of apathy into interesting labor, or those types of labor which seem to lack any burdensome character. Both argumentations are

the performance of labor, to the social resistance of the materials, etc. Not "happiness" that appears in certain kinds that can be abolished or minimized remedies. Rather, due to the modes of all such burdening, labor as such is. This is a result of the fact that human law: the law of the "thing" [Sache] remains a "thing," an Other to life in labor. In labor it is always primarily of the laborer—even when no total "product of labor" has taken place. one's self-being and directed toward others and for others.

It will be the task of the following to get this characteristic of labor out of the praxis. At the same time, it should be understood as a phenomenon of the economic process [Geschehen] of human existence. The concept of labor economics is led back to this foundation. Thus, any fundamental economics refers to these spheres which at the same time transcending economic

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

The process of human life is praxis. One *make* [Tun] his existence himself in order to fulfill it as a task. One's becoming in the process of animal existence is a mere

ultimately based on a complete misunderstanding. The "science of labor" has likewise means. The "science of labor" has likewise means. It has found here a psychological condition that can be analyzed by logical methods. The burdensome character of labor is not apathy or by "feelings of unhappiness," "interest" with specific types of labor. To be sure, these types of labor structure of the labor process, through changes in the burdensome character will not be touched through changes in the structure of being typical of human existence. This is clear.

a formula, this is the essential foundational and labor.

laboring doing is primarily characterized by duration, its essential permanence, and its burden. Of course, all three moments pass processes (as individually "purposeful activity") h, toward its meaning and function in the hat is, duration, permanence, and burden do r laboring processes, but the human doing ular processes, lies at their basis and allows

of labor means that the task which labor an never be fulfilled in one or in many Thus, this task corresponds to an enduring ork, and orienting and directing the whole hich occurs also when a life only fulfills itself le activity; for the enduring directedness of ot be mistaken for an enduring activity!). On lly particular, without duration and happens regard to the process of human life one can ot of "life as play."

it] of labor can be provisionally defined as l "come out of" labor which, because of its enduring than single laboring processes and s. What is worked-on or will be obtained by "world" of the laborer, just as it has been ery same "world." It should either be itself here after the ending of particular laboring ers: an "object" (in the widest, still to be should endow the laborer himself with intain a place in the world for him. In the aracter of labor is treated as "objectifying" is objectifying doing; in labor, human becomes actual, existant, historical "objec-quires an objective form in the becoming

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labor is almost always considered in economic theory—it bor, e.g., in Roscher and Alfred Weber (compare Elster, the attempts of economic theory to present the burden- to it. As supporting evidence, reference is made to those ransformation of apathy into interesting labor, or those any burdensome character. Both argumentations are

the performance of labor, to the social-technical structuring of labor, to the resistance of the materials, etc. Nor is it a question of a "feeling of unhappiness" that appears in certain kinds of labor or modes of laboring and that can be abolished or minimized through technological or psychological remedies. Rather, due to the modes and organization of labor, even *before* all such burdening, labor as such is already encountered as a "burden." This is a result of the fact that human doing stands under an alien, imposed law: the law of the "thing" [*Sache*] that is to be dealt with (and which remains a "thing," an Other to life itself even when one provides one's own labor). In labor it is always primarily a question of the thing itself and not of the laborer—even when no total separation between labor and the "product of labor" has taken place. In labor one is always distanced from one's self-being and directed toward something else: one is always with others and for others.

It will be the task of the following investigation to develop and outline this characteristic of labor out of the specific human doing: out of human praxis. At the same time, it should become clear that labor is not at all primordially a phenomenon of the economic dimension, but is rooted in the process [*Geschehen*] of human existence itself. Precisely through the concept of labor economics is led back to deeper spheres that provide its foundation. Thus, any fundamental treatment of the concept of labor by economics refers to these spheres which constitute its foundation while at the same time transcending economics.

4.

The characteristics of labor that have thus far become visible lead the question of the meaning and function of laboring doing back to the mode of human becoming in the world. This process itself must be brought into focus, insofar as it is *doing*, praxis (since it is precisely this doing that has been clearly unveiled by the philosophical analysis of the concept of labor).

The process of human life is praxis in the eminent sense that man must *make* [*Tun*] his existence himself in such a way that he has to seize it and fulfill it as a task. One's becoming is a continual *active* process (while the process of animal existence is a mere *passive* process): the animal allows its

ultimately based on a complete misunderstanding of what this burdensome character really means. The "science of labor" has likewise made this misunderstanding in that it believes that it has found here a psychological condition that could be dealt with by psychological-technological methods. The burdensome character of labor is not identical with labor determined by apathy or by "feelings of unhappiness," "inhibitions," "appearances of fatigue" associated with specific types of labor. To be sure, these things can be abolished through changes in the structure of the labor process, through changing the conditions of labor or the like. But the burdensome character will not be touched through their removal because it is itself grounded in the structure of being typical of human existence. The following investigation should make this clear.

existence to happen immediately, even when it "does" something; e.g., it builds its nest, protects itself from attack, seeks nourishment. For animals, all this doing is, in Wexberg's¹⁸ fitting phrase, "biologically sanctioned." The animal does not "have" its existence as a given task which it has to fulfill through its modes of being. Man constantly confronts a situation concerning himself and his world that is not immediately his own, such that he could simply passively allow things to happen to him in this immediacy. Rather, he must first make every situation his own, by "mediating" it himself. This process of mediation is designated by the concepts of "production and reproduction" (concepts which, since Marx, have been deprived of their original essential meaning and have been reduced to the economic dimension). Production and reproduction do not simply refer to the becoming of "material existence" in economic doing, but to the active process of human existence as a whole: appropriation, overcoming, transforming and further developing all of human existence in all of its vital spheres. This applies to both the situation of the "world" which we immediately confront and existence itself—a bringing-before-oneself and a having-brought-before-oneself ("represented") as a creation and development of existence and the world in all of its regions (including "material," "vital" as well as "spiritual" being). For humans, this doing is essentially a conscious doing aware of its goal (the creation and development of human beings and their world as more appropriate and more suitable) and which shapes itself according to its "goal"—purposeful activity.

