

ON THE DIVISION OF LABOR AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

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ABSTRACT
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Karl Marx's 'theory' of social class is described as a 'theory' of power dependence relations. Power dependence relations are connected with the division of labor. The division of labor is described as a social process in which class inequalities are developed and sustained. Property relations are treated as a form of class relations. Definitions of class structure based on property relations, such as relations to the means of production, are interpreted as reifications of class relations.

The division of labor in Marx's works does not refer to the differentiation of labor. Marx's conception of the division of labor is juxtaposed with a sociological conception of the division of labor as a division of tasks or functions. This permits raising the issue of the reification of social relations in sociological discussions of the division of labor and in sociological accounts of social stratification in general.

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INTRODUCTION

In this essay I hope to explicate a particular power dependence relation which I will call a power relation of one-sided dependence.¹ I also hope to show its centrality in the development of our understanding of social inequality. The character of the topic has a bearing on the organization of the essay for there appears to be no sociological tradition in which to imbed the discussion. I came to understand power relations of one-sided dependence 'negatively'; I noticed that sociological accounts of inequality do not describe relations of this type. Power is usually conceived of as a relation of mutual dependence. Occasionally it is not conceived of at all. I also noticed that sociologists interpret a major theorist of such relations, Marx, in a way that prevents understanding them. It is in Marx's works that these relations are prominent, although he did not use the terms

¹Richard Emerson has described a power relation of mutual dependence. In Emerson's formulation, the power of an actor A over an actor B is circumscribed by A's dependence on B. A power dependence relation can also be described in which A's power over B is based on the absence of his dependence on B. I have chosen to call the latter type a power relation of one-sided dependence in order to distinguish it from Emerson's relation of mutual dependence. See Richard Emerson, "Power-Dependence Relations," American Sociological Review, 17 (February, 1962), 31-41.

I have adopted.² Marx's concern with power relations of one-sided dependence has been obscured by his treatment of class relations in capitalism. Class relations in capitalism are primarily economic relations. Power is structured by relations of property, by ownership relations. Too much attention has been given to the economic relations of class structure, too little to power relations. Because sociologists have understood economic relations in capitalism as the basis of class relations, they have failed to see that economic relations are a form of class relations, not the only form of class relations.³

An explication of Marx's formulation of power

²Stanislaw Ossowski has called these power relations asymmetrical relations of dependence. Because power relations of mutual dependence also involve asymmetries, it would be confusing to adopt his terminology. Ossowski intends to designate by asymmetrical power relations, relations containing binary attributes, for example, property-propertylessness, exploitation-oppression. Binary attributes also characterize power relations of one-sided dependence. They are attributes which reflect qualitative differences between groups. What constitutes such attributes in a power relation of one-sided dependence is another issue. As Ossowski defines them, they are synchronic. The attributes of power relations of one-sided dependence are diachronic. Stanislaw Ossowski, Class Structure in the Social Consciousness, Translated by Sheila Patterson (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).

³I will refer class relations to a wider range of epochs than capitalism. This usage is forced by the nature of the task, to clarify relations of power and dependence. It is also forced by my concern to remain intelligible within the sociological tradition where the notion of class among some thinkers has achieved clarification as basic divisions between groups. A number of scholars prefer to confine the term class to capitalist structures and to use other terms to describe social relations in non-capitalist societies. Marx himself used other terms although not systematically.

relations of one-sided dependence involves returning to his early writings, and to the interpretations of his works which have been dominant in sociological discussions. I hope to show that sociological accounts of Marx's thought fail to achieve an adequate understanding because they begin an interpretation too late. They begin either from a notion of 'society' rather than a notion of social relations, or from a notion of ownership relations rather than from a notion of labor. I have undertaken this essay because I believe that some aspects of inequality cannot be understood sociologically until power dependence relations are clarified. These aspects of inequality are imbedded in the question of how inequalities are 'produced' rather than in the question of how inequalities are distributed. It is only in raising the question of how schemes of inequality develop that power relations achieve great importance.⁴ Power relations, particularly power relations of one-sided dependence, refer schemes of inequality to the social construction of such schemes. They thus provide a way to begin an analysis which does not involve taking the existence of inequality for granted.⁵ They also offer a way to begin an

⁴Throughout it will be important to keep in mind that class relations are social relations. Some social relations are class relations and some are not. Power relations of mutual dependence are social relations not class relations. Power relations of one-sided dependence are class relations in addition to being social relations.

⁵Most sociological accounts treat the distribution of inequality as problematic rather than its existence per se. This misses the fundamental connection between schemes of inequality and social action.

analysis which does not join the problem of class inequality to the organization of capitalist societies where the economic aspects of class relations are prominent.

I will use the division of labor to clarify power relations of one-sided dependence. There are a number of reasons for doing so. First, the division of labor is in fact the origin of my interest in this type of power relation. Second, the division of labor within the American tradition of sociology has come to be associated with a conception of power based on mutual dependence.⁶ Third, Marx's early notions of the division of labor do not imply a relation of mutual dependence but instead a power relation of one-sided dependence. That is, for Marx the division of labor is the basis of class structures.⁷

The essay is organized in the following way: review of the sociological treatment of inequality and the treatment of Marx's conception of class relations; analysis of

⁶The source of this conception is Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1933). In Durkheim's view, the division of labor refers to the division of functions. This means that each function is seen in terms of the whole (society). Thus the division of labor is characterized by interdependence; power based on mutual dependence. Unfortunately, Durkheim's conception cannot be extensively discussed.

⁷As recently as Ralf Dahrendorf's "On the Origin of Inequality Among Men," Social Inequality, ed. by Andre Beteille (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), pp. 67-78, Marx's use of the division of labor was understood as the differentiation of labor. The presentation here should be contrasted with Dahrendorf's and any others which describe Marx's usage as the differentiation of labor.

Marx's conception of the division of labor. The analysis of the division of labor will not be comprehensive.⁸ Four areas will be discussed: the division of labor and class structure; natural inequality and class division; the division of interests; and the distribution of dependence. The issue of the division of labor and social inequality will then be taken up.

⁸Particular attention will be given to Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, ed. by R. Pascal (New York: International Publishers, 1947), Karl Marx, Early Writings, trans. and ed. by T. B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), Karl Marx, Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations, trans. by Jack Cohen, ed. and with an introduction by E. J. Hobsbawm (New York: International Publishers, 1965).

