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CHAPTER I

DIALECTICS OF THE CONCRETE TOTALITY

THE WORLD OF THE PSEUDOCONCRETE AND ITS DESTRUCTION

Dialectics is after the 'thing itself'. But the 'thing itself' does not show itself to man immediately. To grasp it calls not only for a certain effort but also for a detour. Dialectical thinking therefore distinguishes between the idea of a thing and the concept of a thing, by which it understands not only two forms and two degrees of *cognition* of reality but above all two categories of human *praxis*. Man approaches reality primarily and immediately not as an abstract cognitive subject, as a contemplating head that treats reality speculatively, but rather as an objectively and practically acting being, an historical individual who conducts his practical activity related to nature and to other people and realizes his own ends and interests within a particular complex of social relations. As such, reality stands out to man not primarily as an object of intuition, investigation, and theorizing, whose opposite and complementary pole would be an abstract cognitive subject existing outside and beyond the world, but rather as the realm of his sensory—practical activity, which forms the basis for immediate practical intuition of reality. In his practical—utilitarian treatment of things, with reality appearing as the world of means, ends, tools, needs and procuring, the 'involved' individual forms his own ideas of things and develops an entire system of appropriate intuitions for capturing and fixing the phenomenal shape of reality.

'Real existence' and phenomenal forms of reality are directly reproduced in the minds of agents of historically determined praxis as a set of ideas or as categories of 'routine thinking' (considered only out of a 'barbarian habit' to be concepts). But these phenomenal forms are diverse and often contradict the *law* of the phenomenon, the *structure* of the thing, i.e., its *essential* inner kernel and the corresponding concept. People use money and carry out the most complicated transactions with it without ever knowing, or having to know, what money is. Immediate utilitarian praxis and corresponding routine thinking thus allow people to find their way about in the

world, to feel familiar with things and to manipulate them, but it does not provide them with a *comprehension* of things and of reality. That is why Marx could have written that agents of social conditions feel at ease, as fish do in water, in the world of phenomenal forms that are alienated from their internal connections and are in such isolation absolutely senseless. They see nothing mysterious in what is through-and-through contradictory, and in their contemplation they take no exception to the inversion of the rational and the irrational. The praxis we are talking about here is the historically determined, one-sided and fragmentary praxis of individuals, based on the division of labor, the class differentiation of society and the resulting hierarchy of social status. What is formed in this praxis is both a particular material environment of the historical individual, and the spiritual atmosphere in which the superficial shape of reality comes to be fixed as the world of fictitious intimacy, familiarity and confidence within which man moves about 'naturally' and with which he has his daily dealings.

The collection of phenomena that crowd the everyday environment and the routine atmosphere of human life, and which penetrate the consciousness of acting individuals with a regularity, immediacy and self-evidence that lend them a semblance of autonomy and naturalness, constitutes the world of the *pseudoconcrete*. This world includes:

- the world of external phenomena which are played out on the surface of real essential processes;

- the world of procuring and manipulation, i.e., of man's fetishised praxis (which is not identical with the revolutionary-critical praxis of mankind);

- the world of routine ideas which are external phenomena projected into man's consciousness, a product of fetishised praxis; they are ideological forms of the movement of this praxis;

- the world of fixed objects which give the impression of being natural conditions and are not immediately recognizable as the result of man's social activity.

The world of the pseudoconcrete is the chiaroscuro of truth and deceit. It thrives in ambiguity. The phenomenon conceals the essence even as it reveals it. The essence manifests itself in the phenomenon, but only to a certain extent, partially, just in certain sides and aspects. The phenomenon indicates something other than itself and exists only thanks to its opposite. The essence is not immediately given: it is mediated by the phenomenon and thus shows itself in something other than what it is itself. The essence manifests itself in the phenomenon. Its manifestation in the phenomenon signifies its movement and proves that the essence is not inert and passive.

But the phenomenon similarly reveals the essence. Revealing the essence is the activity of the phenomenon.

The phenomenal world has its structure, its order and its laws that can be exposed and described. But the structure of the phenomenal world does not yet capture the relationship between this world and the essence. If the essence did not show itself in the phenomenal world at all, then the world of reality would be radically and fundamentally distinct from that of phenomena. The world of reality would be 'the other world' for man, as in Platonism or Christianity, and the only world accessible to him would be that of phenomena. But the phenomenal world is not something autonomous and absolute: phenomena turn into a phenomenal world while related to the essence. The phenomenon is not radically distinct from the essence, nor does the essence belong to a different order of reality. If this were the case, the phenomenon would have no internal relation to the essence; it could not reveal the essence while covering it up, their relationship would be one of mutual externality and indifference. To capture the phenomenon of a certain thing is to investigate and describe how the thing itself manifests itself in that phenomenon but also how it hides in it. Grasping the phenomenon negotiates *access* to the essence. Without the phenomenon, without this activity of manifesting and revealing, the essence itself would be beyond reach. In the world of the pseudoconcrete, the phenomenal aspect of the thing, in which the thing reveals and conceals itself, is considered to be properly the essence, and the distinction between the phenomenon and the essence *disappears*. Is thus the distinction between the phenomenon and the essence the same as between the real and the unreal, or as between two different orders of reality? Is the essence any more real than the phenomenon? Reality is the unity of the phenomenon and the essence. Consequently, the essence could be equally as unreal as the phenomenon, and vice-versa, *if* either one were isolated and in this isolation considered to be the one and only 'authentic' reality.

Thus the phenomenon is above all something that shows itself immediately, contrary to the concealed essence. But why does the 'thing itself', the structure of the thing, not show itself immediately and directly? Why must one undertake a detour and exert effort in order to grasp it? Why is the 'thing itself' concealed from immediate perception? In what way is it concealed? It cannot be concealed absolutely; for if man can at all *search* for the structure of the thing and if he wants to investigate this 'thing itself', if it is at all possible to expose the concealed essence or the structure of society, then prior to any investigation man already has to have a certain

cognizance that there exists something such as the structure of the thing, the essence of the thing, the 'thing itself', that there exists a hidden truth of things which is different from phenomena that reveal themselves immediately. Man undertakes a detour and exerts an effort in exposing truth only because he somehow assumes that there is a truth to be exposed, and because he has a certain cognizance of the 'thing itself'. But why is the structure of the thing not accessible directly and immediately? Why is a detour necessary to capture it? And, where does the detour lead to? If the phenomenon of the thing is grasped in immediate perception, rather than the 'thing itself', is it because the structure of the thing is a reality of a different order than is the phenomenon? Is it consequently a different reality altogether, one that is *behind* phenomena?

The essence, unlike phenomena, does not manifest itself to us directly, and the concealed basis of things has to be *exposed in a specific activity*. This is precisely why science and philosophy exist. If the phenomenal form and the essence of things were coterminous, science and philosophy would be superfluous.¹

Since ancient times, effort aimed at exposing the structure of things and the 'thing itself' has always been a matter for philosophy. Different *significant* philosophical trends are but so many variations of this basic problem and of solutions to it at different stages of the development of mankind. Philosophy is an *indispensable activity of mankind* because the essence of things, the structure of reality, the 'thing itself', the being of existents do not show themselves directly and immediately. In this sense, philosophy can be characterized as a systematic and critical effort directed at capturing the thing itself, at uncovering the structure of things, at exposing the being of existents.

The concept of the thing means comprehending the thing, and comprehending the thing means knowledge of the thing's structure. The most proper characteristic of cognition is its dividing the one. Dialectics does not enter cognition from without or as an afterthought, nor is it a property of cognition. Rather, cognition is dialectics itself, in one of its forms: cognition is dividing the one. In dialectical thinking, the terms 'concept' and 'abstraction' have the significance of a method that divides the one in order to intellectually reproduce the structure of the thing, i.e., to comprehend it.²

Cognition is realized as separation of the phenomenon from the essence, of the peripheral from the essential, because only such a separation can demonstrate their internal connection and thus the specific character of the

thing. In this process, the peripheral is not cast aside, it is not separated out as less real or as unreal. Instead, its character is demonstrated as being phenomenal or peripheral by proving the truth of the thing in its essence. This division of the one which is a constitutive element of philosophical cognition – *there is no cognition without division* – displays a structure analogous to that of human activity: for activity, too, is based on dividing the one.

The fact that thinking spontaneously moves in a direction counter to the character of reality, that it has an isolating and ‘paralysing’ effect, and that this spontaneous movement contains a tendency toward abstractness, is not in itself an immanent property of thinking, but rather follows from its practical function. All activity is ‘one-sided’³ because it pursues a *particular* goal, and therefore isolates some moments of reality as essential while leaving others aside. This spontaneous activity elevates certain moments important for attaining particular goals and thus cleaves a unified reality, intervenes in reality, ‘evaluates’ reality.

The spontaneous inclination of ‘praxis’ and thinking to isolate phenomena and to divide reality into what is essential and what is peripheral is *always* accompanied by an *awareness of the whole* in which and from which certain aspects have been isolated. This awareness is also spontaneous, though it is less clearly apparent to naive consciousness, and is frequently unconscious. Dim awareness of a ‘horizon of indeterminate reality’ *as a whole* is the ubiquitous *backdrop* of all activity and thinking, unconscious though it may be for naive consciousness.