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

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

Thus he must constantly hustle himself in the world at all (procuring clothing, no

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

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

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

The positing of man as a natural when dealing with his specific mode of praxis of his existence is in question (concept of labor). Such a procedure "dimension" of human being from human beings are divisible into "different other dimensions only as superstructuralized dimension would be precisely takes place—the world of the means "world of goods."

This is not the place to investigate take as its starting point a concept explicitly or inexplicitly does through

19. *Theoretische Nationalökonomie* (19

20. *Theoretische Sozialökonomie* (Leipz

21. *Op.cit.*, p. 153.

22. As Oppenheimer does, following *Soziologie*, Vol. III, Part I (Jena, 1923), p

tely, even when it "does" something; e.g., it from attack, seeks nourishment. For animals, 's¹⁸ fitting phrase, "biologically sanctioned," its existence as a given task which it has to being. Man constantly confronts a situation rld that is not immediately his own, such that w things to happen to him in this immediacy. every situation his own, by "mediating" it ediation is designated by the concepts of "n" (concepts which, since Marx, have been ntial meaning and have been reduced to the tion and reproduction do not simply refer to stence" in economic doing, but to the active as a whole: appropriation, overcoming, loping all of human existence in all of its vital the situation of the "world" which we imme ce itself—a bringing-before-oneself and a ("represented") as a creation and develop- ld in all of its regions (including "material," eing). For humans, this doing is essentially a oal (the creation and development of human e appropriate and more suitable) and which "goal"—purposeful activity. s mediating and conscious doing: in this duction of human existence (and is opposed ss of, e.g., animal existence). All the charac- nalysis of labor are present in this mode of iversal meaning, which is concerned with the n the world, this concept of labor is encoun- ere something is to be said about the essence nesis (especially emphasized in Augustine's tters, all the way up to Hegel. Here we reach oncept of labor and its banishment to the ve must ask *why* the human activity is ction and reproduction: why man is essen- diate passive acceptance of his lot, and the the so-called "natural" situation of man in an existence is typified by labor since the time to time, can never satisfy his "needs."

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Thus he must constantly hustle simply in order to be able to live in the world at all (procuring clothing, nourishment, housing, tools, etc.).

This primordial "lack" in man's natural situation makes "need" the driving force of his activity. The first and necessary goal of this activity is the "satisfaction of needs"—and here we are already in the sphere of the traditional definition of economics and labor as economic activity. Here are three randomly chosen definitions of the concept of labor: "The object of research in political economy is the activity of man directed toward the satisfaction of needs" (Diehl).¹⁹ "The goal of every economy is the satisfaction of human needs. Thus, the economy is an activity that aims at making possible such a satisfaction of needs" (Cassel).²⁰ In terms of economics, labor is "designated through the goal . . . of creating means for the satisfaction of needs" (Elster).²¹ These definitions are not essentially altered by further determinations of the concept of need and of the activity exerted toward the satisfaction of needs.

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

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

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

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

19. *Theoretische Nationalökonomie* (1916), Vol. I, p. 2.

20. *Theoretische Sozialökonomie* (Leipzig, 1921), p. 2.

21. *Op.cit.*, p. 153.

22. As Oppenheimer does, following the precedent of MacDougall in *System der Soziologie*, Vol. III, Part I (Jena, 1923), pp. 18ff.

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

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

Economic theory has not always failed to realize that perhaps the traditional starting point of the concept of labor is not adequate to account for the full phenomenon of labor. At the very beginning of his book *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, K. Bücher indicates that previously labor has always been considered only "as an absolute economic category," whereas all other activities containing their own end are not seen as labor. Yet, it is highly questionable, he continues, "whether one can show that such a boundary between labor and other activity exists in all stages of human development." Bücher, however, does not develop further this fruitful insight, nor does Thomas Brauer,²³ who through his consideration of the problem of labor is forced to explicitly revise the concept of need. Brauer substitutes in place of the satisfaction of needs "providing for wants" [*Bedarfsversorgung*] which are no longer primarily aimed at "mere existence" but toward "a specific type of being" [*bestimmtes Sosein*]. In principle, this allows making man the object of economics not merely as a subject of "the world of needs," but of his full being. Securing and expanding one's existence, which Bücher calls the goal of economic activity, should refer to man's "qualitative existence" in contradistinction to his "mere existence," and thus concerns the *totality* of human praxis. But Bücher does not heed these insights in the process of his investigation. He quickly returns to the explanation of economic activity through "drives."

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

According to Gottl, economics is not primarily concerned with the satisfaction of needs, but with the "supplying of wants." Roughly characterized, this term is meant to break through the one-sided absolutizing of the economic dimension as "a world of goods" and of initiating a consideration of

23. *Produktionsfaktor Arbeit* (Jena, 1925), pp. 1 f., and p. 10.

"economics as life" accounting for human existence (not primarily related to individual economic individuals), but rather to the "productive" already organized forms of life. Second, the theory demands that in the final analysis aims at the "affirmation" and "promotion" of life through "supply" ultimately leads to an "affirmation" toward a promotion of life." "This means that the process is maximizing quantitatively, but achieving qualitatively."

What is decisive is the return of economics to the question of human existence. Here, it is not a question of the satisfaction of needs, nor of "performing" in the world of goods (K. Elster), etc. Rather, it is a question of how human existence to exist in the fullness of its potentiality. The thesis for our problem becomes clearer when we realize that it mines the immanent *telos*, the authentic meaning of the conjunction of the process "in a unity of process ordered in terms of *duration* and *permanence*."²⁵ "Whenever life is [Lebendiges] there is also an active unity of process whose internal permanence is brought about in relation to its environment."²⁶ Economic doing means the ordering together of all processes in the world of goods and permanence."²⁷

For the problem of labor this implies that the only kind at stake in economics) has, from the beginning, a goal which is *no longer economic* (in the world of goods). It has the task—essentially, the task of self-creating, of creating forms endowed with their own fact, the first and final meaning of labor is the realization of human existence itself, in order to achieve its permanence. All individual wants are not merely mortal and constant want that exists in the world [*Selbsterwirkung*] in duration and consistency.

