

of private property—private property as activity for itself” (Marx 1975, p. 290). In this respect, political economy grasps the working human as the wage-laborer and knows that labor is essential for private property and capital, although it grasps this as a fact or natural phenomenon in modern civil society, rather than in “the way the movement is connected” (Marx 1975, p. 271), the way in which labor in modern society produces private property. That is, political economy, which understands that “it is solely through labor that man enhances the value of the products of nature, whilst labor is man’s active possession” (Marx 1975, p.240), comprehends, in contrast, the laborer, who is the owner of this labor, as “the worker, [who] far from being able to buy everything, must sell himself and his humanity” (Marx 1975, p.239) and accept the given situation. Therefore, we can never exceed the level of political economy, even if we come to know the fact that “labor produces wonderful things for the rich—but for the worker it produces privation” (Marx 1975, p.273) or we feel righteous anger at this fact. Simple righteous anger could be the starting point for action, but it would never help us to overcome political economy, which understands cynical reality cynically; moreover, we would be caught up in the fact. Therefore, it is important to understand the origin of the fact, to comprehend the passway of the becoming of the fact, and to “grasp the way the movement is connected.” According to Marx, the defect of political economy is that it “conceals the estrangement inherent in the nature of labor by not considering the direct relationship between the worker (labor) and production” (Marx 1975, p.273). The essence of the alienation of the labor is that “labor is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his intrinsic nature”; thus, his labor is “coerced; it is forced labor. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it” (Marx 1975, p.274). The conceptual understanding of this situation or of “how ... man came to alienate, to estrange, his labor” is for Marx and for us the critical point in rising above the level of political economy.

As seen from the above, political economy sees the negative side of labor, i.e., exploited labor, coerced labor or, put plainly, alienated labor. Hegel is also enmeshed in this problem, as long as he is said to take the view of political economy. What does Marx’s criticism that Hegel does not see the negative side of labor really mean? Marx also criticized Hegel by saying that “the only labor which Hegel knows and recognizes is abstractly mental labor. Therefore, that which constitutes the essence of—alienation of man who knows himself, or alienated science thinking itself—Hegel grasps as its essence” (Marx 1975, p.333). This criticism sounds a little different from the previous ones. Are there any essential and necessary relationships between not perceiving the negative side of labor and viewing labor only as “abstractly mental labor”? Should we say that Hegel even missed the positive side of labor, if he grasps “abstractly mental labor” only? Marx’s subsequent criticism concentrates mainly on the fact that Hegel sees “abstractly mental labor” as the essence of labor, and Marx appreciates, none the less, that Hegel grasped the “act of creation ... of man” “in the framework of abstract, logical, and speculative expression”(Marx 1975, p.329).

However, does Hegel know only abstract and speculative labor? Does he recognize materialistic labor? In the next section, I would like to clarify this problem.

II. The formulation of Hegel's concept of labor

Kantian dualism (the non-mediated antagonism of the subject and object) was the approach that had to be overcome in the development of German idealism because of multi-strata socialization in modern civil society. This era lacks the transparency of earlier ones, since society stands as an external object to the individual and his conflicts. This individual, who is progressively involved in society, becomes a social being. At the same time, nature is no longer an external cognitive object; rather, it must be developed, humanized, and socialized. Society and the individual, nature and the human being, which seem to be split phenomenally and which do not polarize dualistically as this world and the other world, increasingly define and unite.

Only in the eighteenth century, in "civil society," do the various forms of social connectedness confront the individual as a mere means towards his private purposes, as external necessity. However, the epoch that produces this standpoint, that of the isolated individual, is also precisely that of the hitherto most developed social (from this standpoint, general) relations. (Marx 1993, p. 84)

During the establishment of modern civil society, the grasping of the fate of the individual requires the grasping of the individual as a social being. Overcoming the revolutionary, atomistic cognitive subject by which Kant criticized all overarching beings (especially a transcendent God) and uniting the relations that he fragmented became the challenges for the generation that followed him, one with a monistic philosophy of the identity of subject and object. Therefore, this philosophy of the identity of subject and object necessarily encompassed large contradictions in its attempt to comprehend the identity of society and the individual, the human being; nature makes the cognition of modern society deeper, but at the same time, it clarifies the necessity of overcoming the real division of society (social relations conflict with the individual and become, in reality, the means for the private purposes). This contradiction was taken over from Fichte, through Schelling and Hölderlin, by Hegel, and it provided the momentum for the formation and development of objective idealism.

Fichte denies that the self is contained in the atomistic, individualistic subject; rather, he enlarges it into the "World-Ego to be conscious" [*das zum Bewußtsein gekommene allgemeine Welt-Ich*] (Heine 1997, S.180) and posits the relation between society and individual as the identity of the self (self=self). Thus, Fichte stood at the apex of subjective idealism and represents the transition from it to objective idealism, but he comprehends pure social

relations, which he sees only from the epistemological standpoint. He completely ignores nature, but the philosophic identity of subject–object will be accomplished only with the identity of nature and society.