Phenomena and phenomenal forms of things are spontaneously reproduced in routine thinking as reality (i.e., as reality itself) not because they are on the surface and thus closest to sensory cognition, but because the phenomenal form of things is the natural product of everyday praxis. The everyday utilitarian praxis gives rise to ‘routine thinking’ – which covers both familiarity with things and with their superficial appearance, and the technique of handling things in practice – as a form of movement and existence. But the world that exposes itself to man in his fetishised praxis, in procuring and manipulation, is not a real world, though it does have a real world’s ‘firmness’ and its ‘effectiveness’; rather, it is a ‘world of appearances’ (Marx). The idea of a thing postures as the thing itself and forms an ideological appearance but it is not a natural property of things and of reality; rather, it is the projection of certain *petrified* historical conditions into the consciousness of the subject.

Distinguishing between the idea and the concept, between the world of

appearances and that of reality, between everyday utilitarian praxis of people and the revolutionary praxis of mankind, in one phrase: 'dividing the one', is the mode by which thinking penetrates to the 'thing itself'. Dialectics is critical thinking that strives to grasp the 'thing itself' and systematically searches for a way to grasp reality. Dialectics is thus the opposite of doctrinaire systematization or romanticization of routine ideas. Thinking that wants to know reality adequately will be satisfied neither with abstract schemes of this reality nor with equally abstract ideas of it. It therefore has to *abolish** the apparent autonomy of the world of immediate everyday contacts. Such thinking, which abolishes the pseudoconcrete in order to reach the concrete, is also a process that exposes a real world under the world of appearances, the law of the phenomenon behind the appearance of the phenomenon, real internal movement behind the visible movement, the essence behind the phenomenon.⁴ What lends these phenomena a pseudoconcrete character is not their existence as such but the apparent autonomy of their existence. In destroying the pseudoconcrete, dialectical thinking does not deny the existence or the objective character of these phenomena, but rather abolishes their fictitious independence by demonstrating their mediatedness, and counters their claim to autonomy with proving their derivative character.

Dialectics does not consider fixed artifacts, formations and objects, the entire complex of both the material world of things and that of ideas and of routine thinking, to be something original and autonomous. It does not accept them in their ready-made form, but subjects them to investigation in which the reified forms of the objective and the ideal worlds dissolve, lose their fixed and natural character and their fictitious originality, and show up as derivative and mediated phenomena, as sediments and artifacts of the social praxis of mankind.⁵

Uncritical reflective thinking⁶ will immediately, i.e., with no dialectical analysis, causally relate fixed ideas with equally fixed conditions, and will present this manner of 'barbarian thinking' as a 'materialist' analysis of ideas. Since people have been aware of their own time (i.e., they have experienced, evaluated, criticised and grasped it) in categories of 'the collier's faith' or of 'petit-bourgeois scepticism', the doctrinaire believes that he has 'scientifically' analysed these ideas once he identifies their corresponding economic, social, or class equivalents. This 'materialization' of course accomplishes nothing but a double mystification: the inversion of

*See note on p. 99.

the world of appearances (of fixed ideas) is anchored in an inverted (reified) materiality. Marxist theory has to *initiate* the analysis by asking *why* were people aware of their own time precisely in these categories, and *what kind of a time* do people find reflected in them. With this question, the materialist prepares the ground for destroying the pseudoconcrete *both* of ideas *and* of conditions, *whereupon* he can suggest a rational explanation of the internal connection between the times and the ideas.

The destruction of the pseudoconcrete, the dialectical—critical method of thinking that dissolves fetishised artifacts both of the world of things and of that of ideas, *in order* to penetrate to their reality, is of course only another aspect of dialectics as a *revolutionary* method of *transforming reality*. *To interpret the world critically, the interpretation itself must be grounded in revolutionary praxis*. We shall see later on that reality can be transformed in a *revolutionary* way only because, and only insofar as, we ourselves form reality, and know that reality is formed by us. In this respect, the difference between natural reality and socio-human reality is this, that though man can change and transform nature, he can change socio-human reality *in a revolutionary way*; but he can do so only because he forms *this* reality himself.

The real world, concealed by the pseudoconcrete, and yet manifesting itself in it, is neither a world of real conditions opposed to unreal ones, nor a world of transcendence opposed to a subjective illusion, but a world of human praxis. It is the comprehension of socio-human reality as the *unity* of production and products, of subject and object, of genesis and structure. The real world is thus not the world of fixed 'real' objects leading a transcendental existence behind their fetishised forms, as in some naturalistic parallel to Platonic ideas; rather, it is a world in which things, meanings and relations are conceived as *products* of social man, with man himself exposed as the real subject of the social world. The world of reality is not a secularized image of paradise, of a ready-made and timeless state, but is a process in which mankind and the individual *realize* their truth, i.e., humanize man. The world of reality, unlike the world of the pseudoconcrete, is a world of *realizing* truth, a world in which truth is not given and preordained, and as such copied, ready-made and immutable, in human consciousness, but rather a world in which truth *happens*. This is why human history can be the story of truth and the happening of truth. Destroying the pseudoconcrete means that truth is neither unattainable, nor attainable once and for all time, but that truth itself happens, i.e., develops and realizes itself.

The pseudoconcrete is thus destroyed in the following ways: (1) by the revolutionary—critical praxis of mankind which is identical with the humanization of man, with social revolutions as its key stages; (2) by dialectical thinking which dissolves the fetishised world of appearances in order to penetrate to reality and to the 'thing itself'; (3) by the realization of truth and the forming of human reality in an ontogenetic process; since the world of truth is also the own individual creation of every human individual as a social being. Every individual has to appropriate his own culture and lead his own life *by himself and non-vicariously*.

Destroying the pseudoconcrete is thus not like tearing down a curtain to discover a ready-made and given reality, existing independently of man's activity hiding behind it. The pseudoconcrete is precisely the autonomous existence of man's *products* and the reduction of man to the level of utilitarian praxis. Destroying the pseudoconcrete is the process of forming a concrete reality and of seeing reality in its concreteness. Idealist trends have either absolutized the subject, and deal with the problem of how to look at reality so that it be concrete and beautiful, or they have absolutized the object, and believe that the more perfectly the subject is eliminated from reality, the more real reality is. The materialist destruction of the pseudoconcrete by contrast results in the liberation of the 'subject' (i.e., in concrete *seeing* of reality as opposed to fetishist 'intuiting' of it) merging with the liberation of the 'object' (with the forming of a human environment in terms of humanly transparent and rational conditions), because the social reality of people forms itself as a dialectical unity of the subject and the object.

The call 'ad fontes' that one periodically hears as a reaction *against* the most diverse manifestations of the pseudoconcrete, as well as the positivist methodological rule of 'presuppositionlessness', have their basis and substantiation in the materialist destruction of the pseudoconcrete. The return to 'the sources' takes on two entirely different forms, though. At times it appears as a humanist, scholarly, learned critique of sources, as an investigation of archives and of antiquities, from which true reality is to be derived. But in its more profound and more important form, which even learned scholasticism finds barbaric (as testified by reactions to Shakespeare and Rousseau), the call 'ad fontes' signifies a *critique of civilization and culture*, a romantic or a revolutionary attempt to discover productive activity behind products and artifacts, to find the 'real reality' of the concrete man behind the reified reality of reigning culture, to dig out the authentic subject of history from under the sediment of fixed conventions.

THE SPIRITUAL AND INTELLECTUAL REPRODUCTION OF REALITY

Because things do not show man immediately what they are, and because man does not have the ability to immediately intuit things in their essence, mankind arrives at the cognition of things and of their structure via a detour. Precisely because this detour is the *only* negotiable path to truth, every now and then will mankind attempt to spare itself the trouble of the long journey and seek to intuit the essence of things *directly* (mysticism is man's impatience in the search for truth). But man is also in danger of losing his way on this detour, or of getting stuck halfway.

'Self-evidence,' far from being the evidence and clarity of the thing itself, is the opacity of the idea of the thing. What is natural shows up as unnatural. Man has to exert effort to emerge from his 'state of nature' and to become a man (man *works himself up* to being a man) and to recognize reality for what it is. Great philosophers of all times and tendencies, Plato with his myth of the cave, Bacon with his image of idols, Spinoza, Hegel, Husserl and Marx, have all correctly characterized cognition as overcoming that which is natural, as supreme activity and 'use of force'. The dialectic of activity and passivity in human cognition is manifest particularly in the fact that in order to know things in themselves, man has to transform them into things for himself; to know things as they are independently of him, he has to subject them to his praxis; to find out how they are without his interference he has to interfere with them. Cognition is not contemplation. Contemplation of the world is based on the results of human praxis. Man knows reality only insofar as he *forms* a human *reality* and acts primordially as a practical being.

In order to come close to the thing and its structure, and to find access to it, some distance is imperative. It is well known how *difficult* it is to deal scientifically with current events, whereas analysing events past is relatively easier, for reality itself has performed a certain elimination or a 'critique'. Science has to replicate this natural course of history *artificially* and experimentally. What is the basis of this experiment? It is the appropriate and substantiated *distance* of science, from which things and events are seen adequately and without distortion. (The importance of this thought experiment which substitutes for real historical distance has been emphasized by Schiller, in the context of drama.)