With this, Gottl aims beyond the economic dimension of man: toward the specific mode of human existence which already appears as constant and enduring. Gottl expressly stresses the "foundational" characterizations. Among other things, this characterizes

24. *Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft* (Jena, 1925), p. 10.

25. *Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft*, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 754. Italics added.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 442.

does so with, as it were, his whole being being some needs. At any rate, it is clear of and in the sphere of the satisfaction of a well-determined dimension (the even roots him in this dimension so features of labor are also primarily dealt nension.

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"economics as life" accounting for human beings in their totality. Want is not primarily related to individual economic subjects (as mere economic individuals), but rather to the "products" of the economy as themselves already organized forms of life. Secondly, it always refers to a totality of demands that in the final analysis aims at nothing less than a determinate "affirmation" and "promotion" of life itself. The "interaction of want and supply" ultimately leads to an "affirmation of life, that is, to a degree, toward a promotion of life." "This means that economics does not aim at maximizing quantitatively, but achieving an overall optimum."²⁴

What is decisive is the return of economic activity to the very becoming of human existence. Here, it is not a question of goods as means for the satisfaction of needs, nor of "performing" in the service of the organization of goods (K. Elster), etc. Rather, it is a question of the potentiality of human existence to exist in the fullness of its possibilities. The significance of this thesis for our problem becomes clearer when we now see how Gottl determines the immanent *telos*, the authentic "task" of that process. It is the conjunction of the process "in a unity of reality" such "that it appears as a process ordered in terms of *duration* and, as a unity, in terms of *permanence*."²⁵ "Whenever life is actualized as a living process [*Lebendiges*] there is also an active unity whose duration brings about and whose internal permanence is *brought about by labor* that always fits into its environment."²⁶ Economic doing must also be seen under this last aspect and "therefore every exchange and every production contributes toward ordering together all processes in the form of a unity of duration and permanence."²⁷

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

With this, Gottl aims beyond the economic dimension, toward the being of man: toward the specific mode of human praxis in the world. And labor already appears as constant and enduring self-creation precisely in this being. Gottl expressly stresses the "foundational" character of his conceptualizations. Among other things, this character reveals itself in the impos-

24. *Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft* (Jena, 1931), pp. 211 f.

25. *Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft, op.cit.*, p. 411. Italics added.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 754. Italics added.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 442.

sibility, both in principle and in fact, of totally satisfying wants. The primordial want of human existence in which economic activity is ultimately grounded is not want of "goods" of any sort, but a never to be "satisfied" want of human existence for itself: Gottl calls it the "necessity for life" [*Lebensnot*]. "What is fundamental about the necessity for life... is emphatically posited by the fact that the remedy of wants always leaves something to imagine and that some unfulfilled want always remains behind."²⁸

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

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

This essential excess of being over existence constitutes the primordial and ineliminable human "necessity for life" (Gottl). Man's very structure of need [*Bedürftigkeit*] is grounded in it and its fulfilling is the final meaning of labor: the need for an enduring and lasting self-fulfillment of the

28. *Ibid.*

existence in the actuality of all it economy ultimately is also engaged would necessarily lead to an of concrete character of labor could impossible to pursue here, given give greater concreteness to the c define the meaning of its use in c tying up the already mentioned b (which now have been generally r existence), we shall next consider tification [*Gegenständlichkeit*] and of life in labor. Our choice of dir "factuality" [*Sachlichkeit*] of lab description of the phenomenon.

The claim that all labor is esse first doubtful if one thinks, for activity, social service work (such In the context of our investigation to being-a-self. Objectification m than the self. For the self all e tifications. Even other men and Although in different ways, work fications as works of technology

The self *is* only within its "wor But in regard to the very process as a whole and everything in it that of the self; they have their the history of the self. In active himself confronted with a world world filled and formed by a hu which is always already past a public conveniences, institutio economic nature, means of prod of use, works of art, etc., a worl of space and time which, as a v existence, even in every new cre existing world has received from the fulfillment of the vital space the basis of the current histor historical development, the "sub be the family, the tribe, the esta

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at insofar as they take the concept of the world of goods as the starting point, all the full factual content of labor. At best, as "material" production and reproduction explain that! Imagine a society that produces economic goods and that this supply is the model. Even then the interaction between the world could continue as "labor." This would mean that the drives and compulsions to labor were not to be taken up would largely be the transference of the dimension to other dimensions of human existence. The place, form, and function of economic activity would also change completely: in such a world would longer serve as a model for labor in the content of labor is not grounded in the continuity between the world of disposable goods, but, on the contrary, in an essential discontinuity. A very possible situation in which it finds itself always *more* than its present existence. This is not only and precisely because of this there is a discrepancy between the two: a discrepancy that is coming, even though human existence is self and its world.

er existence constitutes the primordial "necessity for life" (Gottl). Man's very structure of existence and its fulfilling is the final meaning and lasting self-fulfillment of the

existence in the actuality of all its possibilities—a task in whose service the economy ultimately is also engaged. Further pursuing the suggested path would necessarily lead to an ontology of man, and only within it the concrete character of labor could be developed. This path is obviously impossible to pursue here, given the limitations of this work. In order to give greater concreteness to the concept of labor, and especially in order to define the meaning of its use in economics, we must proceed otherwise. In tying up the already mentioned basic characteristics of the laboring activity (which now have been generally related to the developing process of human existence), we shall next consider the relation between labor and objectification [*Gegenständlichkeit*] and the objectifying [*Vergegenständlichung*] of life in labor. Our choice of direction is a function of the character of the "factuality" [*Sachlichkeit*] of labor that was already visible in our first description of the phenomenon of labor.