CLASS STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

In sociological explanations, social inequalities are interpreted as marks of social stratification or of class structure.⁹ As marks of stratification, their distribution is studied in social structures. As marks of class structure, they are analyzed as aspects of antagonism and division between social groups. No consensus exists about the kind of inequalities that constitute marks of stratification or class structure. Some studies of stratification are concerned with wealth and prestige. Others are concerned with authority as well. Studies of class structure are primarily about property relations or power relations. No uniform connection exists between kinds of inequalities studied and conceptions of social stratification or class structure. The same kinds of inequalities may be used in both conceptualizations of social structure. They need not, however, have the same meaning. For example, inequalities in wealth can be interpreted as a class attribute or as a variable in social stratification. This means that sociological theories of inequality are not

⁹Stratification refers here to the distribution of statuses in the 'sociological' sense, not to strata in the 'Marxian' sense.

necessarily theories about the same inequalities, but different kinds of theories about different kinds of inequalities using the same terms.

When social stratification is formulated as the distribution of social rewards, in sociological accounts it is treated as synonymous with class stratification. The criteria by which statuses are ordered constitute the 'class' structure. This means that class does not refer to fundamental divisions between social groups but to a scheme of ranking groups.¹⁰ Alternatively social stratification may be considered as an effect of the structure of power or property, that is of a class structure. In this case social stratification and class structure are separate phenomena. When a class structure is thought of as the basis of social stratification, a causal analysis is given of the connections of status inequalities and class relations. When social stratification and 'class' structure are conceived of as identical a causal analysis of class relations is unnecessary, although an explanation is usually offered of the inappropriateness of an analysis based on fundamental division between social groups.

Studies of social stratification describe the number of dimensions along which members of a society are collectively ranked and the variable factors related to different

¹⁰ See Stanislaw Ossowski's discussion of schemes of gradation. Ossowski, Ch. III.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

2. The second part is a list of names and addresses.

schemes of ranking. To the extent that these studies use the terminology of class without intending to imply fundamental divisions between social groups, they disassociate its use from a causal account which begins with social relations. Attention is confined to the distribution of status inequalities not to an analysis of how they are generated by relations of power or wealth. Power and wealth are treated as variables of a scheme of the distribution of social status, not as components of class structure.

The functionalist theory of social stratification illustrates this in a striking way. Davis and Moore in the first major presentation of this theory explain the universal presence of stratification in terms of the requirement facing every society of placing and motivating individuals in social structure.¹¹ Stratification refers to the differential structure of rewards among social positions not to differential rewards among individuals or social groups. Every society must ensure the distribution of its members in social positions which carry different degrees of skill and functional importance. Social rewards and a scheme of their distribution mean that different positions must be unequal. The theory is unusual in several respects.

¹¹Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore, "Some Principles of Social Stratification," Class Status and Power, ed. by Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset (New York: The Free Press, 1966), pp. 47-53.

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting. The names are listed in alphabetical order.

First, stratification is cast as the inequality of social positions, not as inequality in social relations. Rewards and their distribution are taken from a point of view outside of social relations, i.e., from the point of view of society. The problem of stratification for 'society' is motivational. It involves ensuring the most appropriate placement of individuals in positions which are unequal. Inequality in social positions is an "unconsciously evolved device by which societies insure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified members."¹²

Second, inequality in social positions is taken as logically prior to the distribution of individuals in these positions. Positions mediate access to rewards of wealth and prestige rather than individuals. They refer to occupations not power relations or economic relations. What is at issue is how positions arise. If inequalities in social positions are taken as logically prior to the distribution of individuals in them, they are not empirically prior to the individuals and social groups who construct and maintain them. It is only in raising the question of how people build positions of inequality and enhance them that power relations become salient.

When a scheme of rewards and their distribution is taken as a societal mechanism for insuring the distribution

¹²Davis and Moore, p. 47.

of people in social positions, a system of inequality is not a construction of social actors but an impersonal instrument of social necessity. The notion of a class structure, a system of class relations within which inequalities are developed and sustained is outside the scope of the theory. Inequality is given at the outset. It is not produced in social action. Because inequality is 'given,' no analysis can be undertaken of how it is produced. Because none is undertaken, social relations, class relations, and power relations are not thought to be prerequisites of understanding inequality.

Karl Marx's conception of social classes and class structure involves an analysis of inequality in social relations rather than societal positions. It is his analysis to which most studies of stratification and class structure react. Although nowhere did he systematically develop a theory of social class, his description of class structure in capitalism has served as the basis of his theory. The bearing of social relations in capitalism on class structure is pervasively economic. Class relations are relations to the means of production. They are thus property relations or ownership relations.

The ideal exemplification of class structure is the capitalist class who owns the means of production and the proletariat who are without property but are the producing class. These two classes are divided by opposite attributes: property-propertylessness, exploitation-oppression, etc.

Ossowski has referred to this formulation as a dichotomic scheme of class structure based on three or four criteria of division. It characterizes capitalism with regard to its dominant form of relations of production.¹³

When Marx's conception of capitalist class structure is taken to represent his theory of social classes, a critique is made of property relations. Either property relations are denied to be the fundamental relations of class division in favor of power relations, or property relations are denied to be the basis of class division and class division as such is simultaneously denied in favor of a theory of social stratification.¹⁴ The latter is characteristic of American Sociology.

To see property relations as pivotal in Marx's conception of social classes narrows the scope of his analysis. First, it involves taking an example of social classes for Marx's conception of social classes. There is considerable difference in meaning if capitalist property relations are conceived as a form of class structure or as the only form of class structure.¹⁵ The issue of what constitutes class

¹³Ossowski, Chapters V and X.

¹⁴For a critique of Marx which denies that property relations are fundamental relations of class division in favor of power relations see Ralf Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959). Dahrendorf's critique is based on a narrow view of Marx's conception of social class.

¹⁵There are clear advantages in identifying class structure with ownership of the means of production. On

in Marx's view is related to whether class refers to relations to the means of production, specifically, for example, ownership of the means of production and propertylessness, or whether class refers to fundamental divisions between social groups of which ownership of the means of production is an instance. If class refers to fundamental divisions between social groups, capitalist class structure is a type of class structure among other possible types.¹⁶ When

the one hand, to the extent that modern industrial societies have moved away from the model of class relations that Marx developed, an emphasis on capitalist class structure and class relations can be dismissed as outdated. Marx's analysis may then be seen as applicable to 19th century capitalism and not 20th century developments. On the other hand, when Marx's analysis of capitalist class structure is sustained as the basis of class structure, class structure can be denied once collectivization has occurred. Social structure may then be conceptualized from the point of view of non-equalitarian classlessness. A society is classless because the particular form of class structure taken to be the form of class structure has been destroyed and unequal because status inequalities are still present. See Ossowski's description of non-equalitarian classlessness. Ossowski, Chapter VII. Compare, Trent Shoyer, "Toward a Critical Theory for Advanced Industrial Society," Recent Sociology, No. 2, ed. by Hans Peter Dreitzel (New York: Macmillan, Paperback edition, 1970), pp. 210-34.