The structure of the thing, that is, the thing itself, can be grasped neither immediately, nor by contemplation or mere reflection, but only by a certain *activity*. It is impossible to penetrate to the 'thing itself' or to answer the question, what the 'thing itself' is, without analysing the activity through

which the thing is grasped. Such an analysis has to cover also the problem of *creating* this very activity which negotiates access to the 'thing itself'. These activities are different kinds or modes of human *appropriation* of the world. Problems elaborated in phenomenology under such descriptions as 'intentionality toward something', 'intention of meaning toward something', or as various 'modes of perception' have been interpreted on a materialist basis by Marx, as various kinds of human *appropriation* of the world: the spiritual-practical, theoretical, artistic, religious, but also the mathematical, physical, etc. One cannot appropriate mathematics, and thus grasp it, with an intentionality that is not appropriate for mathematical reality, e.g. with a religious experience or with artistic perception. Man lives in several worlds, but to each of them there is a different key. One cannot move from one world to another without the right key, i.e. without changing the intentionality and the mode of appropriating reality. In modern philosophy and modern science, which have been permanently enriched by the concept of praxis, *cognition* represents one mode of man's *appropriating* the world; and *every* such mode of appropriation has two constitutive elements, namely its subjective and its objective *sense*. What is the intentionality, what is the view, the *sense* that man has to develop, to 'rig up', in order to grasp and uncover the *objective sense* of the thing? The process of capturing and exposing the *sense* of the thing amounts at the same time to forming the appropriate 'sense' in man with which he can comprehend the sense of the thing. The *objective sense* of the thing can be grasped if man cultivates the *appropriate sense*. These senses with which man uncovers both reality and the sense of reality are themselves an historical—social product.⁷

All degrees of human cognition, sensory or rational, as well as all modes of appropriating reality, are activities based on the objective praxis of mankind, and are consequently in some degree connected with and in some way mediated by all other modes. Man always perceives *more* than what he sees and hears immediately. The building that I see in front of me I perceive primordially and immediately as an apartment house, a factory or as an historical monument, and this immediate sensory perception is realized in a certain mood which manifests itself as interest, indifference, astonishment, revulsion, etc. In the same way, the din I hear, I perceive first of all as the din of an approaching or departing plane, and I can tell by the very sound whether it is a 'copter, jet, fighter or transport plane, etc. Thus in a certain way, *all* of my knowledge and culture participates in my hearing and seeing, as do all my experiences, current or those buried in oblivion to be recovered in certain situations, and all my thinking and judgement, although none of

this manifests itself in concrete acts of perceiving and experiencing in any explicitly predicative form. Thus in the course of appropriating the world spiritually—practically, which is the basis for all other modes of appropriation—the theoretical, artistic, etc.—reality is perceived as an *undifferentiated whole of existents and of meanings*, and it is implicitly grasped in a unity of statements of fact and those of value. It takes abstraction and thematization, a *project*, to select out of this full and inexhaustible world of reality certain areas, aspects and spheres, which naive naturalism and positivism would then consider to be the *only* true ones and the only reality, while suppressing the ‘rest’ as sheer subjectivity. The physicalist image presented by positivism impoverishes the human world, and its absolute exclusiveness deforms reality, because it reduces the real world to but *one* dimension and aspect, to the dimension of extensity and of quantitative relations. In addition, it cleaves the human world, when it declares the world of physicalism, the world of idealised real values, of extensity, quantity, mensuration and geometric shapes to be the only reality, while calling man’s everyday world a fiction.

In the world of physicalism that modern positivism considers to be the only reality, man can exist only in a particular abstract activity, i.e. as a physicist, statistician, mathematician, or a linguist, but not in all of his potentialities, not as a whole man. The physical world, a thematized mode of cognition of the physical reality, is only one of the possible images of the world, and expresses certain essential properties and aspects of objective reality. Apart from the physical world there exist other worlds, too, and equally *justified* ones: e.g., the artistic, the biological, etc.; in other words, reality is *not exhausted* in the physical picture of the world. Positivist physicalism has substituted a certain *image* of reality for *reality* itself and has promoted a certain mode of appropriating the world as the only true one. Thereby it denied, first, the inexhaustibility of the objective world and its irreducibility to knowledge, which is one of the fundamental theses of materialism, and, second, it impoverished the human world by reducing the wealth of human subjectivity, formed *historically* through the objective praxis of mankind, to one single mode of appropriating reality.

Every particular thing upon which man focuses his view, attention, action or evaluation, emerges from a certain whole which envelops it and which man perceives as an indistinct background or as a dimly intuited imaginary context. How does man perceive individual things? As absolutely isolated and unique, perhaps? Actually, he *always* perceives them in a horizon of a certain *whole*, which is usually unexpressed and not perceived

explicitly. Whatever man perceives, observes, works on, is a part of a whole, and it is precisely this not explicitly perceived whole which is the light that illuminates and reveals the very uniqueness and significance of the unique thing under observation. Human consciousness therefore has to be investigated both in its theoretical—predicative form, of explicit, substantiated rational and theoretical cognition, and in its pre-predicative, holistically intuitive form. Consciousness is the unity of both forms which intermingle and influence one another, because they are based, united, on objective praxis and on the spiritual—practical reproduction of reality. Denying or invalidating the first form leads to irrationalism and to assorted varieties of ‘vegetative thinking’, whereas denying or underrating the second form leads to rationalism, positivism and scientism which in their one-sidedness inexorably produce irrationality as their own complement.

Yet why does theoretical thinking turn into a ‘universal medium’ through which everything that had been experienced in an experience, intuited in an intuition, imagined in an idea, performed in an action and felt in a feeling has to *once again* make its passage? Why is the reality which man appropriates above all spiritually—practically, and on this basis also artistically, religiously, etc., the reality that man experiences, evaluates, and works on, why is it appropriated *once again* theoretically? A certain ‘privileged character’ of the theoretical sphere over all others can be demonstrated in the fact that anything can become a topic for theory and subjected to explicit analytical investigation: aside from art there is a theory of art, aside from sport there is a theory of sport, aside from praxis a theory of praxis. What is this ‘privileged character’ about? Does perhaps the truth of art lie in the theory of art, and the truth of praxis in the theory of praxis? Does the impact of art follow from the theory of art and the impact of praxis from its own particular theory? These are indeed the assumptions of every caricature and of every formalist—bureaucratic concept of theory. Theory, however, determines neither the truth nor the impact of this or that non-theoretical kind of appropriating reality, but represents rather the *explicitly reproduced* comprehension of the corresponding kind of appropriating, whose intensity, truthfulness, etc. it influences in its own turn.

Materialist epistemology, as the spiritual reproduction of society, captures the *two-fold* character of consciousness which both positivism and idealism miss. Human consciousness is at once a ‘reflection’ and a ‘project’, it registers as well as constructs and plans, it both reflects and anticipates, is both receptive and active. To let the ‘thing itself’ express itself, to add nothing and just let things be as they are — this requires a special activity.

Epistemology as the spiritual reproduction of society emphasizes the active character of cognition on *all* levels. Elementary sensory knowledge is not the result of passive perception but of perceptual activity. Yet, as incidentally follows from the central tenet of this work, every epistemology is implicitly or explicitly based on a certain theory of reality, and presupposes a certain concept of reality. Materialist epistemology, as the intellectual reproduction of society, is based on a conception of reality different from that of the method of reduction. Reduction presupposes a rigid substance and immutable, further irreducible elements, to which the diversity and variety of phenomena can in the last analysis be reduced. The phenomenon is considered explained when reduced to its essence, to a general law, to an abstract principle. How untenable reductionism is for social reality has been demonstrated by a well-known observation: Franz Kafka is a petit-bourgeois intellectual; yet not every petit-bourgeois intellectual is a Franz Kafka. The method of reductionism subsumes the unique under the generally abstract, and posits two unmediated poles: abstract individuality on the one end and abstract generality on the other.

Spinozism and physicalism are the two most wide-spread varieties of the reductionist method which translates the wealth of reality into something basic and elementary. All the richness of the world is jettisoned into the abyss of an immutable substance. For Spinoza, this method is just another side of moral asceticism which proves that all wealth is actually non-wealth, that everything concrete and unique is illusory. There is a certain intellectual tradition that would consider Marx's theory to be dynamized Spinozism; as though Spinoza's immutable substance were set in motion. In this form, modern materialism would be of course merely a variation on metaphysics. Modern materialism has not dynamised an immutable substance, but has posited the 'dynamics' and the dialectics of being as the 'substance'. Coming to know the substance thus does not amount to reducing the 'phenomenon' to a dynamized substance, i.e. to something concealed behind phenomena as something independent of them; rather, it is cognition of the laws of movement of the thing itself. The very *movement of the thing, or the thing in motion*, is the 'substance'. The movement of the thing forms particular phases, forms and aspects that cannot be comprehended by reducing them to a substance, but that are comprehensible as an explication of the 'thing itself'. Religion can be materialistically comprehended not by finding the earthly kernel of religious artifacts or by reducing them to material conditions, but only as an inverted and mystified activity of man, the objective subject. The 'substance' of man is objective activity (praxis), not some dynamized substance in man.