5.

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

The self *is* only within its "world," in and with a world of objectifications. But in regard to the very process of becoming of the self, the present world as a whole and everything in it have a process of becoming "other" than that of the self; they have their own "history" which never coincides with the history of the self. In actively constituting its existence, the self finds himself confronted with a world which is the world of another existence: a world filled and formed by a human animating power which is not its own, which is always already past and is yet present and actual—a world of public conveniences, institutions, concerns of a political, social and economic nature, means of production and objects of consumption, things of use, works of art, etc., a world of division and of universal organizations of space and time which, as a whole, remains the work of a past human existence, even in every new creation. What the existence is that the pre-existing world has received from its time and to which the organization and the fulfillment of the vital space is to be attributed can only be determined on the basis of the current historical situation. According to the stages of historical development, the "subject" of the "world-formation" appears to be the family, the tribe, the estate, the class, etc. Yet, the organized world is

always encountered as the reality of a *past* existence: as past which is still present. Just as the objectified world is the reality as an already past human existence, so it also carries the future of this past life in it: it is the actuality of its provisions and foresight, its discoveries and failures, its alliances and enemies. Thus, it is not something like a closed "state" [*Zustand*], nor is it a completely static manifold of disposable entities, but it is through and through unfinished and open: it is movement and *process* through and through. The processual character of the objective world that comes out of the past toward the present and yet anticipates the future, proceeds as always already encountered by human existence. This process unfolds, as it were, with its own temporal and spatial dimensionality beside the process of human existence. It has its own immanent power and regularity by virtue of which it can even "become solidified" and can elude human control.

The first decisive experience constituting laboring activity is that existence, in order to develop at all, must first allow this objectivity also to develop and must preserve it, take care of it, develop it, and work on it. Now we can say that the process of "mediation," of production and reproduction, begins with the overcoming of the past-made-present. In order for human existence to generate its own situation, to appropriate its own world and make it conform to its dynamic, it must interact with this process that emerges from the past. This past in the process of becoming presents itself as an objective process which spontaneously makes definite demands on the development of human existence. The countryside once it is opened to commerce—the field once it is cultivated—the mine, once it is exploited—the factory, once it is set in operation—the law, once it is promulgated—the constitution, once it is implemented—the work of art or science, once it is offered to the public: all of these have their own "history" that never coincides with the history of existence in this or that epoch, and can never be deduced from that history. They all have their own law-like development. In order for existence to simply continue to develop, all of these objectifications demand a specific kind of care, maintenance, securing, developing and overcoming based on them—a laboring that is in no way only based on the needs of the present, but must rather take into consideration the immanent want in these objectifications: the necessity already implicit in the mere existence of the organized and realized "world."²⁹

29. This "autonomy" of the process of the objective world as a historical world has been sharply worked out by Gottl: "Organization... does not refer back exclusively to human action. Rather more preponderant than this is a self-organization of all structures. All entities and processes occurring in common life press forward toward duration and constancy. For it only falls to human action to affirm what has been; the action adapts itself to it and seeks to maintain it." And: "Conscious action comes, however, already too late in regard to organization, because the economy is now already there, it or something similar to it in its effects must be there already, simply because it is the branch upon which we sit. Therefore, where action consciously intervenes, its value lies only in transforming or realizing a form." (*Arbeits- als Tatbestand des Wirtschaftslebens*, op.cit., pp. 291-2.)

To these demands posed by objectivity, the conscious regulating of itself according to its immanent regularity which is revealed and which gives to the "mediation" the character of a relation among things (to be treated as such). Whether explicit or implicit is at stake is always the thing itself. The "thing": whether one stands by or is concerned with organizational measures that instructs people, etc. In his activity toward the thing, subjects himself and obeys the object, directs it, guides it, and lets himself "with himself," does not passively. On the contrary, he places himself in the situation he is with an "Other than himself" and freely assumed life. This externalization is this taking-up-in-oneself the law of mediation by the process of development of objectivity (even if it can almost completely overcome the phenomenon does not correspond to it does not stop with the termination of the thing). Human existence itself is turned toward the thing.

We can now attempt to formulate the labor in its true "negativity" by at least the significance of the burdensome character of human in the world is first and foremost determining one's own existence and since, on the other hand, the laboring rendering objectivity passive as a burden upon objectivity is essentially burdened implicit in particular laboring process. Some character of labor expresses the very essence of human existence as passing through otherness: by the process of "alienation."

By showing the interconnection of labor, its essential objectivity, and its activity, we have sought to partialize objectivity. We must pursue this labor to objectivity and to the laboring

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

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

6.

By showing the interconnection between the burdensome character of
 labor, its essential objectivity, and the primordial negativity of laboring
 activity, we have sought to partially clarify the relation between labor and
 objectivity. We must pursue this path further and ask: what happens in
 labor to objectivity and to the laborer?

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

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

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

30. The broadest illustration of this historicity of the world of objects has been provided by Dilthey under the title of *life objectifications* (especially in the formulations in Volume VII of the *Gesammelten Schriften*). Cf. also F. Krueger, "Die Arbeit des Menschen als philosophisches Problem," in *Blätter für Deutsche Philosophie*, Vol. III, No. 2 (1929), p. 159.

Only in labor, and not before, man determines his position in the historical world. He can be a machine, dig coal in a mine, serve in a bureaucratic apparatus, or teach in a school. He has stepped out of their own private sphere and taken a defined place in an already organized world. He is placed into various corporations, occupations, and professions as members of specific organizations. He is defined by labor that roots the individual in a specific "position" [*Stand*] within the historical world. On the basis of this position that it is possible for him to accept and alter his situation. Before labor he is outside of praxis in the service of his own existence can project many possibilities. Through labor it has entered into a definite historical world with acquired historical permanence. The individual, as an employee, an official, an owner, an entrepreneur, etc. here as examples of actual historical positions. He is defined over all the concrete relations, conditions, and "positions" [*Stände*]. The laborer is defined as powerful or powerless: part of a social structure exposed to the power or powerlessness of others.