¹⁶The issue of what constitutes class in Marx's view is related to the different uses which Marx made of the term. As Ossowski has shown, it is possible to explicate three different schemes of class relations in his work, only one of which, the 'dichotomic' scheme, has come to represent his view. Marx used the term class with both wide and narrow extensions. He used it to refer to relations to the means of production. He also used it to refer to class division in other kinds of social formations. He did not, however, distinguish between usages. Because no differentiation was made, "the use of the Marxian or Leninist concept of class tends to suggest--contrary to certain assertions made by both Engels and Lenin--that all class divisions have been based simply on a difference in relations to the means of production and that all class rule, all exploitation

class is defined as fundamental divisions between social groups, the question of how particular divisions between social groups develop becomes important. Attention can be focused on social relations which produce fundamental divisions between men, and the specific environments in which these divisions take shape.

Secondly, seeing property relations as pivotal in Marx's conception of social classes has been joined with a structural rather than an historical analysis of social inequality.¹⁷ In a structural analysis, how class relations come to be organized as property relations is not as salient an issue as what the actual property relations of a social structure are. The historical dimension is minimized. The issue as it will be posed here, however, is not that class relations in capitalism are economic relations but how class relations come to be organized as economic relations in some social structures. This involves asking how property relations develop. To put it most accurately it involves asking how men develop property forms and come to use property

of other men's labour, has been achieved by a class monopoly of the ownership of the means of production." Ossowski, pp. 127-28. The presentation here selects from the dichotomic conception of classes, although the selection does not involve committing class relations to ownership of the means of production. That is, binary attributes are emphasized; relations to the means of production are treated as an example of division not as the basis of division.

¹⁷This sense of structural is the American sense, a system of social constraints, not the French sense of structuralism.

forms to mediate their relations with each other. As I have already suggested, once the issue is stated in this way, power becomes a significant component of an analysis. Power is a vehicle of establishing and expressing fundamental divisions between social groups, and of perpetuating and extending them.¹⁸ To the extent that economic relations have been taken as the basis of class structure, too little attention has been paid to Marx's analysis of how class relations develop. For Marx, the basis of class structure was not property but labor taken in the widest sense of the term. When property relations are seen to operate as the basis of his theory of classes, a conception of class relations as relations produced by men is left unexamined because his treatment of labor as the basis of property is ignored.¹⁹ Classes are defined in relation to each other not in relation to the way, and the environment, in which they take shape. This means that an interpretation begins too late, at a point far after the place at which Marx began an analysis. Marx's thought is treated as a structural

¹⁸There is some hidden connection between what a structural analysis can do by way of developing an explanation of events and the kind of conception of power and of change it posits. As with any analysis, it emphasizes certain dimensions and neglects others.

¹⁹For example, "The subjective essence of private property, private property as activity for itself, as subject, as person, is labour." Marx, Early Writings, p. 147. Italics have been dropped from all quotations of Marx.

rather than as a processual analysis.²⁰ The content of the analysis is different. It focuses on economic aspects of class division, not on the relations of labor and class division.

A more comprehensive examination of Marx's 'theory' of social class involves placing the notion of class within the history of labor. It involves asking how class relations are structured by labor.²¹ When a more comprehensive analysis is used, social relations, class relations, and property relations are not thought of as given to Man but as produced by men in the course of producing a means of life. They are produced through labor. When an interpretation of Marx's 'theory' of classes begins with labor the question of class structure is related to the ways in which labor is divided in social formations.

²⁰I do not wish to deny that Marx also approached the study of social formations structurally. This is clearly the case in Capital. What I do want to emphasize is that this was not the only way in which he approached social formations. To interpret Marx's work always involves a selection of issues and conceptualizations. A structural analysis is a selection as is this presentation.

²¹This is what is at issue in Ossowski's use of asymmetrical relations of dependence. These relations are not described in terms of the way they take shape. They are relations of classification. For example, there is a marked difference in saying that a dichotomic scheme of class division is characterized by property and propertylessness, and saying that a dichotomic scheme of class division is characterized by property and labor. The first form of the dichotomy suggests opposite attributes. The second form of the dichotomy suggests, in addition, a dialectic, e.g., property emerges out of labor.

Relations of Labor

Little attention has been paid to Marx's notions of labor or of the division of labor. This is in part due to the late publication of some of his writings: The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts in 1932; The German Ideology; Grudrisse in 1939-40.²² It is also due to a constant tendency to approach Marx's thought from the point of view of Capital where his conception of labor and the division of labor has as its referent the structure of capitalism.²³ I have tried to suggest that social structures arise out of man's effort to construct a way to sustain life, out of their work. This is the point at which an analysis must begin if an understanding of how class relations develop is to be emphasized. When an analysis begins with man's effort to sustain life, labor as the basis of the sustenance of life is connected with the environment in which men work and

²²Grudrisse was first published in Moscow, 1939-41. Until it was published in Berlin in 1953 it was virtually unknown. The entire Grudrisse has not yet been translated into English. Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations is an excerpt from the collection published in English in 1965.

²³Capital has been the major referent for an understanding of Marx's treatment of the division of labor in the field of sociology. His earlier conceptions were not available to a number of thinkers who read Marx and have informed the sociological tradition, e.g. Weber, Durkheim, Simmel. This is extremely important to remember as the main line of understanding the division of labor was stabilized in the discipline by scholars who were responding to Marx's characterization in Capital not to earlier conceptions in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, The German Ideology or Grudrisse.

their relations to each other in their work. The specific ways in which men work, the ways in which they divide their labor determine the class relations which emerge.²⁴

Marx's conception of the meaning of labor is the basis of his critique of Feuerbach in The German Ideology. "The chief defect of all materialism up to now [including Feuerbach's] is, that the object, reality, what we apprehend through our senses, is understood only in the form of the object or contemplation; but not as sensuous human activity, as practice; not subjectively."²⁵ 'Sensuous human activity' or 'practice' is labor. It is the basis of man's being in the world and the way in which men construct a world. For Marx, men make history, they thus make themselves, become through their work.²⁶

Labor is the basis of the sustenance of life, and the development of social structure. Men produce through labor a material life, a way to sustain their existence.

²⁴The division of labor can be taken narrowly as a technical process referring to the specialization of tasks or very broadly as a social process referring to the division of community and private interests, the division of interests between town and country, the division of mental and physical labor. Reference to the division of labor as a social process is prominent in Marx's early writings. The examples used here come from The German Ideology. This essay treats the division of labor as a social process and as the most fundamental social process after labor.

²⁵Marx, The German Ideology, p. 197.

²⁶"The first necessity therefore in any theory of history is to observe this fundamental fact in all its significance and all its implications and to accord it its due importance." Marx, The German Ideology, p. 16.