Reductionism is the method of 'nothing but'. The wealth of the world is 'nothing but' a substance, immutable or dynamized. Therefore reductionism cannot rationally explain *new* phenomena, or qualitative development. It will reduce anything new to conditions and prerequisites; the new is 'nothing but' — the old.⁸

If the entire richness of man as a social being were reduced to the statement that the essence of man is the production of tools, and if the entire social reality were in the last analysis determined by economics, *in the sense of the economic factor*, the following question would arise: Why does this factor have to be disguised, why does it realize itself in forms that are innately alien to it, such as imagination and poetry?⁹

How can the new be comprehended? According to the above conception, by reducing it to the old, to conditions and prerequisites. New appears here as something external, as a supplement to material reality. Matter is in motion but does not have the property of negativity.¹⁰ Only such a concept of matter that in matter itself discovers negativity, that is, the potentiality to produce new qualities and higher stages of development, can materialistically explain the new as a property of the material world. Once matter is grasped as negativity, scientific explanation no longer amounts to reduction, to reducing the new to prerequisites, to reducing concrete phenomena to an abstract base, and it instead becomes the *explication of phenomena*. Reality is explained not by reducing it to something other than what it is itself, but by having it explicate itself, in unfolding and illuminating its phases and aspects of its movement.¹¹

The starting point of the investigation must be formally identical with the result. The identity of this starting point must be maintained throughout the whole course of thinking, as the only guarantee that thinking will not start its journey with Virginia Woolf and end it with the Big Bad Wolf. But the sense of the investigation is in this, that in a spiral movement, it reaches a result which had not been known at the outset, and thus that while the starting point and the result are formally identical, thinking does in the end arrive at something different in content than what it had started with. Thinking progresses from a vibrant, chaotic, immediate idea of the whole toward concepts, to abstract conceptual determinations, and in summing them up it returns to the starting point which no longer is an uncomprehended though vibrant whole of immediate perception, but a richly differentiated and comprehended whole of the concept. The journey from the 'chaotic idea of the whole' to the 'rich totality of many determinations and relations' is identical with comprehending reality. The whole is not

cognizable by man immediately, though it is given immediately to his senses as the idea, the intuition, the experience. The whole that is immediately accessible to man is a chaotic and opaque whole. A detour is necessary in order to know and comprehend this whole, to clarify and explicate it: the concrete is comprehensible by way of the abstract, the whole by way of its parts. Precisely because the journey of truth is roundabout – *der Weg der Wahrheit ist Umweg* – man can lose his way or get stuck halfway.

The method of ascending from the abstract to the concrete is a method of *thinking*, in other words, it is a movement realized in the concepts and the life-element of abstraction. Ascending from the abstract to the concrete is not a transition from one level (the sensory) to another (the rational); it is rather movement in thinking and the motion of thought. If thinking is to ascend from the abstract to the concrete, it has to move in its own life-element, i.e. on an abstract level which is the negation of sensory immediacy, clarity and concreteness. Ascending from the abstract to the concrete is a movement for which every beginning is abstract and whose dialectics consists of transcending this abstractness. Ascending from the abstract to the concrete is therefore generally a movement from the part to the whole and from the whole to its parts, from the phenomenon to the essence and from the essence to the phenomenon, from totality to contradiction and from contradiction to totality, from the object to the subject and from the subject to the object. Ascending from the abstract to the concrete, which amounts to materialist epistemology, is the dialectics of the concrete totality in which reality is intellectually reproduced *on all levels and in all dimensions*. The process of thinking not only transforms the chaotic whole of ideas into a clear whole of concepts; but in this process, the whole itself is outlined, determined and comprehended, too.

As we know, Marx distinguished between the method of investigation and that of exposition. Nevertheless, the method of investigation is frequently passed over as something familiar, whereas the method of exposition is taken merely for a form of presentation. It is ignored that precisely this method renders the phenomenon transparent, rational and comprehensible. The method of investigation involves three stages:

- (1) Appropriating the material in detail, mastering it to the last historically accessible detail.
- (2) Analysing its different forms of development.
- (3) Tracing out their internal connections, i.e. determining the unity of different forms in the development of the material.^{1 2}

Without mastering this method of *investigation*, any dialectics is but barren speculation.

That with which science *initiates* its exposition is already the *result* of research and of a critical-scientific appropriation of the subject-matter. The beginning of the presentation is a *mediated* beginning which like a germ contains the construction of the whole work. But precisely what can and should serve as *the beginning of the exposition*, i.e. of the scientific unfolding (explication) of the problematic, is not known at *the beginning of the investigation*. The beginning of the exposition and the beginning of the investigation are two different things. The beginning of the investigation is random and arbitrary, the beginning of the exposition is necessary.

Marx's *Capital* begins – and this fact has since become trivial – by an analysis of a commodity. But the knowledge that a commodity is a cell of the capitalist society, an abstract beginning whose unfolding will reproduce the whole internal structure of the capitalist society – this origin of the *exposition* results from an investigation, from a scientific appropriation of the subject-matter. A commodity is an 'absolute reality' for the capitalist society because it is the unity of all determinations, the germ of all contradictions, and as such can be characterized in Hegelian terms as the unity of being and not-being, of the differentiated and the undifferentiated, of identity and non-identity. All other determinations are but richer definitions and concretizations of this 'absolute' of the capitalist society. The dialectics of the exposition or of the explication may not overshadow the central problem: how does science arrive at the *necessary origin of the presentation*, i.e. of the explication? Not distinguishing or indeed confusing the beginning of the investigation with that of the exposition (explication) in interpreting Marx's work becomes a source of the trivial and of the ridiculous. The beginning of the investigation is arbitrary but the presentation is an *explication of the thing* precisely because it presents the thing in its *necessary internal* development and unfolding. Here, the true beginning is the necessary beginning, and other determinations of necessity stem from it. Without a necessary beginning, the exposition is no unfolding, no explication, but mere eclectic accumulation or skipping from one thing to another, or finally, it is not the necessary internal unfolding of the *thing itself* but only an unfolding of the reflection of the thing, of the contemplation of the thing, which in relation to the thing itself is an external and arbitrary matter. The method of explication is no evolutionist unravelling, but rather the unfolding, exposing and 'complicating' of contradictions, the unfolding of the thing by way of contradictions.

Explication is a method that proves the unfolding of the thing to be a *necessary transformation* of the abstract into the concrete. Ignorance of the method of dialectical explication based on comprehending reality as a concrete totality leads either to subsuming the concrete under the abstract, or to skipping intermediate links and to creating forced abstractions.

Materialist dialectics as a method of scientific clarification of the socio-human reality thus is not a search for the earthly kernel of spiritual artifacts (as Feuerbach's reductionist, Spinozist materialism would have it), nor does it assign cultural phenomena to their economic equivalents (as Plekhanov had taught, in the same Spinozist tradition), or reduce culture to the economic factor. *Dialectics is not a method of reduction, but a method of spiritual and intellectual reproduction of society*, a method of unfolding and explicating social phenomena on the basis of the objective activity of the historical man.

CONCRETE TOTALITY

The category of totality, anticipated in modern thinking especially by Spinoza with his *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, has been elaborated in German classical philosophy as a central concept for polemically distinguishing dialectics from metaphysics. The standpoint of totality, which grasps reality in its internal laws and uncovers necessary internal connections under superficial and haphazard phenomena, is juxtaposed against the standpoint of empiricism that dwells on such haphazard phenomena and cannot arrive at a comprehension of the development of reality. By the standpoint of totality we understand the dialectics of lawfulness and randomness, of parts and the whole, of products and producing, etc. Marx¹³ adopted this dialectical concept, scoured it of its ideological mystifications and turned its *new* form into one of the central concepts of *materialist dialectics*.

But a strange fate befalls central concepts of philosophy, concepts which expose essential aspects of reality. They *always* cease to be the exclusive property of the philosophy which first employed and substantiated them, and they gradually move into the public domain. As a concept expands, as it becomes accepted and achieves general recognition, it undergoes a metamorphosis. The category of totality has also been well received and broadly recognized in the twentieth century, but it is in constant danger of being grasped one-sidedly, of turning into its very opposite and ceasing to be a *dialectical* concept. The main modification of the concept of totality has

been its reduction to a *methodological* precept, a methodological rule for *investigating* reality. This degeneration has resulted in two ultimate trivialities: that everything is connected with everything else, and that the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

In materialist philosophy, the category of concrete totality answers first and foremost the question, *what is reality*. Only secondarily, and only after having materialistically answered the first question, can it be an epistemological principle and a methodological precept. Idealist trends of the 20th century have abolished the three-dimensionality of totality as a methodological principle and have reduced it to a single dimension — the relation of the whole to its parts.¹⁴ In particular, though, they have radically severed totality as a methodological precept and an epistemological principle of the *cognition* of reality from the materialist conception for which *reality itself* is a concrete totality. Thus severed, totality can no longer be substantiated as a coherent methodological principle. It will instead be interpreted idealistically and its content will be impoverished.

Cognition of reality, its mode and its possibility, depend in the last analysis on an explicit or implicit conception of reality. The question, how can reality be known, is always preceded by a more fundamental question: What is reality?

What is reality, indeed? If it were only a sum of facts, of the simplest and further irreducible elements, then it would follow that, first, concreteness is the sum of *all* facts, and that, second, reality in its concreteness is principally unknowable because to every phenomenon one can array further facets and aspects, further forgotten or as yet undiscovered facts, and by this *infinite arraying* prove the abstract and inconcrete character of cognition. 'All knowledge, whether intuitive or discursive', notes a leading contemporary opponent of the philosophy of concrete totality, 'must be of abstract aspects, and we can never grasp the 'concrete structure of [social] reality itself'.¹⁵

There is a principal difference between the opinion that considers reality to be a concrete totality, i.e. a structural, evolving, self-forming whole, and the position that human cognition can, or cannot, achieve a 'totality' of aspects and facts, i.e. of *all* properties, things, relations and processes of reality. The second position takes totality as a sum of all facts. Since human cognition never can, in principle, encompass all facts, for additional facts and aspects can always turn up, this position considers the standpoint of concreteness or totality to be mysticism.¹⁶ Totality indeed does not signify *all facts*. Totality signifies reality as a structured dialectical whole,

within which and from which *any particular* fact (or any group or set of facts) can be rationally comprehended. The accumulation of all facts would not yet amount to the cognition of reality, and neither would all accumulated facts amount to a totality. Facts are the cognition of reality only provided they are comprehended as facts and as structural parts of a dialectical whole, i.e. not as immutable, further irreducible atoms which, agglomerated, compose reality. The concrete, *that is*, totality, is thus not equal to all the facts, to a sum of facts or to the accumulation of all aspects, things and relations, for this set lacks the most important feature – totality and concreteness. Without comprehending *what* facts signify, i.e. without comprehending that *reality* is a concrete totality which for the purposes of knowing individual facts or sets of facts *turns into* a structure of meanings, cognition of the concrete reality itself amounts to no more than mysticism or to a thing in itself unknowable.