Man's actual historical becoming is defined through labor by means of labor. Because through labor the object of his labor, in the worked-upon world, becomes something perservering, present, "objectified" in the historical domain and in vital history. Through labor this state of affairs in his description of the world is bound itself up with its object. It is defined upon. What appears as the form of the object for the laborer, from the viewpoint of the laborer, is the form of being." "During the process of labor the converted from the form of becoming into that of objectivity."

By now it should have become clear that labor is a *historical* category; a category of history.

"Whatever man in his development designates as his object. In order to define the historicity of labor, Dilthey says: 'The object of the continuation of labor': it is 'the unchanging through which man distinguishes himself from the species begins with each animal. . . . But every generation is a continuation of the culture of all previous generations that will follow.'" (*Entstehung der Volkswirtschaft*)

31. *Kapital*, *op.cit.*, pp. 136 and 144.

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

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

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

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Only in labor, and not before, man attains a determinate position in the historical process. The machine, dig coal in a mine, serve in a bureaucratic apparatus, or teach in a school, stepped out of their own private sphere and found a place in an already organized social order. They entered into various corporations, occupied themselves as members of specific organizations, and by labor that roots the individual in a concrete "position" [*Stand*] within the historical process. On the basis of this position that it is possible to accept and alter his situation. Before labor, man existed outside of praxis in the service of a higher existence can project many possibilities. Through labor it has entered into a definite historical process with acquired historical permanence. The individual, as an employee, an official, an owner, and so on, here as examples of actual historical positions over all the concrete relations, "positions" [*Stände*]. The laborer is either powerful or powerless: part of a social order exposed to the power or powerlessness of others.

Man's actual historical becoming is achieved through labor by means of labor. Because the object of his labor, in the worked-upon object something perservering, present, "concrete" in the historical domain and in vital history, is not in this state of affairs in his description, but bound itself up with its object. It is not upon. What appears as the form of the laborer, from the viewpoint of the object, is "the form of being." "During the process of labor converted from the form of becoming into that of objectivity."

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historical life. Its historical life acquires its full significance when it is at the objects' animation and historicity is its own, which theory sees things, but that it is its own "substantiality" of objects. Through labor the objects create further effects. Man's objective world is created. Labor, as the product of human life, has its own place in objects of use, enjoyment, decoration, and in all the institutions and organizations that have objectified life demands, dominates, and is (without this necessarily becoming conscious) constantly interacts with that historical life and its objects.³⁰

Man's historical life in an organized world in a determined place to bear the determinate historicity of this world. This brings about the historicity of the very object. Man places himself in the totally concrete world. He is present, accepts its past, and works for its future. "Becoming historical extends through the object with the very specific pregivenness of the object in relation to their selection and the form that they are historically transmitted); and it encompasses the spatial and temporal organization of labor, and its goal of labor.

The historicity of the world of objects has been provided by various formulations (especially in the formulations in Volume VII of F. Krueger, "Die Arbeit des Menschen als philosophische Existenz," *Deutsche Philosophie*, Vol. III, No. 2 (1929), p. 159.

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31. *Kapital*, op.cit., pp. 136 and 144.

Labor presupposes a well-determined *relation to time* which thoroughly dominates human existence and guides its praxis. We have already indicated some modes of this relation to time. Human praxis is labor on and in the present through the "overcoming" and the transformation of the past while at the same time turned with anticipatory care towards the future. The laborer maintains himself in a stable way in his own temporality and in that of the objective world, and this attitude is expressed in many ways: in creating, handling, and evaluating the material of labor; in distributing and administrating the means of labor, and especially in partitioning time according to a general rule,³² to which all laborers are more or less subjected (both within the individual laboring processes as well as in the division of existence into labor and "free time," in the determining of the length of the working day, etc.). Only within very narrow boundaries is the individual free to dispose of his partitioned time. The true "subject" of vital time lies in the various historical communities (or better, those "groups" that have constituted themselves into historical communities as the "dominating class").³³

From this standpoint, the question of the role of labor in the life of so-called primitives can be clarified. It has always been claimed that, for primitive people, labor seems to have an essentially different meaning than it has for so-called civilized people³⁴—indeed, one cannot speak of labor proper in a definite stage of development of primitive people. In primitive societies, labor is not a "regulated activity." The supplying of wants does not go beyond "what is necessary at the moment" (not even when they know very well that in the future, e.g., in the winter, they will find themselves in a situation of need). The time dedicated to labor stands in a striking "incongruity" to play, dance, production of decorations, etc. These facts directly evoke the interconnection between the relation of human existence to time (historicity) and labor as a mode of human praxis. Primitives do not have that relation to time which makes human existence historical and constitutes labor as human praxis. Their existence is essentially *pre-historical*, even when we encounter them "in" our history, or even in our present. (The boundary between historical and pre-historical existence cannot be dated in our historical chronology: it is an "essential boundary" [*Wesensgrenze*] dividing various modes of human existence.)

Here we cannot investigate whether the *introjection* of the historical

32. The meaning for the social order of the general regulation of time has been particularly emphasized by Schäffle: *Bau und Leben des sozialen Körpers* Second Edition (Tübingen, 1896), Vol. II, pp. 101f.

33. See Section 8 below.

34. Bücher, *Entstehung der Volkswirtschaft*, *op.cit.*, pp. 30f; Eliasberg, "Arbeit und Psychologie," in this *Archiv* . . . , Vol. L (1922), p. 113; Grosse, *Die Formen der Familie* . . . (Jena, 1896), pp. 38ff; Gurewitsch, *Die Entwicklung der menschlichen Bedürfnisse* (1901), pp. 37f.

relation in time and thus the passage explained through the growing impoverishing and increasing contraction of the quantity of labor. The literature, already mentioned, generally give a negative answer to the question of regression from a "pre-economic" to a "purely economic" existence, explained through "purely economic" processes.