Producing a material life is not only a means of sustenance, it is also a definite mode of sustenance. It is a form of association, of collective existence. Labor involves both sustenance of life and a distinct pattern of association with others. The production of social structure through labor is always both a technical and a social process. It involves forms or techniques of labor (production) and relations of labor (production).²⁷ When the notion of production is taken exclusively as a technical principle, when it is separated from the relations of labor which producing a means of life entails, as it often is in interpretations of Marx, his formulation becomes a narrow, technical analysis. Social relations, and class structure are determined by 'production' (technical sense of the term) rather than simultaneously given in production (wide sense of the term meaning labor).²⁸ This is the source of most interpretations

²⁷In a fundamental sense, labor and production have the same meaning. Men produce a social world through labor. Labor is the production of a social world. This is often acknowledged in using the terms productive labor or productive life. "Productive life is, however, species-life. It is life-creating life. In the type of life activity resides the whole character of a species, its species-character; and free, conscious activity is the species character of human beings." Marx, Early Writings, p. 127.

²⁸There is an ambiguity in taking labor and production as synonymous which is reflected in Marx's own works and selectively emphasized in interpretations of Marx. Compare for example the terms 'mode of life' and 'mode of production.' We do not sense their having the same meaning. Or compare 'labor' and 'productive forces.' Do these terms have the same or different meanings? For Marx, labor was a productive force although we most quickly think of it as a technical not a human process. Marx however also speaks

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of class structure based on property relations, on ownership of the means of production. In addition, when production is taken narrowly, when it is separated from labor, the meaning of labor as a dynamic and world-building activity is lost. Labor is production, the basis of the produced social world. It is the media within which social life is built. It thus is the media for the development of the world of social forms. This means that it is the basis of the inequalities which develop between men. Men produce a way to sustain life, and simultaneously a network of social relations. To the extent that inequalities exist between men, they are also produced by men in work.²⁹ Men produce their inequalities in the course of producing a means of sustenance. When labor is separated from production, e.g. as the means of production, or as the forces of production, an analysis of class inequality loses its referent in the social process which is organized by men.

I have suggested that the way in which productive labor is divided is the basis of class relations between men. I have defined class relations as fundamental divisions between social groups and I have implied that these

of productive forces in a very objectified way. For example, "The form of intercourse determined by the existing productive forces at all previous. . . " Marx, The German Ideology, p. 26.

²⁹"For all human servitude is involved in the relation of the worker to production, and all the types of servitude are only modifications or consequences of this relation." Marx, Early Writings, pp. 132-33.

divisions refer to power dependence relations. Class relations are power relations of one-sided dependence. A power relation of one-sided dependence is a relation in which the power of a class A over a class B is not limited by any dependence of class A on class B.³⁰ I have also suggested that labor is a process which produces social forms, including forms of inequality. Labor is a productive process, a way in which forms are constructed. The way in which labor is divided produces a division in the process of world-building, a division which appears in the social relations which labor entails. This means that class relations develop in relation to labor and the division of labor. Two things must be borne in mind. First, labor is a productive process, a process which produces a social world. Second, the division of labor produces class structures.

³⁰I will continue to develop the meaning of one-sided dependence as I attempt to explicate it in Marx's writings. See footnote 1 for a definition of power relations of mutual dependence.

THE DIVISION OF LABOR AND CLASS STRUCTURE

For Marx, division of labor does not mean differentiation of tasks or functions, but division in the conditions of existence of men.³¹ It means that there are fundamental and qualitative differences in the ways in which men live and work in the world.³² These differences 'produce' class relations between men.³³ That is, the differences in the ways in which men live and labor in the world 'produce' their class relations. I do not mean to imply that the division of labor 'causes' class relations but that it entails them. To say this another way, class relations presuppose qualitative differences in the conditions of existence of men based on the division of labor. The form

³¹This formulation emphasizes conditions not because it is in any sense the 'definitive' meaning of the division of labor but because it is the clearest way to explicate the character of the advantage of the division of labor for a class of capitalists and its disadvantage for a class of laborers. The division of labor can, and in fact, will be described as the division of the means of labor (production) and labor, the division of the objects of labor and labor and as a division of interests.

³²I have, of course, been using the terms labor and work as synonyms. To distinguish between them as do some writers tends to obscure the productive process.

³³It should be recalled that I refer class relations to power relations of one-sided dependence. See footnote 4.

these relations take may be a property relation, for example, ownership of capital and labor. The basis of the form however is not property. Its basis is a division in conditions of existence which involves a power advantage on the one hand, and one-sided dependence on the other. Conditions of existence are embedded in productive labor. The division of labor is a division of productive labor. This was Marx's most comprehensive conception of the division of labor.³⁴

Marx describes the division of labor as the dissolution of the unity of productive labor, the unity of man in a natural environment he is constructing and changing in as he is constructing it. It thus presupposes the unity of men and means that it is breaking up.³⁵ His early discussion of the dissolution of productive labor was taken in terms of splitting up the process of productive labor into accumulated labor, what Marx first called capital, and the activity of laboring. His later discussion was taken in terms of ownership of the conditions of labor (the means

³⁴This means that Marx's usage of the division of labor cannot be compared to Durkheim's usage. Labor for Durkheim was a much more circumscribed notion of functions. Durkheim had no conception of productive labor in either the sense of man producing his social world or in the sense of man having a species-life.

³⁵This is the reason why, in footnote 24, I emphasized that the division of labor was the fundamental social process; it breaks up the unity of man and of man's social world.

of production) and labor.³⁶

Division and Property I

The division of labor separates productive labor from itself. (This is an approximation of its meaning.) It separates ownership of the products of labor, and the instruments of labor, from the activity of laboring. Capital emerges with this separation as accumulated labor owned by a non-laborer. As distinct from the activity of producing objects and a category of laborers, capital is a form of property. The division of labor creates property and a 'class' of owners of property different from the producers of capital. Laborers then become the producing non-owners of capital. "Division of labour and private property are, moreover, identical expressions: in the one the same thing is affirmed with reference to activity as is affirmed in the other with reference to the product of the activity."³⁷

When productive labor is divided, property comes to mediate the relations which men have with their environment and their relations to each other. It does so first by marking an asymmetrical difference in their conditions of

³⁶I have primarily relied on The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts in developing Marx's early formulation, and on Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations in developing his 'later' formulation.

³⁷Marx, The German Ideology, p. 22.

existence. Owners of capital possess at any point in time resources to sustain their lives, apart from any activity which might be seen as labor. Non-owning laborers possess their labor as their only means of subsistence. Property marks the asymmetry in the conditions of existence of owners of capital, and non-owning producers of capital. Property however is not the basis of class division. Property entails an advantage in conditions of existence, an advantage based on acquired capital.³⁸ The form of the advantage is property. The process producing property is the basis of class structure. This process is the division of labor.

The asymmetry in conditions of existence which emerges when property develops is based on the reduction of productive labor to a means of life for a category of men, i.e., the alienation of labor, and the segmentalization of the laboring process into accumulated labor and labor, or ownership of the means of labor and labor, i.e., a class structure. Marx used two modes of analysis in describing the division of labor.³⁹ I want first to emphasize his

³⁸I mean to say here that the asymmetry in conditions of existence contains an advantage for owners of capital, and that the advantage is of a particular type. It can be extended; the advantage entails future advantages.