The dialectics of the concrete totality is not a method that would naively aspire to know all aspects of reality exhaustively and to present a 'total' image of reality, with all its infinite aspects and properties. Concrete totality is not a method for capturing and describing *all* aspects, features, properties, relations and processes of reality. Rather, it is a theory of reality as a concrete totality. This conception of reality, of reality as concreteness, as a whole that is structured (and thus is not chaotic), that evolves (and thus is not immutable and given once and for all), and that is in the process of forming (and thus is not ready-made in its whole, with only its parts, or their ordering, subject to change), has certain methodological implications that will become a heuristic guide and an epistemological principle for the study, description, comprehension, interpretation and evaluation of certain thematic sections of reality, be it physics or literary criticism, biology or political economy, theoretical problems of mathematics or practical issues of organizing human life and social conditions.

In modern times, man's thinking has been leading to a dialectics of cognition, to a dialectical concept of cognition, which manifests itself especially in the dialectical relation of the absolute and the relative truth, the rational and the empirical, the abstract and the concrete, the premise and the conclusion, the assumption and the proof, etc. It has also, however, been leading to a comprehension of the dialectics of objective reality itself. The possibilities of creating a unified science and a unified concept of science are based on the exposition of a more profound unity of objective reality. The development of science in the 20th century has been noteworthy in that the more specialized and differentiated it becomes, and

the more new areas it uncovers and describes, the more clearly evident is the *internal* material unity of most diverse and distant areas. This in turn leads to a fresh questioning of the relationships of mechanism and organism, of causality and teleology, etc., and thus also of the *unity of the world*. The differentiation of science at one point seemed to jeopardize the unity of science. It contained the danger of parcelling out the world, nature and matter into independent, isolated units, and of transforming scientists into isolated pilgrims in their own disciplines, each working out of context and deprived of means of communication. In fact, though, it has led to results and consequences which *actually* further a more profound exposition and cognition of the *unity* of reality. This profound comprehension of the unity of reality has its counterpart in an equally profound comprehension of the *specificity* of various areas and phenomena as well. In sharp contradiction to the romantic disdain for natural sciences and technology, it was precisely modern technology, cybernetics, physics and biology that have highlighted new potential for the development of humanism and for investigating that which is specifically human.

Attempts to create a new unified science stem from finding that the structure of reality itself is dialectical. The existence of structural similarities in areas that are quite diverse and internally quite different is based on the fact that all areas of objective reality are systems, i.e. complexes of interdependent elements.

The parallel development of different scientific disciplines, especially of biology, physics, chemistry, cybernetics and psychology, highlights the problem of organization, structure, wholeness, dynamic interaction, and leads to the recognition that the study of isolated parts and processes is insufficient. The main problem is 'organizing relations that result from dynamic interaction and make the behavior of parts different, when studied in isolation or within the whole'.¹⁷ Structural similarities form a starting point for a more profound investigation of the *specificity* of phenomena. Positivism has conducted a grandiose purification of philosophy from remnants of the *theological* conception of reality, as a hierarchy of degrees of perfection. As the ultimate leveler it has reduced all reality to physical reality. The one-sidedness of the scientific conception of philosophy should not overshadow the creditable destructive and demystifying role of modern positivism. Hierarchizing reality on a non-theological principle is possible only on the basis of degrees of *complexity* of structure and of forms of movement of reality itself. Hierarchizing systems on the basis of the complexity of their internal structure fruitfully continues in the tradition of

Enlightenment and in the heritage of Hegel who had also examined reality (which he conceived as a system) on this basis, describing internal structure in terms of mechanism, chemism and organism. But only the dialectical conception of the ontological and gnoseological aspects of structure and system provides a fruitful solution and avoids the extremes of mathematical formalism on the one side and of metaphysical ontologism on the other side. Structural similarities of various forms of human relations (language, economics, kinship patterns, etc.) can lead to a more profound understanding and explanation of social reality only as long as both the *structural similarities* and the *specificity* of these phenomena are respected.

The dialectical conception of the relationship between ontology and gnoseology allows one to detect the disparity and poor fit between the logical structure (model), used to interpret reality or some area of it, and the structure of this reality itself. A certain model, structurally of a 'lower order' than the corresponding area of reality, can interpret this more complex reality only approximately; the model can become the first approximation of an adequate description and interpretation. Beyond the limits of this first approximation, the interpretation is false. The concept of mechanism will, for example, explain the mechanism of a timepiece, the mechanism of memory, and the mechanism of social life (the state, social relations, etc.). But *only* in the first instance will the concept of mechanism exhaust the essence of the phenomenon, and adequately explain it; as for the other two phenomena, this model will explain only *certain* facets and aspects, or a certain fetishised form of them, or perhaps it will offer a first approximation and a potential way of conceptually grasping them. These phenomena are instances of a more complex reality whose adequate description and interpretation calls for structurally adequate logical categories (models).

It is important that contemporary philosophy know how to pick out the *real* central issues and the content of concepts introduced in the varied, unclear and frequently mystifying terminology of different philosophical schools and tendencies. It should examine whether classical concepts of materialist philosophy, e.g. totality, are not more suitable for conceptually grasping problems of contemporary science described in terms of structure and system. Both of these concepts might be implied in the concept of concrete totality.

From this perspective one might also criticize the inconsistencies and the biases of those philosophical tendencies which reflect in a certain way the spontaneous genesis of dialectics from twentieth century science (Lenin).

Such is the philosophy of the Swiss thinker Gonseth. Gonseth emphasizes the dialectical character of human cognition but his fear of metaphysics prevents him from satisfactorily establishing whether or not the objective reality that human thinking comes to know is itself dialectical. According to Gonseth, human cognition arrives at different horizons or images of reality but never reaches the 'ultimate' reality of things. If he meant that reality cannot be exhausted by human cognition, and that it is an absolute totality, whereas at every stage of its development mankind reaches only a certain relative totality, i.e. captures reality only to a certain degree, we could agree with Gonseth. Some of his formulations have, however, an explicitly relativistic character. Man's cognition has apparently nothing to do with reality itself but only with certain horizons or images of reality. These are historically variable but they never capture the fundamental, 'ultimate' structure of reality. Reality thus evaporates and man is left only with its image. Gonseth improperly confuses the ontological question and the gnoseological one, the question of objective truth and the dialectic of absolute and relative truth, as evident e.g. from the following clear formulation: 'The natural world is such, and we are such, that reality is not given to us in complete cognition [which is correct], in its essence [which is incorrect]'.¹⁸ Cognition that is severed from nature, matter and objective reality cannot but fall into a degree of relativism, for it is never more than the cognition or expression of images or horizons of reality, and cannot formulate or recognize how objective reality itself comes to be known through these horizons or images.

The methodological principle for dialectically investigating objective reality is the standpoint of concrete totality. This implies that every phenomenon can be conceived as a moment of a whole. A social phenomenon is an historical fact to the extent to which it is studied as a moment of a certain whole, that is, to the extent to which it fulfils that *two-fold* role which makes it an historical fact in the first place: the role of defining itself and of defining the whole; of being both the producer and the product; of determining and being determined; of exposing while being decoded; of acquiring proper meaning while conveying the sense of something else. This interconnectedness and mediatedness of the parts and the whole also signifies that isolated facts are abstractions, artificially uprooted moments of a whole which become concrete and true only when set in the respective whole. Similarly, a whole whose moments have not been differentiated and determined is merely an abstract, empty whole.

The distinction between systematic-additive cognition and dialectical

cognition is essentially the distinction between two different conceptions of reality. If reality were a sum of facts, then human cognition could amount only to abstract, systematic-analytic cognition of abstract parts of reality, whereas the whole of reality would remain unknowable. 'The object of scientific inquiry', says Hayek in his polemic with Marxism, 'is never the totality of all observable phenomena in a given time and space, but always only certain selected aspects of it . . . The human spirit can never encompass the 'whole' in the sense of all different aspects of the real situation'.¹⁹

Precisely because reality is a structured, evolving, and self-forming whole, the cognition of a fact or of a set of facts is the cognition of their place in the totality of this reality. In distinction from the summative-systematic cognition of rationalism and empiricism which starts from secure premises and proceeds systematically to array additional facts, dialectical thinking assumes that human cognition proceeds in a spiral movement in which *any* beginning is abstract and relative. If reality is a dialectical, structured whole, then concrete cognition of reality does not amount to systematically arraying facts with facts and findings with findings; rather, it is a process of *concretization* which proceeds from the whole to its parts and from the parts to the whole, from phenomena to the essence and from the essence to phenomena, from totality to contradictions and from contradictions to totality. It arrives at concreteness precisely in this spiral process of totalization in which all concepts move *with respect to one another*, and mutually illuminate one another. Neither does further progress of dialectical cognition leave individual concepts untouched; such cognition is not a summative systematization of concepts erected upon an immutable basis, constructed once and for all, but is rather a spiral process of interpenetration and mutual illumination of concepts, a process of dialectical, quantitative—qualitative, regressive—progressive totalization that transcends abstractness (one-sidedness and isolation). A dialectical conception of totality means that the parts not only internally interact and interconnect both among themselves and with the whole, but also that the whole cannot be petrified in an abstraction superior to the facts, because precisely in the interaction of its parts does the whole *form* itself as a whole.