Schelling studied under and with Fichte, and for him, intellectual intuition [*intellektuelle Anschauung*] means knowledge “whose object is not independent of it, so a knowledge that produces its object and at the same time an intuition which freely produces in general and in which the producing and the product is one and the same” [*dessen Objekt nicht von ihm unabhängig ist, also ein Wissen, das zugleich ein Producieren seines Objekts ist—eine Anschauung, welche überhaupt frei producierend, und in welcher das Producierende mit dem Producierten eins und dasselbe ist*] (Schelling 1977, S.369). This understanding enables him to comprehend the identity of nature and the human being. However, he depends on intuition and develops his “natural philosophy” only with poetic imagination, rather than exploring “the production of its object” and “free production in general in the real world.” It is Hegel who overcomes Schelling’s intuition and comprehends the self-producing power of the real world and who completes objective idealism. Moreover, his concept of labor is the central category that enables him to anchor the simultaneity of positing and sublating the reality of the real world.

The concept of labor appeared concretely for the first time in the *System of Ethical Life* of the Jena era; however, according to Lukács, Hegel tackled the concept of labor already in the Frankfurt era.⁵⁾ Needless to say, he treated the concept in the larger framework of the establishment of the identity of the subject–object. In a fragment written in 1797, he grasped the relation between subject and object as follows.

Where the subject and object or freedom and nature are designed as so united that nature is freedom, subject and object are inseparable; there is here something divine—such an ideal is the object of every religion. A deity is subject and object, you cannot say that it was a subject in conflict with objects or that it has objects.

Theoretical syntheses are entirely objective and completely opposite to the subject—practical activity destroys the object, and therefore is entirely subjective—just as love alone is it one with the object; it does not control and is not properly controlled. This love, the essence of which is made by imagination, is the deity.

[*Wo Subjekt und Objekt oder Freiheit und Natur so vereinigt gedacht wird, daß Na-*

5) “We believe that we have the right to assume that the concept of labour as it can be found as an essential category of Hegelian social understanding in the ‘system of morality’ in the Jena time, was already in the lost parts of the ‘system fragment’ of the Frankfurt time” [Wir glauben also, daß wir das Recht haben, anzunehmen, daß die Konzeption der Arbeit, wie sie als wesentliche Kategorie der Hegelschen Gesellschaftsaffassung im Jenaer “System der Sittlichkeit” zu finden ist, bereit in dem verlorengegangenen Teile des Frankfurter “Systemfragments” vorhanden war](Lukács 1948, S.233).

tur Freiheit ist, daß Subjekt und Objekt nicht zu trennen sind, da ist Göttliches—ein solches Ideal ist das Objekt jeder Religion. Eine Gottheit ist Subjekt und Objekt zugleich, man kann nicht von ihr sagen, daß sie Subjekt sei im Gegesatz gegen Objekte oder daß sie Objekte habe.

Die theoretische Synthesen werden ganz objektiv, dem Subjekt ganz entgegengesetzt—Die praktische Tätigkeit vernichtet das Objekt, und ist ganz subjektiv—nur in der Liebe allein ist man eins mit dem Objekt, es beherrscht nicht, und wird nicht beherrscht. Diese Liebe von der Einbildungskraft zum Wesen gemacht, ist die Gottheit.]
(Hegel 1971a, S. 242)

Grasped in this way, the identity of subject and object developed along with Hegel's deepening understanding of the real world and made love as the image of unification advance to life, which advanced to morality. Therefore, the identity of the subject and object becomes a moving entity, and the mediator of this development is the concept of labor.

It is very difficult to grasp the totality of the *System of Ethical Life*.⁶⁾ Nonetheless, if this system is understood as the first manuscript of *The Philosophy of Right*, then it is made more accessible (Riedel 1984). Although in *The Philosophy of Right* contains a strict system of abstract law—morality-ethics (family-civil society-state)—in the *System of Ethical Life*, the foundation is the direct relation between the individual and objects (the triad of desire-labor-enjoyment) and “absolute ethicality according to relationship,” based mostly on the social relations among individuals. In the *System of Ethical Life*, Hegel sees that the totality of life is produced thorough a mediator and focuses on the establishment of the nation in-itself and for-itself. Further, Hegel's image of life, one which he learned from his study of the economics of James Steuart and Adam Smith, starts with the direct relation of the individual and nature (Robinson Crusoe story in the 18th century manner) and grasps the relative and for-itself ethicalities as “the system of desire,” the necessary mediator by which natural and in-itself ethicality become absolute and universal ethicality. That is, “civil society” is for Hegel the indispensable point at which the human being emerges. Not until the involvement of “civil society” or the splitting of the real world as a mediator that the identity of the subject and object is grasped as mutually constraining, mutually producing, and generating its totality.

In the fragment above (Hegel 1971a, S. 242), “practical activity” is understood as “entirely subjective” because it “destroys the object”; however, in the triad of desire-labor-enjoyment of the *System of Ethical Life*, labor does not simply “destroy the object.” By making an issue of labor, activity is seen as a movement of the subject that destroys the object and, at the same time, posits the object. Hegel grasps labor as follows.

6) Marcuse also says that “this draft, the so-called System of Morality [*System der Sittlichkeit*], is one of the most difficult in German philosophy” (Marcuse 1960, p.56).