Now we can attempt to roughly outline the structure of human existence. In its broadest sense, it is grounded in the mode of being human, in the developing one's own existence by means of labor (of production and reproduction. Now, in historical existence) always confronts a world that is divided, organized and accomplished in a certain way. In deal, labor unfolds in a temporal and spatial manner, laboring processes with various objects and in various historical situation of the worker and the social processes take place in the various divisions of labor or in "intellectual" production and reproduction. Labor is purely necessary for human existence, but it also lies beyond these necessities. All of the time is to be sure, as individual laboring processes are subordinated to the final intention of the worker, human beings in their permanence, and in their development.

From this standpoint, it is clear that labor is "itself": it is not self-contained and does not have basically a lack, something negative: it is not yet there, that is not already present. In overcoming of this lack, the goal and the fulfillment of human existence in its totality. One says that the goal of labor lies beyond the reach of labor, dangerously ambiguous. Since the goal of labor is outside of existence, "outside of" must not be understood as existence: it does not refer to any goal or to any sort of objectivity whatsoever. The goal is not something outside of it. The existence is "outside of" in regard to the essential, which essentially transcends every individual laboring process. It obtains, and aims at the very existence.

In spite of the essential universal character of human existence, in spite of the determination

etermined *relation to time* which thoroughly guides its praxis. We have already seen the relation to time. Human praxis is labor on the "overcoming" and the transformation of the world turned with anticipatory care towards the future, and this attitude is expressed in many ways: in the distribution and evaluating the material of labor; in the distribution of means of labor; and especially in partitioning labor, to which all laborers are more or less subjected, as well as in the distribution of "free time," in the determining of the social order. Only within very narrow boundaries is the individual's time partitioned. The true "subject" of vital activities are the historical communities (or better, those "groups" which dissolve into historical communities as the

question of the role of labor in the life of societies is clarified. It has always been claimed that, for primitive societies to have an essentially different meaning than for modern people³⁴—indeed, one cannot speak of labor in the development of primitive people. In primitive societies, labor is a regulated activity." The supplying of wants does not vary "at the moment" (not even when they know that, e.g., in the winter, they will find themselves in a situation where labor stands in a striking "incongruity" of decorations, etc. These facts directly connect the relation of human existence to time with the mode of human praxis. Primitives do not have a labor that makes human existence historical and constitutes its essence. Their existence is essentially *pre-historical*, existing "in" our history, or even in our present. (The distinction between pre-historical existence cannot be dated in time; it is an "essential boundary" [*Wesensgrenze*] of human existence.)

to determine whether the *introjection* of the historical

order of the general regulation of time has been particularly clearly seen in *Leben des sozialen Körpers* Second Edition (Tübingen,

Volkswirtschaft, op.cit., pp. 30f; Eliasberg, "Arbeit und Familie," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, L (1922), p. 113; Grosse, *Die Formen der Familie... Die Entwicklung der menschlichen Bedürfnisse* (1900),

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

7.

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

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

In spite of the essential universality and duration of labor in human existence, in spite of the determination of human existence as labor, every

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

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

35. The split does not indicate the social subdivision of vital space and time in the sense that both spheres are attributed to different groups, classes, etc. Rather, it is every single existence that is split within its own totality into the two spheres of the necessary and no-longer-necessary; every individual existence demands a becoming and a fulfillment in both spheres and the sundering of this totality through the just mentioned economic-social appropriation is only the result of a specific form of the "division of labor." We shall come back to this in the last section.

existence. Only when relieved of these own possibilities. Even beyond necessity remains praxis: even here "labor" has changed. Now labor is no longer development of mere human existence, stable organization aimed at winning a as if its direction changes: labor no longer human existence as something that it rather, it is an event *resulting* from existence as its realization. Thus, this lacks that *being-delivered-over* to an and stable framing of an *imposed* event that existence can be at all. Here exists it truly is: it must disclose the truth and itself in this disclosed truth and full analysis, it *can* be. Thus, praxis in the praxis and "goal" to which all other labor existence in its true possibilities.

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

With this, we believe that we have at least sufficiently to indicate the dimension which, despite this transcendence. For its part, economic theory philosophical character of the concept possible to conceive of the economic objects for scientific research independent as such (i.e., if it were possible to out goods," corresponding approximately science of "nature" as a field mathematics however, is precluded precisely because dimension of human praxis—a dimension constituted through the being and becoming

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existence. Only when relieved of these needs can existence be free for its
 own possibilities. Even beyond necessities, the process of human existence
 remains praxis: even here "labor" has to be performed, but its character
 has changed. Now labor is no longer at the service of the process of
 development of mere human existence; it is no longer an enduring and
 stable organization aimed at winning and securing vital space. It is almost
 as if its direction changes: labor no longer aims at shaping and fulfilling
 human existence as something that it has yet to create and secure but,
 rather, it is an event *resulting* from the form and fullness of human
 existence as its realization. Thus, this praxis contains its goal and end; it
 lacks that *being-delivered-over* to an "alien" objectivity, that continuing
 and stable framing of an *imposed* event to which it must give itself up so
 that existence can be at all. Here existence must assume and become what
 it truly is: it must disclose the truth and fullness of its being and maintain
 itself in this disclosed truth and fullness—to be what, in the ultimate
 analysis, it *can* be. Thus, praxis in the "realm of freedom" is the authentic
 praxis and "goal" to which all other labor is directed: the free unfolding of
 existence in its true possibilities.