Opinions as to whether concreteness as the cognition of all facts is knowable or not are based on the rationalist—empiricist idea that cognition proceeds by the analytic—summative method. This idea is in turn based on the atomist idea of reality as a sum of things, processes and facts. Dialectical thinking, by contrast, grasps and depicts reality as a whole that is not *only* a sum of relations, facts and processes, but is also the very *process of forming*

*them**, their structure and their genesis. The *process of forming* the whole and of forming a unity, the unity of contradictions and its genesis, all belong to the dialectical whole. Heraclitus expressed the dialectical concept of reality in a great metaphor of the cosmos as a fire kindled and quenched according to rule, and he especially emphasized the *negativity* of reality: he described fire as 'need and satiety'.²⁰

Three basic concepts of the whole, or totality, have appeared in the history of philosophical thinking, each based on a particular concept of reality and postulating corresponding epistemological principles:

(1) the *atomist-rationalist* conception, from Descartes to Wittgenstein, which holds reality to be a totality of simplest elements and facts;

(2) the *organicist and organicist-dynamic* conception which formalizes the whole and emphasizes the predominance and priority of the whole over its parts (Schelling, Spann);

(3) the *dialectical conception* (Heraclitus, Hegel, Marx) which grasps reality as a structured, evolving and self-forming whole.

The concept of totality has been attacked from two sides in the twentieth century. For empiricists, as for existentialists, the world has collapsed, it has ceased to be a totality and has turned into chaos. Organizing it is a matter for the subject. This transcendental subject or the subjective perspective, for which the totality of the world has collapsed and has been substituted by a scatter of subjective horizons, introduces order into the world's chaos.²¹

The subject who comes to know the world and for whom the world exists as the cosmos, divine order, or as totality, is *always* a social subject, and the activity of knowing the natural and the socio-human reality is the activity of a social subject. Severing society from nature goes hand in hand with not grasping that socio-human reality is *equally* a reality as nebulae, atoms or stars are, although it is not an *equal* reality. The suggestion will follow that the reality of nature is the only real one, and that human reality is less real than that of rocks, meteorites or suns; or that only one reality (the human one) can be comprehended, whereas the 'other' (the natural one) can at best be explained.

*Translating the concept of *Bildung* into Czech is as problematic as translating it into English. Kosík employed the word 'vytvářet', one specific form (the imperfective aspect) of the word 'tvořit', 'to create', 'to form'. Concepts related to *Bildung* have been rendered as *the process of forming*, *to form*, and *formative*.

According to materialism, social reality is known in its concreteness (totality) at the point when the *character* of social reality is exposed, when the pseudoconcrete is abolished and when social reality is known as the dialectical unity of the base and the superstructure, with man as its objective, socio-historical subject. Social reality is *not* known as a concrete totality as long as man is intuited primarily or exclusively as an object in the framework of totality, and as long as the primary importance of man as the *subject* of mankind's objective-historical praxis remains unrecognized. The concreteness, the totality of reality is thus not a matter of whether the facts are complete and whether horizons can change and shift; rather, it involves a *fundamental* question: *What is reality?* As for social reality, *this* question can be answered when reduced to a *different* one: How is social reality *formed*? This type of questioning, which establishes what social reality *is* by way of establishing how it is *formed*, contains a *revolutionary* concept of society and man.

Turning back to the question of the fact and its importance for the cognition of social reality, we have to emphasize (apart from the generally acknowledged position that every *fact* is comprehensible only in context and in a whole²²) one other even more important and more fundamental point which is usually ignored: that *the very concept of fact is determined by the overall conception of social reality*. What an historical fact is, is only a partial question of the main one: What is social reality?

We agree with the Soviet historian I. Kon, that elementary facts have turned out to be something very complex, and that science which in the past used to deal with unique facts is now orienting itself more and more toward processes and relations. The relationship between facts and their generalizations is one of interconnection and interdependence; just as generalizations would be impossible without facts, there are no scientific facts that would not contain an element of generalization. An historical fact is in a sense not only the prerequisite for investigation *but* is also its result.²³ However, if facts and generalizations dialectically interpenetrate, if every fact carries elements of generalization and if every generalization is a generalization of facts, how is one to explain this *logical* mutuality? This logical relationship expresses the fact that a generalization is the *internal connection* of facts and that a fact itself mirrors a certain complex. The ontological essence of every fact reflects the whole reality, and the *objective* significance of a fact depends on how richly and how essentially it both encompasses and mirrors reality. This is *why* one fact can state more than another fact. This, too, is why it has more to state or less, according to the

method and the subjective approach of the scientist, i.e. according to how well the scientist questions the objective content and significance of his fact. Dividing facts by significance and importance follows not from subjective judgement but from the objective content of the facts themselves. Reality exists in a certain sense only as a sum of facts, as a hierarchized and differentiated totality of facts. Every cognitive process of social reality is a circular movement. Investigation both starts from the facts and comes back to them. Does something happen to the facts in the process of cognition? Cognition of historical reality is a process of theoretical appropriation, i.e. a critique, interpretation and evaluation of facts; an indispensable prerequisite of *objective* cognition is *the activity* of man, the scientist. This activity, which discloses the *objective* content and meaning of facts, is the scientific method. A scientific method is fruitful to the degree to which it manages to expose, interpret and substantiate the wealth of reality that is *objectively* contained in this or that particular fact. The indifference of certain methods and tendencies to facts is well known; it is an inability to see in facts anything important, i.e. their proper objective content and meaning.

Scientific method is a means for decoding facts. How did it ever happen that facts are not transparent but pose a problem whose sense science must first expose? A fact is coded reality. Naïve consciousness finds facts opaque because of their perpetual *two-fold* role, discussed above. To see only one facet of facts, either their immediacy or their mediatedness, either their determinacy or their determining character, is to encode the code, i.e. to not grasp the fact as a code. In the eyes of his contemporaries, a politician appears as a *great* politician. After his death it turns out that he was merely an *average* politician and that his apparent greatness was an 'illusion of the times'. What is the historical fact? The *illusions* that had *influenced* and 'created' history, or the truth that came into the open only subsequently, and at the crucial time had not existed, had not happened as a reality? An historian is to deal with events as they really happened. Yet, what does this mean? Is real history the history of people's consciousness, the history of how people were aware of their contemporary scene and of events, or is it an history of how events really occurred and how they *had to be* reflected in people's consciousness? There is a double danger here: one can either recount history as it *should have* happened, i.e. infuse it with rationality and logic, or one can describe events uncritically, without evaluation, which of course amounts to abandoning a fundamental feature of scientific work, namely the distinction between the essential and the peripheral, which is the *objective* sense of facts. The existence of science is based on the *possibility* of this distinction. There would be no science without it.

Mystification and people's false consciousness of events, of the present and the past, is a *part* of history. The historian who would consider false consciousness to be a secondary and a haphazard phenomenon and would deny a place in history to it as to something false and untrue would in fact be distorting history. While Enlightenment eliminated false consciousness from history and depicted the history of false consciousness as one of errors that could have been avoided if only people had been more farsighted and rulers wiser, romantic ideology, on the contrary, considered false consciousness to be true, to be the only one that had any effect and impact, and was *therefore* the only historical reality.²⁴

Hypostatizing the whole and favoring it over its parts (over facts) is one path that leads to a *false totality* instead of to a *concrete* one. If the whole process represented a reality which would be indeed *genuine* and *higher* than facts, then reality could exist independently of facts, independently in particular of facts that would contradict it. The formulation that hypostatizes the whole over the facts and treats it autonomously provides a theoretical substantiation for subjectivism which in turn ignores facts and violates them in the name of a 'higher reality'. The facticity of facts is not their reality but rather their fixed superficiality, one-sidedness and immobility. The *reality* of facts is opposed to their facticity not so much as a reality of a *different* order and independent of facts, but rather as an *internal* relation, as the dynamics and the contradictory character of the totality of facts. Emphasizing the whole process over facts, ascribing to tendencies a reality higher than to facts, and the *consequent* transformation of a tendency of facts into a tendency independent of facts, are all expressions of a hypostatized whole predominant over its parts, and thus of a *false* totality predominant over the concrete totality. If the process as a whole amounted to a reality higher than facts, rather than to the reality and lawfulness of facts *themselves*, it would become independent of facts and would lead an existence different from theirs. The whole would be separated from the facts and would exist independently of them.²⁵

Materialist theory distinguishes between facts in two different contexts: in the context of reality where facts are set primordially and originally, and in the context of theory where they are arrayed secondarily and mediately, after having been torn out of the original context. But how can one discuss a context of reality where facts are originally and primordially, if the *only* way to know *this* context is through facts that have been *torn out* of it? Man cannot know the context of reality other than by extracting facts from it, isolating them and making them relatively autonomous. This is the basis of *all* cognition: dividing the one. All cognition is a dialectical oscillation

(dialectical as opposed to metaphysical, for which both poles would be constant magnitudes and which would record their external, reflexive relations), and oscillation between facts and context (totality), an oscillation whose mediating active center is the method of investigation. Absolutizing the activity of the method (about this activity itself there is no doubt) begets the idealistic illusion that thinking generates the concrete, or that facts first acquire sense and significance *only* in man's head.