³⁹It would perhaps be better to say that he used two vocabularies which reflect different aspects of the same phenomenon. This means then that alienation is an attribute of class structure. In the section on property and alienation I will take up this point. Compare the following definition of alienation. "By alienation we mean the process by which the unity of producing and the product is broken." Peter Berger and Standley Pullberg, New Left Review, No. 35, (1966), p. 61.

discussion of the segmentalization of productive labor because it is a more straightforward way of explicating power relations of class division. Capital is accumulated labor, the objects of labor separated from laborers who produce them. Capital is a form (product) of the process of labor. It is produced by labor. This is why Marx first referred to capital as accumulated labor.

To the extent that a class of men possess capital, their being in the world is based on an advantage in their conditions of existence. The advantage in their conditions of existence produces their power advantage over a class of laborers. The advantage of capital is based on the acquisition of the products of labor.⁴⁰ The products of labor possessed as capital are objects which would otherwise be the means of sustenance of a class of laborers. When capital develops, laborers have no means of subsistence because they no longer own the objects of their labor. Laborers are then entirely dependent on laboring as a means of life. Because a class of capitalists possess capital, their existence is independent of labor at any point in time. Because a class of laborers do not possess the objects of

⁴⁰To my knowledge, no explanation of how the products of labor are acquired is given in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts. When Marx reformulates the division of labor as ownership of labor and labor, he provides an historical account. The division of labor is treated as an historical phenomenon. In the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts his analysis is primarily philosophical, not historical.

their work, their existence in continuously dependent on labor. When a class of laborers produce objects they do not own, they produce for capital. Production for capital increases the wealth of capital. At the same time it produces the dependence on a class of laborers on labor.⁴¹

To work as a means of life is still a process of labor, the creation of values. The increasing wealth of capital enlarges the independence of a capitalist class of the activity of labor and sustains the dependence of a class of laborers.

Once capital has been produced, it mediates the existence of a class of laborers by mediating the activity of laboring. From the point of view of an owner of capital, labor, the activity of work, is not a means of life, as it is for a laborer, but a means for the acquisition of more capital. Labor is the basis of the wealth of capital. For a worker, labor is a means of existence. Labor exists for an owner of capital only when it is needed for capital. However, for a worker, labor must exist for survival. When labor does not exist for the laborer, he cannot live.⁴² In

⁴¹There are two interrelated processes here: 1) production for capital, 2) in production for capital, the laborer produces his own dependence.

⁴²"The worker is the subjective manifestation of the fact that capital is man wholly lost to himself, just as capital is the objective manifestation of the fact that labour is man lost to himself. However, the worker has the misfortune to be a living capital, a capital with needs, which forfeits its interest and consequently its livelihood during every moment that it is not at work. As capital, the

this way the division of conditions of existence between owners of capital and laborers moves forward to become a division in the conditions of survival for a class of laborers.

To the extent that a class of men possess capital (accumulated labor) they possess the productive power of labor for capital. The productive power of labor is abstract labor, not the labor of men but the labor of potential capital. To the extent that a class of men produce capital for others, they exist only for capital and not for themselves.⁴³ In acquiring ownership of the objects of

value of the worker varies according to supply and demands, and his physical existence, his life, was and is considered as a supply of goods, similar to any other goods. The worker produces capital and capital produces him. Thus he produces himself, and man as a worker, as a commodity, is the product of the whole process. Man is simply a worker, and as a worker his human qualities only exist for the sake of capital which is alien to him. Since labour and capital are alien to each other, and thus related only in an external and accidental manner, this alien character must appear in reality. As soon as it occurs to capital--either necessarily or voluntarily--not to exist any longer for the worker, he no longer exists for himself; he has no work, no wage, and since he exists only as a worker and not as a human being, he may as well let himself starve, be buried, etc. The worker is only a worker when he exists as capital for himself, and he only exists as capital when capital is there for him. The existence of capital is his existence, his life, since it determines the content of his life independently of him." Marx, Early Writings, p. 137.

⁴³This of course presumes that laborers have no means of existence other than labor. Marx did not specifically refer to the absence of a means of labor for laborers in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts. He later explicitly began his analysis of labor and capital from the point of view of ownership of the means of labor and labor.

labor, owners of capital acquire the process of labor. (The process of labor is for capital). Labor produces the wealth of capital. Capital as property through the process of labor mediates the production of a class of laborers. Labor is purchased when it is needed for the acquisition of more capital. It is purchased at cost. That is, at whatever is the minimum necessary subsistence of a class of laborers. A class of laborers is regulated by the demands of capital.

The division of labor entails an advantage for owners of capital. The advantage of capital entails further advantages for capital.⁴⁴ Production for capital increases the wealth of capital. The wealth of capital regulates labor for capital. Labor for capital is the means of existence for a class of laborers. When labor for capital is unwanted, a class of laborers has no means of life. Without a means of life, laborers cannot live. Capital regulates the production of the laborer in regulating the labor process.

Because labor is the basis of capital, the relation

⁴⁴This is in fact the point of attack in Marx's critique of political economy. "We shall begin from a contemporary economic fact. The worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces and the more his production increases in wealth and extent. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more goods he creates. The devaluation of the human world increases in direct relation with the increase in value of the world of things." Marx, Early Writings, p. 121.

between labor and capital might be thought to be a relation of mutual dependence.⁴⁵ As a relation of mutual dependence, the power of capital would be circumscribed by the dependence of capital on labor. In what sense might capital be thought of as dependent on labor? Capital is not dependent on the process of labor. The process of labor exists independent of the existence of capital as production for sustenance. Capital is dependent on labor in the narrow sense of labor as a means of existence. Labor in the narrow sense produces capital. What is at issue then is whether the labor which produces capital, is the basis of the dependence of capital on labor. The labor which produces capital is the labor of men, the labor on which capital depends is an abstract form of labor. I have tried to show the value of labor for capital is the acquisition of wealth. The value of labor for a class of laborers is their life. The dependence of capital on abstract labor is not commensurate with the dependence of the laborer on labor. The dependence of the capitalist on abstract labor is based on the acquisition of more wealth. To the extent that capital does not require more wealth it has no dependence on labor at all.⁴⁶ The dependence of the laborer on labor

⁴⁵See footnote 1 for a definition of power relations of mutual dependence.