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

With this, we believe that we have outlined the general concept of labor
 at least sufficiently to indicate the dimension that transcends economics—a
 dimension which, despite this transcendence, constantly penetrates eco-
 nomics. For its part, economic theory need not concern itself with this
 philosophical character of the concept of labor were it methodologically
 possible to conceive of the economic dimension as a self-enclosed field of
 objects for scientific research independently of the theme of human praxis
 as such (i.e., if it were possible to outline a picture of a pure "world of
 goods," corresponding approximately to the picture outlined by modern
 science of "nature" as a field mathematizable in principle). This possibility,
 however, is precluded precisely because economic theory constitutes a
 dimension of human praxis—a dimension whose being and becoming are
 constituted through the being and becoming of historical, human existence,

in terms of its "ontological place" within the totality of being. The meaning of labor, which is grounded in this ontological place of man and is the constitutive element for all human praxis, cannot be excluded from any dimension of the latter.³⁶ Hence, every genuine economic theory is explicitly or inexplicitly connected with an ontology of man that transcends it. Furthermore, economic theory has at least a rough concept [*Entwurf*] of historical human existence as such, which directs its development.³⁷

8.

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

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

36. "That separation of functions according to which the economy leads its own existence whose laws could be known in isolation and whose intensity would rise with time, has shown itself to be inadequate. . . . Human labor occupies so central a position in the spiritual-ethical world that no single empirical science is alone able to describe its phenomena in their actual togetherness" (F. Krueger, *op.cit.*, p. 164). Cf. also Giese, *op.cit.*, pp. 161f.

37. This is shown very clearly by Marx. It is useless to reject his foundation of economic theory, especially as it is worked out in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844 and in *The German Ideology* as philosophical sins of youth that were later overcome. Such a foundation is operative throughout *Capital*, and is explicitly taken up in crucial places.

alongside others, and for others. Community, its praxis is partial.

The divisions of labor traditionally "social" obtain only within this partiality. What is understood is the division of labor according to sex, constitution, talent, etc. This is the first historical community laboring operative in every stage of history. The "sexual" division of labor between men and women concerns the division of labor into different classes, occupations, etc., and the division of kinds of labor to specific groups. The division of production and reproduction and of human existence. Here, we need to understand labor only insofar as it is necessary for the crystallization of labor and its existence.

Despite all the differences in the way of labor, the natural and social division of labor is carried out in the opposite directions: labor ("directing" and "directed") is considered *before* its realization and its realization lies in the very essence of labor as laboring. Laboring as a conscious activity is not one's own possibilities and one's own foresight into what is to happen with what "is to be done" with what. Since every labor is a partial labor, this circumspection and foresight into the labor of others: it implies reckoning with the possibilities and necessities. The main reason for the further development of human existence is the conditions of a "natural" and "social" labor, the depth, breadth, and force of labor. Every praxis confronts an unchangeable existence, a unique and unexchangeable existence, every circumspection and foresight "divided" differently. This need for diversity, given through the situation, turns bound to it, already implies

38. "Every activity is an element in the totality of labor. The activity of every man is no longer an end in itself to the extent that it is inserted within the framework of the totality" (Lederer, *Grundzüge der ökonomischen*

ace" within the totality of being. The meaning in this ontological place of man and is the human praxis, cannot be excluded from any sense, every genuine economic theory is explained with an ontology of man that transcends it. Every theory has at least a rough concept [Entwurf] of such, which directs its development.³⁷

8.

Understand how the concept of labor has been the economic dimension, thus undergoing a first step to examine an already mentioned fact: the

of labor" is misleading since in the field of labor has been an integral unity which later, at a certain point, is divided. Rather, historical labor has always already been partial and does not require subsequent division. Every human existence unfolds in individuality dealing only with specific objects in specific situations and its world. What individual human beings are coming (in the broadest sense, as necessities) comes from others and from a past that is not theirs in a future that is not their own. Human beings are shaped by others and in a time temporalized, every individual human being contributes to the process and temporalizing. This essential partiality is the historical communities (family, tribe, city, etc.) "object" of their world. Only they "have" the existence requires for its becoming. Every praxis is the care of, and render disposable the objective boundaries of the vital space and time of the individual human beings derive from this world and its process by laboring. The process of development of itself a process of development with others,

is according to which the economy leads its own existence and whose intensity would rise with time, has shown that labor occupies so central a position in the spiritual-ethical life that it is alone able to describe its phenomena in their actuality (p. 164). Cf. also Giese, *op.cit.*, pp. 161f. It is useless to reject his foundation of economic theory in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844 as philosophical sins of youth that were later overcome. Such a rejection is *Capital*, and is explicitly taken up in crucial places.

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

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

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

38. "Every activity is an element in the process of production based on the division of labor. The activity of every man is no longer his own activity at all, but obtains only to the extent that it is inserted within the framework of a society bound by the division of labor" (Lederer, *Grundzüge der ökonomischen Theorie* [1923], p. 41).

suchlike, and an ascription to these groups of determinate labors—in the sense of a diversity and of an ascription transmitted through a crystalized form of socio-economic development. Rather, the power that existence derives from its circumspection and foresight could determine its "status" in the world, without any longer becoming crystalized in a merely socio-economic ascription.

Now, however, the social division of labor and the "relations of production" in the various societies, decisively oppose every "essential" division of labor (i.e., a division directed toward the most authentic possibilities of human existence).³⁹ Here, we must refer to states of affairs that we cannot develop. We will deal with them, in a very general way, only to the extent that they can be accepted by any theory as a basis for discussion.

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

The realization of the division of labor in the relation of domination and servitude, which has come to a full and secure development on the socio-economic level, is the fundamental condition of every further division of

39. In his controversy with W. Jerusalem, Max Scheler does not consider the distinction between "essential" and social-economic division of labor. Cf. *Kölner Vierteljahrshefte für Sozialwissenschaft*, Vol. I (1931), n. 3, p. 36.