The fundamental question of materialist epistemology²⁶ concerns the relation of concrete and abstract totalities and the possibility of one changing into the other: how can the thought process of intellectually reproducing reality stay on the level of *concrete* totality, and not sink into an abstract totality? When reality is radically severed from facticity, it is hard to recognize *new* tendencies and contradictions in facts: because even before it investigates anything, *false* totality considers every fact to be predetermined by a once-and-for-all established and hypostatized evolutionary tendency. Despite its claims to a *higher* order of reality, this tendency will itself degenerate into an abstraction, i.e. into a reality of a *lower* order than is that of empirical facts, if it is conceived of not as an historical tendency of facts *themselves* but as one existing beyond, outside, above and independently of facts.

False totalization and synthetization show up in the method of the abstract principle which leaves aside the wealth of reality, i.e. its contradictory character and its multiple meanings, and deals only with facts that accord with this abstract principle. The totality to which this abstract principle might be promoted amounts to an *empty* totality which treats the wealth of reality as an irrational 'residue' beyond comprehension. The method of the 'abstract principle' distorts the *whole* picture of reality (of an historical event, of a work of art) and is *equally* insensitive to its *details*. It is aware of particulars, registers them, but does not understand them since it fails to grasp their significance. Instead of uncovering the objective sense of facts (details), it obfuscates it. It abolishes the wholeness of the investigated phenomenon by decomposing it into two autonomous parts: that which agrees with the principle and can be interpreted by it, and that which contradicts the principle and therefore remains in darkness (with no rational explanation or comprehension of it), as an unilluminated and unclarified 'residue' of the phenomenon.

The standpoint of concrete totality has nothing to do with the holistic, organicist, or the neo-romantic concepts of wholeness which hypostatize the whole over its parts and mythologize it.²⁷ Dialectics cannot grasp totality as

a ready-made or formalized whole determining the parts because the *genesis* and *development* of totality are components of its very determination. From the methodological perspective, this calls for an examination of how totality *originates* and of the *internal sources of its development* and movement. Totality is not a ready-made whole, later filled with a content and with properties and relations of its parts; rather, totality *concretizes itself in the process of forming its whole as well as its content*. The genetic-dynamic character of totality is emphasized in the remarkable fragments of Marx's *Grundrisse*: 'While in the completed bourgeois system every economic relation presupposes every other in its bourgeois economic form, and everything posited is thus also a presupposition, this is the case with every organic system. This organic system itself, as a totality, has its presuppositions, and its *development* to its totality consists precisely in subordinating all elements of society to itself, or in creating out of it the organs which it still lacks. *This is historically how it becomes a totality*. The process of becoming this totality forms a moment of its process, of its development'.²⁸

The genetic-dynamic conception of totality is a prerequisite for rationally grasping the genesis of a new quality. Prerequisites that originally had been historical conditions for the genesis of capital, appear after its emergence and constitution as results of capital's own self-realization and reproduction. They are no longer conditions of its *historical genesis* as much as results and conditions of its *historical existence*. Individual elements (such as money, value, exchange, labor power) that historically preceded the emergence of capitalism, that had existed independently of it and compared with capitalism had led an 'antediluvian' existence, are after the emergence of capital incorporated into the process of its reproduction and exist as *its* organic moments. Thus in the epoch of capitalism, capital turns into a structure of meanings that *determines* the internal content and the objective sense of its elements, a content and sense that in the pre-capitalist phase had been different. *The forming of a totality as a structure of meanings is thus also a process which forms the objective content and meaning of all its elements and parts as well*. This interconnection, as well as the profound difference of conditions of genesis (which are an independent, unique historical prerequisite) and of conditions of historical existence (which are historically produced and reproduced forms of existence), involve the dialectic of the logical and the historical: logical investigation indicates where historical investigation begins, and that in turn complements and presupposes the logical.

Insisting on the question of what is primary, whether totality or *contradictions*, or indeed dividing contemporary Marxists into two camps,²⁹ according to what they prefer, demonstrates an absolute lack of comprehension of materialist dialectics. The question is not whether to recognize the priority of totality over contradictions or vice versa, precisely because such a division strips both totality and contradictions of their dialectical character: *without contradictions, totality is empty and static; outside totality, contradictions are formal and arbitrary*. The dialectical relationship of contradictions and totality, of contradictions within totality and the totality of contradictions, of the concreteness of a totality formed by contradictions and the lawful character of contradictions within totality, all this is one of the distinctions that set apart the materialist and the structuralist conceptions of totality. Further: totality as a conceptual means of comprehending social phenomena is abstract as long as it is not stressed that this is a totality of the base and the superstructure, of their interrelation, mutual movement and development, with the base playing the determining role. And finally, even the totality of the base and the superstructure is abstract when it is not demonstrated that man is the *real historical subject* (i.e., of praxis), and that in the process of social production and reproduction he forms both the base and the superstructure, that he forms social reality as a totality of social relations, institutions and ideas, and that in this process of forming the objective social reality he also forms himself as an historical and social being with human senses and potentialities, realizing thereby the infinite process of 'humanizing man'.

Concrete totality, as the dialectical-materialist standpoint of the *cognition* of reality (we have several times emphasized its derivative character, compared with the ontological problem of reality), thus signifies a complex process with the following moments: destruction of the pseudoconcrete, i.e. of fetishist and fictitious objectivity of the phenomenon, and cognition of its real objectivity; further, the cognition of the phenomenon's historical character which in a peculiar way reveals the dialectic of the unique and of the generally human; and finally, the cognition of the objective content and meaning of the phenomenon, of its objective function and its historical place within the social whole. When cognition does not destroy the pseudoconcrete, when it does not expose the phenomenon's real historical objectivity under its fictitious objectivity, and when it consequently confuses the pseudoconcrete with the concrete, it becomes a captive of fetishist intuiting and results in a bad totality.³⁰ Social reality is then conceived of as a sum or a totality of autonomous structures

influencing one another. The subject vanishes, or more precisely, the place of the real subject, i.e. of man as an objective—practical subject, is taken by a subject that has been mythologised, reified and fetishised: by the autonomous movement of structures. Materialistically conceived totality is formed by man's social production, while for structuralism, totality arises from the interaction of autonomous series of structures. In 'bad totality', social reality is intuited only in the form of the object, of ready-made results and facts, but not subjectively, as objective human praxis. The fruit of human activity is divorced from the activity itself. The dual movement from product to producer and from producer to product³¹ in which the producer, creator, man, stands *above* his artifacts, is replaced in relativistic 'bad totality' by a simple or a complex movement of autonomous structures, i.e. of results and artifacts taken in isolation, through the objectivation of objective—intellectual human praxis. Consequently, in structuralist concepts 'society' enters into art only from without, as social determinism. It is not intrinsic to art, subjectively, as the social man who is its creator. Aside from idealism, the second basic feature of the structuralist conception of totality is sociology.³²

False totality appears in three basic forms:

(1) As *empty* totality which lacks reflection, the determination of individual moments, and analysis. Empty totality excludes reflection, i.e. the appropriation of reality as individual moments, and the activity of analytical reason.³³

(2) As *abstract* totality which formalizes the whole as opposed to its parts and ascribes a 'higher reality' to hypostatized 'tendencies'. Totality thus conceived is without genesis and development, without the process of forming the whole, without structuration and destructuration. Totality is a *closed* whole.

(3) As *bad* totality, in which the real subject has been substituted by a mythologized subject.

Important concepts of materialist philosophy, such as false consciousness, reification, subject—object relationship, etc., lose their dialectical character when they are isolated, torn out of the materialist theory of history and severed from other concepts which together form a whole and an 'open system' that lends them real meaning. The category of totality also loses its dialectical character when it is conceived only 'horizontally', as the relation of parts and the whole, and when other of its organic features are neglected: such as its '*genetic—dynamic*' dimension (the forming of the whole and the unity of contradictions) and its '*vertical*' dimension (the

dialectic of the phenomenon and the essence). The dialectic of the phenomenon and the essence was applied in Marx's analysis of simple capitalist commodity exchange. The most elementary and ordinary phenomenon of everyday life in a capitalist society – simple commodity exchange – in which people play the roles of simple buyers and sellers, shows under further investigation to be a superficial appearance that is determined and mediated by essential deep processes of the capitalist society – by the existence and the exploitation of wage labor. The freedom and equality of simple exchange is *developed and realized in the capitalist system of production as inequality and lack of freedom*. 'A worker who buys commodities for 3s. appears to the seller in the same function, in the same equality – in the form of 3s. – as the king who does the same. All distinction between them is extinguished'.^{3,4}

The internal relation of the phenomenon and the essence, and the development of the contradictions of this relation, are dimensions which grasp the reality *concretely*, i.e. as a concrete totality. By contrast, hypostatizing reality's phenomenal aspects produces an abstract view and leads to apologetics.