⁴⁶Primitive explanations of capital's continued demand for wealth have often involved imputations of greed. Some explanation is in any case required to keep the cycle of production for capital moving. In Marx's later formulation, the cycle continued automatically through surplus value.

is life itself. Capital is not dependent on any specific laborer, only on abstract labor. Any specific laborer is dependent on labor for life. If a class of capitalists does not depend on labor in the same way that a class of laborers depends on labor, does it then depend on labor at all? Labor produces the wealth of capital. It produces the laborer.⁴⁷ Each act of labor in the narrow sense of labor for life confirms the labor of life. Capital does not depend on labor. The laborer depends on labor. Labor produces capital. In producing capital, it produces itself for capital. Capital does not depend on labor. It regulates the continued existence of labor. The relation of capital and labor is indirectly a relation of one-sided dependence.⁴⁸ The dependence of labor produces the power of capital. The power of capital is based on its autonomy from labor. Its autonomy is achieved through acquisition of the objects of labor.

Division and Property II

As you recall, I described the division of labor

⁴⁷I have already pointed to the absence of an explanation of how capital acquires the objects of labor. The same question can be posed as how labor alienates itself. I will take up this point in the section on property and alienation.

⁴⁸I use the term indirectly because it is necessary to presume the absence of a means of labor in developing the relation. Were this presumption not made, the relation would be one of mutual dependence.

as the dissolution of productive labor. Marx's early discussion of this was taken in terms of splitting up productive labor into accumulated labor and labor. His later discussion was taken in terms of the conditions of labor and labor.⁴⁹ Conditions of labor are means by which men labor. They are means of production. The division of labor separates productive labor into ownership of the means of labor and labor.⁵⁰

As distinct from objects of labor and the activity of labor, means of labor are instruments of production, means by which men produce their sustenance. Land, for example, is a means of labor (production).⁵¹ It is both a media of labor for the production of use-values and the raw material of the laboring process. To the extent that men possess a means of labor, it is the objective condition of their being in the world. It is the basis of the unity of their labor. As possessors of a means of labor, men

⁴⁹In The German Ideology, this distinction was developed as ownership of labor and labor. I will take up this point in the section on natural inequality and class division.

⁵⁰The term 'means of labor' has the same meaning here as the term 'means of production.' They will be used interchangeably. To treat means of production apart from its referent to labor is to narrow and make extremely technical its usage. See an earlier discussion of this point on p. 18.

⁵¹Marx also described the means of labor as instruments of labor. Instruments of labor are tools and skills involved in producing objects of use.

are laboring proprietors of the conditions of their existence. They have an objective existence independent of their labor which is their proprietorship of their means of labor. Furthermore, their identity as proprietors of their means of production is confirmed because the objects which they produce are their own objects, their use values. Possession of a means of labor presumes possession of the objects produced by means of labor. Possession does not imply however that the means of labor are appropriated by labor. Marx assumed that men simply regarded the objective conditions of their labor as their own.⁵²

The division of labor is the dissolution of man's proprietorship of the means of his labor (land or instruments of labor).⁵³ It separates laborers from their means

⁵²Possession of land appears not as the product of labor but occurs as a natural attitude. "Thus originally property means no more than man's attitude to his natural conditions of production as belonging to him, as the prerequisites of his own existence; his attitude to them as natural prerequisites of himself, which constitute, as it were, a prolongation of his body." Marx, Pre-Capitalist. . . , p. 89. In so far as man's attitude towards his objective conditions is confirmed in existence, it is realized through actual productiveness. Man's natural attitude is confirmed through his active, real relationship to it.

⁵³This shift is extremely important as it suggests an historical treatment of the division of labor. What I have treated rather formally as class division and Marx first approached philosophically can be examined as an historical process. This in fact is what Marx undertook. See for example The German Ideology and Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations where he describes the division of labor historically.

of production and thus from any means of subsistence that can be gained through proprietary labor. Men then no longer have an objective existence but exist only subjectively as potential wage laborers for those who acquire the means of production. The dissolution of the laborers' relation to the objective conditions of existence involves the acquisition of the means of labor by a class of men. Capital's early formation occurs simply because wealth permits the purchase of the objective conditions of labor on the one hand, and the exchange of labor of free workers for money on the other.⁵⁴ Capital then accelerates this separation.

When the means of labor are owned by a class of men, the same division in the conditions of existence appears between owners of capital and laborers. In this formulation of class division however the power relation involved is directly a relation of one-sided dependence. It is no longer expressed as loss of the objects of labor but as the acquisition of the means of labor by capital.⁵⁵

⁵⁴For example, "What enables monetary wealth to turn into capital is, on the one hand, that it finds free labourers, and on the other, it finds means of subsistence, materials, etc. which would otherwise be in one form or another the property of the now objectiveless masses and are also free and available for sale." Marx, Pre-Capitalist . . . , p. 108.

⁵⁵This form of class division provides a way around the question of how capital acquires the objects of labor which was an obscurity in the first formulation of the division. It also suggests that labor does not create capital at least in quite the direct sense taken at first. Capital can be seen outside of the whole issue of accumulated labor.

Laborers exist in a condition of dependence because they have no means of labor with which to achieve a means of subsistence. The means of labor are owned by capital. Laborers are directly dependent on a class of capitalists by virtue of capital's acquisition of the means of labor. In the early formulation laborers were dependent on the activity of work because a class of capitalists owned the objects of their labor. Their detachment from a means of labor was presumed. The early formulation involved capital's owning the objects of labor not the means of labor. How the objects of labor were acquired by capital was not explained. The dynamic of power and dependence is also clarified. In the first formulation, the power advantage of capital over a class of laborers involved from the point of view of capital being able to define labor as abstract labor rather than human labor irrespective of the point of view of the laborer. The advantage was based on an asymmetry in resources (accumulated labor) produced by labor and separated from labor. In this formulation the power advantage of capital involves owning the means of labor as well as the objects of labor. Labor now entails the exchange of wage labor for subsistence, e.g. a means of existence. The exchange involves a double advantage for capital. Not only is labor regulated by the demands of capital, sought when it is needed, but the very act of laboring for capital involves the expansion of wealth of capital through surplus value. Production for capital

automatically increases the wealth of a class of capitalists and the extent of the wealth of capital. In the early formulation, production for capital increased the wealth of capital only if production was initiated by capital. This means that the character of the power advantage of capital has become more decisive. In the early formulation the power advantage of capital was over the laborer. Now the power advantage involves increasing the advantage of capital automatically while at the same time increasing the dependence of labor.⁵⁶

Labor exists irrespective of capital as the production of a means of sustenance. When capital develops labor exists only for capital. When capital is defined by acquisition of the means of labor, there is no objective means of existence for a class of laborers because they possess no means of labor. The process of labor exists as a process of production for sustenance. When capital develops, the