40. Compare, for example, Schäffle, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 326f; Schmoller, "Das Wesen der Arbeitsteilung..." in *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung...* Vol. XIV (1890), pp. 49 and 83; Herkner, "Arbeit und Arbeitsteilung," in *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik*, Vol. II, part I, p. 279; Gumplowicz, *Grundriss der Soziologie* (Innsbruck, 1926), pp. 103ff; Oppenheimer, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, part 1, pp. 307f and pp. 174ff.

labor among groups, classes, occupying the socio-economic appropriation of subjugated existence is limited by necessities of the common needs (cannot be investigated here): man becomes consolidated into a mode of human existence (servitude).

We saw that all labor demands circumspection and foresight. Praxis in production and reproduction demands which is only possible on the basis of a state within the world: a state in which needs, and has attained a certain immediacy of things. Only in such a state of being can be seen beyond what is necessarily provided. Existence must be able to really develop freely. One insight is in having seen that the production and reproduction reifies itself, stepping over into the dimension of labor cannot be separated from material object of labor becomes independent of worker, the latter is also necessarily alienated, alienated and becomes an independently of his freedom. For "things," those things become chains of himself without sacrificing his very existence to material production and the acquisition of conscious foresight its own possibilities. The "status" are no longer determined through foresight and circumspection, but the individual is already born or

Labor, which is in its very essence the totality of human existence, i.e. (necessity and freedom); is transferred a dimension: in the dimension of production. This happens when the two-dimensions of the totality of existence has become totalities of human existence: a diversity transmitted in the socio-economic sphere, burden and toil of labor falls (in objectivity) into the dimension of necessity, while at the

groups of determinate labors—in the option transmitted through a crystalized ent. Rather, the power that existence foresight could determine its "status" becoming crystalized in a merely socio-

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

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lit., Vol. I, pp. 326f; Schmoller, "Das Wesen der zgebung... Vol. XIV (1890), pp. 49 and 83; *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik*, Vol. II, part I, zie (Innsbruck, 1926), pp. 103ff; Oppenheimer, ff.

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

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

Labor, which is in its very essence and meaning related to the becoming of the totality of human existence, i.e., to praxis in its dual dimension (necessity and freedom); is transferred and becomes crystalized in the economic dimension: in the dimension of production and reproduction of necessities. This happens when the two-dimensionality of necessity and freedom within the totality of existence has become a two-dimensionality of *different* totalities of human existence: a diversity of modes of existence founded and transmitted in the socio-economic sphere. Now, for the first time, the entire burden and toil of labor falls (insofar as it is already grounded in its objectivity) into the dimension of material production and reproduction, in the praxis of necessities, while at the same time, on the existential level, the

dimension of freedom is extricated and separated from this praxis.⁴¹ The socio-economic division of labor, expressed in the fundamental relationship of domination and servitude, splinters the essential union of both dimensions of human existence and both fundamental modes of its praxis that alone can realize the full meaning of labor as the developing process of the totality of human existence, and thus cuts off labor in material production and reproduction from the positivity to which it owes its realization.⁴² The actual enduring and permanent developing process of human existence falls now completely to the praxis of material production and reproduction, which from the very beginning to the end remains in the hands of specific socio-economic strata and classes, while praxis in the dimension lying beyond this sphere appears at the same time as socio-economic appropriation and is no longer open to every existence as one's own free possibility: as something which can and must be gained through labor.

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

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

41. "The coupling of the economic zone with labor leads to an ontological distortion" (Giese, *op.cit.*, p. 293).

42. Spending time in the truly "fulfilling" dimension beyond material production and reproduction is now for the laborer limited to a small "rest period" of his person and limited to the shortest time: evenings, Sundays, etc. Through this suppression and degradation of the decisive vital becoming to mere "free time," nothing less is accomplished than a reification of this rest period as well. Compare here Giese, *op.cit.*, pp. 183f.

labor determined by necessity and by definition beyond the sphere of this realm can only consist in producers, rationally control the it under their common control, force, performing it with the le conditions most worthy and adequate remains a realm of necessity. Be powers, which is an end-in-itself, can only unfold on the basis of

43. *Kapital*, Vol. III, part 2; edited

Critique:

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Paul Sweezy

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icated and separated from this praxis.⁴¹ The or, expressed in the fundamental relationship splinters the essential union of both dimen- l both fundamental modes of its praxis that ning of labor as the developing process of the nd thus cuts off labor in material production sitivity to which it owes its realization.⁴² The at developing process of human existence falls s of material production and reproduction, g to the end remains in the hands of specific asses, while praxis in the dimension lying at the same time as socio-economic appro- n to every existence as one's own free possi- n and must be gained through labor. n that the cutting off of material production limension of "freedom" that completes and ck to these very dimensions and their praxis. illing and at the same time binding spheres, dimension" idles and devours the *totality* of free praxis. This is a process which here we place before our eyes. Even beyond material labor now loses its true meaning: it is no the actual developmental process and praxis io longer fulfill its highest possibility which is process of the totality of existence in order to Robbed of its full reality as *praxis*, labor er being *labor*: it now only accompanies labor, out solid ground). eonomic division of the totality of existence other, and the transformation of material (which, untied from the dimensions fulfilling ependent, now idle) in a praxis controlled, ese dimensions, and deriving its fulfillment making possible the restitution to existence of ee from alienation and reification, can again the free and full realization of the whole man act, the realm of freedom begins only where nic zone with labor leads to an ontological distortion" "fulfilling" dimension beyond material production and mited to a small "rest period" of his person and limited ys, etc. Through this suppression and degradation of the time," nothing less is accomplished than a reification of ere Giese, *op.cit.*, pp. 183f.

labor determined by necessity and external purposes stops. Therefore, it lies by definition beyond the sphere of actual material production . . . Freedom in this realm can only consist in that socialized men, i.e., the associated producers, rationally control their material exchange with nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being controlled by it as a blind force, performing it with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most worthy and adequate to their human nature. But this always remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins the development of human powers, which is an end-in-itself, the true realm of freedom. This, however, can only unfold on the basis of the realm of necessity."⁴³

43. *Kapital*, Vol. III, part 2; edited by Karl Kautsky (Berlin, 1929), p. 316.

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