NOTES

¹ The minds of people 'reflect always only the immediate *phenomenal forms* of relations, rather than their internal structure. If the latter were the case, of what use would science be?' (Marx's letter to Engels, 27 June 1867. Marx–Engels, *Werke*, Berlin, 1967ff., vol. 31, p. 313). '... all science would be superfluous if the outer appearance and the essence of things directly coincided.' (Marx, *Capital*, New York, 1967, vol. 3, p. 817.) 'For ... the *phenomenal form*, ... as contrasted with the *essential relation*, the same difference holds that holds with respect to all phenomena and their hidden substratum. The former appear directly and spontaneously as current modes of thought; the latter must first be discovered by science.' (Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 542; emph. Kosík)

² Certain philosophers (e.g. G. G. Granger, 'L'ancienne et la nouvelle économique', *Esprit*, 1956, p. 515) ascribe the 'method of abstraction' and of 'concept' exclusively to Hegel. In reality, this is the only path by which philosophy can arrive at the structure of the thing, i.e. to a *grasp* of it.

³ Marx, Hegel, and Goethe were all advocates of this practical 'one-sidedness' opposed to the fictitious 'all-sidedness' of romanticists.

⁴ Marx's *Capital* is methodologically constructed upon the distinction of false consciousness and the real grasping of things, and the main categories of conceptually grasping the reality under investigation are the following pairs:

phenomenon – essence
 world of appearances – real world
 external appearance of the phenomenon – law of the phenomenon
 real existence – internal essential concealed kernel
 visible movement – real internal movement
 idea – concept
 false consciousness – true consciousness
 doctrinaire systematization of ideas ('ideology') – theory and science.

⁵ 'Marxism is an effort to detect behind the pseudo-immediacy of the reified economic world the social relations that formed it and that are concealed behind their own creation'. A. de Waelhens, *L'idée phénoménologique de l'intentionnalité*, The Hague, 1959, p. 127f. The characterization offered by a non-Marxist author is a symptomatic testimony of philosophy in the twentieth century, for which the destruction of the pseudo-concrete and all manner of alienation has become a most pressing problem. Various philosophies differ in the *mode* of solving it, but the problematique itself is shared by both positivism (cf. Carnap's and Neurath's struggle against metaphysics, real or imagined), and phenomenology and existentialism. Characteristically, it took a Marxist philosopher, Tran-Duc-Thao, whose work was the first serious attempt to confront phenomenology and Marxism, to expose the authentic sense of Husserl's phenomenological method and its internal connection with philosophical problems of the twentieth century. Tran-Duc-Thao fittingly characterized the contradictory and paradoxical character of the phenomenological destruction of the pseudoconcrete: 'In the ordinary language, the world of appearances has arrogated the whole sense of the notion of reality . . . Appearances present themselves in the name of the real world and eliminating them took the form of bracketing the world . . . The authentic reality to which one was returning paradoxically took on the form of the irreality of pure consciousness'. Tran-Duc-Thao *Phénoménologie et matérialisme dialectique*, Paris, 1951 pp. 223f. [Eng. trans. *Phenomenology and Dialectical Materialism*, D. Reidel, Dordrecht and Boston, forthcoming].

⁶ Hegel has characterized reflexive thinking thus: 'Reflection is that form of mental activity which establishes the contradiction and which goes from the one to the other, but without effecting their combination and realizing their pervading unity'. Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, London, 1895, pp. 204f (adapted). See also Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 88.

⁷ Cf. Marx, 'Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State', in *Early Writings*, New York, 1975, p. 174 *et passim*.

⁸ Positivism of the Viennese school played a positive role in destroying the pseudoconcrete, when it opposed surviving metaphysical conceptions by stating that matter is not something behind phenomena or the transcendence of phenomena, but that it is rather material objects and processes. Cf. Neurath, *Empirische Soziologie*, Vienna 1931, pp. 59–61 [Eng. trans. in *Empiricism and Sociology*, Vienna Circle Collection, Vol. 1, pp. 358–64, D. Reidel, Dordrecht and Boston, 1973].

⁹ This problematique will be further developed in chapters 'The Economic Factor' and 'Philosophy of Labor'.

¹⁰ Polemics against dialectical materialism relentlessly impute to modern materialism the mechanical and metaphysical concept of matter of eighteenth-century theories. Why should *only* the spirit, and not matter, have the property of negativity? Sartre's thesis that materialism cannot be the philosophy of revolution (cf. his 'Materialism and Revolution', in his *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, New York, 1962, pp. 198–256) also stems from a metaphysical concept of matter, as *indirectly* acknowledged by Merleau-Ponty: 'Occasionally, the justified question is raised, how could materialism

possibly be dialectical (Sartre, 'Materialism and Revolution'), how could matter in the strict sense of the word contain the principle of productivity and of generating novelty, which is referred to as dialectics'. (*Temps modernes*, 1, p. 521.) All arguments concerning the acceptance or the rejection of the 'dialectics of nature' orbit around this question.

¹¹ The German word *entwickeln* is a translation of the Latin *explicatio* and means 'Unfolding, clear structuration of a whole that had been dark, muddled and mysterious'. (J. Hoffmeister, *Goethe und der deutsche Idealismus*, Leipzig, 1932, pp. 120f.) Both Goethe and Marx use the word in this sense.

¹² See Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 19.

¹³ A detailed explication of the 'position of totality' as a methodological principle of Marx's philosophy is presented in Lukács' well-known *History and Class Consciousness*, Cambridge, Mass., 1971. L. Goldmann further developed Lukács' thought; see, e.g., *The Hidden God*, London, 1961.

¹⁴ One classic example is Karl Mannheim and holistic structuralist theories that stem from his work.

¹⁵ K. R. Popper, *Poverty of Historicism*, New York, 1964, p. 78.

¹⁶ See Popper, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ L. von Bertalanffy, 'General System Theory' in *General Systems*, 1, (1956), p. 1.

¹⁸ F. Gonseth, 'Remarque sur l'idée de complémentarité', *Dialectica*, 1948, p. 413.

¹⁹ F. A. Hayek, *Scientisme et sciences sociales*, Paris, 1953, p. 79. [Counter Revolution in Science, Glencoe, 1952.]

²⁰ K. Freeman, ed., *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, Oxford, 1952, p. 65.

²¹ Characteristically, the first major post-war philosophical clash between Marxism and idealism was over the problem of *totality*. There are clear practical considerations behind this theoretical argument: Can reality be changed in a revolutionary way? Can socio-human reality be changed in its foundations and as a whole, i.e. in its totality and totally, or are only partial changes practicable and real, with the whole being either an immutable entity or an elusive horizon? See the polemic between G. Lukács and K. Jaspers at 'Rencontres Internationales de Genève' of 1946, in J. Benda, ed., *L'Esprit Européen*, Neuchâtel, 1947.

The close connection between problems of totality and of revolution appears, appropriately modified, in Czech conditions as well: see K. Sabina's 1839 conception of totality as a revolutionary principle, in K. Kosík, *Česká radikální demokracie* [Czech Radical Democracy], Prague, 1958.

²² See C. L. Becker, 'What are Historical Facts?', *Western Political Quarterly*, 8, 1955, no. 3, pp. 327–40.

²³ I. Kon, *Filosofskii idealizm i krizis burzhoaznoi istoricheskoi mysli*, Moscow, 1959, p. 237.

²⁴ This is e.g. the error of H. Lévy-Bruhl in his essay 'Qu'est-ce que le fait historique?' *Revue de synthèse historique*, 42, 1926, pp. 53–59. I. Kon misinterprets Lévy-Bruhl's position, in his book mentioned above, and his polemic thus misfires.

²⁵ One can trace here the genesis of all objective idealistic mystifications. A valuable analysis of this problematique in Hegel is presented in E. Lask's *Fichte's Idealismus und Geschichte*, in Lask, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, Tübingen, 1923, pp. 67f., 280, 338.

²⁶ For the time being we shall leave aside the question, how socio-human reality itself undergoes change and is transformed from a *concrete* to a *false* totality and vice versa.

²⁷ Schelling's great early thoughts about nature as a unity of product and productivity have not yet been sufficiently appreciated. Even at this stage, however, his thought demonstrates a strong tendency toward hypostatizing the whole, as evident from the following quote, dated 1799: 'Inasmuch as all parts of an organic whole carry and

support each other, this whole must have existed prior to its parts. The whole is not inferred from the parts, but the parts had to spring from the whole'. Schelling, *Werke*, Munich, 1927, vol. 2, p. 279.

²⁸ Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 278 (emph. K. Kosík). [Penguin Books ed., 1973.]

²⁹ This opinion appeared at the international philosophical colloquium on dialectics in Royaumont, France, in September 1960. My paper 'Dialectique du concret' polemised with this view.

³⁰ The term 'bad totality' was coined by Kurt Konrad who in his magnificent polemic against formalism discriminated between the concrete totality of materialism and the false bad totality of structuralism. See Kurt Konrad, *Svár obsahu a formy* [The Dispute of Content and Form], Prague, 1934.

³¹ Cf. Leibniz: 'C'est par considération des ouvrages qu'on peut découvrir l'ouvrier'.

³² This issue will be dealt with in detail in the chapter 'Historism and Historicism'.

³³ A critique of the economic concept of totality, for which all cats are black, was offered in Hegel's argument with Schelling, in his 'Introduction' to the *Phenomenology of the Mind*. Romanticists are obsessed with totality, but theirs is an empty totality because it lacks the fullness and determinacy of relations. Since the romanticist can absolutize the immediate, he can spare himself the journey from the particular to the general and arrives at everything – God, the Absolute, life – as by a shot of a gun. This is the main reason for the futility with which romanticists attempted to write a novel. The relationship of the vacuous totality of the romanticists and romanticist art is dealt with in B. von Arx, *Novelistisches Dasein*, Zürich, 1953, pp. 90, 96.

³⁴ Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 246; cf. also p. 251.