⁵⁶In Richard Emerson's formulation. The Power advantage of A over B is always a relative advantage because A's advantage is limited by his dependence on B. In a power relation of one-sided dependence A's power over B is 'absolute.' Seen through time this means that the advantage can only continue to expand. It is an advantage which leads to further advantages. Emerson, "Power-Dependence Relations," p. 32. Also compare the following: "First--unmediated and mediated unity of the two. Capital and labour are at first still united; later indeed separated and alienated, but reciprocally developing and promoting each other as positive conditions. Opposition between the two--they mutually exclude each other; the worker recognizes the capitalist as his own non-existence and vice versa; each seeks to rob the other of his existence." Marx, Early Writings, p. 144.

process of labor continues not as production for sustenance but as production for capital. The process of labor becomes an exchange process rather than a subsistence process. In the exchange process, a class of laborers exists to the extent that they are needed for the production of commodities. The exchange of labor for subsistence, however involves not merely the subsistence of a class of laborers but the expansion of the wealth of capital. The exchange process produces surplus value for capital. The increasing wealth of capital involves nothing more than the capitalist acting as a middle man between the means of labor and a class of laborers.⁵⁷ Capital merely in uniting men and means of labor which are already present increases the power of capital. Furthermore the power of capital is not confined by limited resources. The resources of capital (the means of production) develop through time, through surplus value and the expansion of the means of production. The power of capital and the dependence of labor accelerate through time.

I have described the division of labor as a class division. The character of class division, I have argued, is a power relation of one-sided dependence. Its phenomenological form is property. A power relation of one-sided dependence is defined as a relation in which the power of Class A over Class B is not circumscribed by any dependence

⁵⁷Marx, Pre-Capitalist.

of Class A on B. This means that A's power is total and that B's dependence is total. No process of equilibration exists in a power relation of one-sided dependence. B has no power with which to force a measure of equilibration. A power relation of one-sided dependence cannot be equilibrated; it can only be overthrown.⁵⁸ If you recall, I developed the class dependence of labor first as the absence of objects of subsistence and second as the absence of a means of production. The class power of capital was first based on ownership of the objects of labor and second ownership of the means of labor. The class power of capital can only expand in scope. In the first formulation, production for capital increased the wealth of capital when it was initiated by capital. In the second formulation, mediating the means of labor and a class of laborers enhances the wealth of capital automatically through surplus value. Merely sustaining a class of laborers at work enhances the wealth of capital. Not sustaining them ends

⁵⁸There is an antinomy in Marx's thought which is in part the origin of my interest in power relations and the division of labor. In reading Marx, there is an apparent shift in the solutions Marx forwarded to class inequality. In his early works, Marx focuses on the destruction of the division of labor. This is very clearly seen in The German Ideology. In his later works, Marx focuses on the destruction of property and particularly the means of production. This shift was puzzling in two quite different ways. In what sense was Marx referring to the division of labor when he advocated destroying it? How is it that he moved to destruction of property and away from the division of labor?

their life. The power of capital remains for a class of capitalists as a resource of their existence. The division of labor entails the wealth of a class of capitalists. Seen through time the division of labor continuously increases the wealth of capital in an unending expansion of the resources of capital. The division of labor is dynamic. It separates labor, entails a class division and the acceleration of the conditions of division (the content of the division). The fundamental class division entails a widening cycle of class inequalities.

Property and Alienation

I earlier suggested that Marx used two vocabularies in describing the division of labor; the segmentalization of labor, and the alienation of labor. The segmentalization of labor separates the objects of labor from laborers. It entails a class structure. Laborers then no longer possess the objects of their work. Their objects are the property of a class of capitalists. As the property of capital, their objects appear to them as alien autonomous entities apart from them. Marx called the alienation of the worker from the objects of his work "the alienation of the thing." "The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, assumes an external existence, but that it exists independently, outside himself, and alien to him, and that it stands opposed

to him as an autonomous power."⁵⁹

The alienation of the thing is the laborers' experience of the objective condition of alienation, i.e., a property form owned by capital. It expresses his experience of his class condition. Laborers experience their objects as alien autonomous objects. Their objects are alien. They are owned by a class of capitalists. Furthermore, their objects are a power apart from them. They are the power of capital. The power of capital is capital's capacity to define the activity of labor for capital, a power based on possessing the objects of labor. Marx is quite explicit about the objective reality of the experience of alienation.

If the product of labour is alien to me and confronts me as an alien power, to whom does it belong? If my own activity does not belong to me but is an alien, forced activity, to whom does it belong?⁶⁰

He answers:

The alien being to whom labour and the product of labour belong, to whose service labour is devoted, and to whose enjoyment the product of labour goes, can only be man himself. If the product of labour does not belong to the worker, but confronts him as an alien power, this can only be because it belongs to a man other than the worker.⁶¹

The objective reality of alienation is class division.

The relation of the worker to work also produces

⁵⁹Marx, Early Writings, pp. 122-23.

⁶⁰Marx, Early Writings, p. 129.

⁶¹Marx, Early Writings, p. 130.

the relation of the capitalist (or whatever one likes to call the lord of labour) to work.⁶²

Accumulated labor is the property of capital. The alienation of the thing is the worker's experience of the loss of his objects of work. Both vocabularies refer to the same process, the division of labor, although from different vantage points.⁶³ Property, you recall in the early formulation, is produced by labor. Capital is accumulated labor. This means that it is a product of self alienation.⁶⁴ Property is the necessary result of alienated labor, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself.⁶⁵

⁶²Marx, Early Writings, p. 131.

⁶³They express two aspects of property: property as accumulated labor owned by capital; and property as the laborer's loss of his objects. The experience of property will be extremely different when looked at from the point of view of capital or labor. "Only for the workers, therefore, is the separation of capital, landed property and labour an inexcusable, vital and harmful separation." Marx, Early Writings, p. 69.

⁶⁴This is a logical inference of this argument once alienation is conceived of as the laborers' experience of class division. See for example Marx, Early Writings, p. 131. "We have, of course, derived the concept of alienated labour (alienated life) from political economy, from an analysis of the movement of private property. But the analysis of this concept shows that although private property appears to be the basis and cause of alienated labour, it is rather a consequence of the latter, just as the gods are fundamentally not the cause but the product of confusions of human reason." Or "Private property as the material, summarized expression of alienated labour includes both relations; the relation of the worker to labour, to the product of his labour and to the non-worker, and the relation of the non-worker to the worker and to the product of the latter's labour." Marx, Early Writings, p. 134.

⁶⁵Marx, Early Writings, p. 131.

Alienation from the objects of labor summarizes alienation in work activity. It summarizes self-alienation in production.

This is the relationship of the worker to his own activity as something alien and not belonging to him, activity as suffering (passivity), strength as powerlessness, creation as emasculation, the personal physical and mental energy of the worker, his personal life (for what is life but activity) as an activity which is directed against himself, independent of him and not belonging to him. This is the self-alienation as against the above mentioned alienation of the thing.⁶⁶

If the relation of the worker to work also produces the relation of the capitalist to work, how is it then that men alienate their labor? Marx raised this question in The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts. If the alienation of labor is a vocabulary for expressing the experience of class division, then to raise the question of how men alienate their labor is to raise one form of the question of how it is that the objects of labor come to be acquired by a class of capitalists. I have already pointed to the absence of an account of how the objects of labor are acquired by capital. Neither form of the question was answered in the early formulation of class division.⁶⁸

⁶⁶Marx, Early Writings, p. 126. The imagery of powerlessness is particularly striking in the quote.

⁶⁷Marx, Early Writings, p. 133.

⁶⁸An answer was given in The German Ideology based on labor power. See the discussion in Natural Inequality and Social Division.

Work activity within alienation is labor for capital, not labor for sustenance. Labor becomes a means of life not an exemplification of productive life.

For labour, life activity, productive life, now appear to man only as means for the satisfaction of a need, the need to maintain his physical existence. Productive life is, however, species-life. It is life-creating life. In the type of life activity resides the whole character of a species, its species-character; and free, conscious activity is the species character of human beings. Life itself appears only as a means of life.⁶⁹

The alienation of the laborer is an expression of the experience of dependence, of powerlessness. It expresses a class attribute, dependence, in a class relation of power and dependence. Alienation is usually treated as an existential or psychological condition not as a class attribute. It is analyzed apart from its objective content. As a psychological condition, an account is given which is highly individualized. As an existential condition, it is treated as a burden of the species, an intrinsic aspect of the human condition. In either case, its meaning as a relational experience is not expressed. There is no reference to a world in which men live and their relations to each other in the world. Without such a reference, alienation can only be a condition, not as an historical phenomenon or a phenomenon of particular types of social structures.

If alienation expresses a class attribute in a

⁶⁹Marx, Early Writings, p. 127.

class relation of one-sided dependence, then it can be analyzed in history.⁷⁰ It can be seen to 'develop' within the context of class division. This means, also, that the content of the experience is not fixed but evolving as the context of class division develops. Alienation, for example, can take shape as an experience within awareness, or as an experience outside awareness. Equally important, the experience and its shaping can be related to the conditions in which men live.⁷¹

I have suggested that the alienation of labor expresses the experience of the objective condition of class division. It expresses it from the point of view of the worker. The segmentalization of labor and the alienation of labor are vocabularies for describing class relations entailed in the division of labor. This means that the division of labor is the alienation of labor.⁷²

The division of labour is the economic expression of the social character of labour within alienation. Or, since labour is only an expression of human activity within alienation of life activity as alienation of life, the division of labour is nothing but the

⁷⁰"The establishment of the individual as a worker, stripped of all qualities except this one, is itself a product of history." Marx, Pre-Capitalist. . . , p. 68.

⁷¹The distinction between alienation and reification involves contrasting conditions of commodity production with other conditions of production.

⁷²The division of labor equals the alienation of labor.

alienated establishment of human activity as a real species activity or the activity of man as a species being. The economists are very confused and self-contradictory about the nature of the division of labour (which of course has to be regarded as a principal motive force in the production of wealth once labour is recognized as the essence of private property), i.e. about the alienated form of human activity as species-activity.⁷³

The consideration of division of labour and exchange is of the greatest interest, since they are the perceptible, alienated expression of human activity and capacities as the activity and capacities proper to a species.⁷⁴

The analysis as it has been developed may appear circular. I have equated the division of labor with the alienation of labor, class structure, and property. This would be the case if the notion of productive labor were not the background of the entire discussion. It is within the context of productive labor that the analysis must be placed. The division of labor is the dissolution of the unity of man, a dissolution which transforms social relations into class relations, productive life into alienated labor, and labor into capital.

Natural Inequality and Class Division

The class relation between capital and labor has been described from two points of view: accumulated labor; and ownership of the means of production. In each case, class division entailed a power advantage on the one hand

⁷³Marx, Early Writings, p. 181.

⁷⁴Marx, Early Writings, p. 187.

and one-sided dependence on the other. In the first formulation, the class power of capital involved being able to define the labor process as a process for capital. In the second formulation, the class power of capital involved acquiring the means of labor. The power advantage in the second formulation involved automatic expansion of the scope of capital's power. The class relation of capital and labor presupposes the division of labor. Both formulations implicitly contain another way of analyzing class division--property in labor and labor. That is, class division can be taken from the point of view of accumulated labor, the means of production, and 'owning' labor. What is fundamental in this last formulation is whether men own their labor or not. If men own their labor, their labor is the objective basis of their being in the world. They are the proprietors of their labor. This means that labor is a form of their property.⁷⁵ When however laborers do not own their work activity, when it is not for them but for others, their labor is the property of others. A similar kind of account was given in the section on accumulated labor and labor. There, however, owning the objects of labor as property led to control of labor. Here, control of labor is itself a form of property. Property thus has a different meaning. It is not, for example, a

⁷⁵Marx, for example, referred to owning one's labor as estate capital in describing the feudal epoch. Marx, The German Ideology, p. 47.

produced object owned by a non-laborer or a means of labor. Property is control of the producer of an object; it is control of labor power. The formulation is transitional. To the extent that property is not a produced object, it is disconnected from the alienation of labor. It does not refer to labor producing its dependence. This shifts the meaning of dependence. Dependence is defined by the involuntary character of labor, not by the reduction of productive labor to a means of labor. It also shifts the meaning of power. Power refers to an intrinsic power advantage among men, not to property as a form of power advantage.

This formulation of class division is expressed in The German Ideology. The division of property in labor and labor, is entailed in the division of labor as a natural division. A natural division of labor is built up in connection with inequalities between men. Inequalities in abilities and capacities produce a natural division of work in terms of abilities. A natural division of work is convertible into a class division. Natural inequalities contain a power process. The process is the following: natural inequalities involve a natural advantage for some in terms of labor and a natural disadvantage for others. A natural advantage in labor is an advantage over other men in terms of their labor. It is a comparative advantage. As a comparative advantage in labor it can be extended. The advantage for example can be used to acquire the labor

of other men.⁷⁶ Control of the labor of others was the first form of property. Marx identified it with the natural division of labor in the family, the first such division. The division of labor in the family produces the power advantage of a man over his family. His power advantage is his control of the labor of his family, a latent slavery system. "This latent slavery in the family, though still very crude, is the first property, but even at this early stage it corresponds perfectly to the definition of modern economists who call it the power of disposing of the labour power of others."⁷⁷ The ironic tone is Marx's own.

There are two aspects of the class structure of natural inequality. The natural division of labor produces property forms (labor produces property). A natural division in abilities entails power process, the conversion of natural attributes into class attributes. Natural division 'produces' on the one hand a power advantage, i.e., control of the labor power of others and on the other hand, one-sided dependence, i.e., involuntary labor. To the extent that natural inequalities contain a power process, they must be subverted by conscious and rational control.

Involuntary labor is labor without choice. In this instance, its root is the biology of the species

⁷⁶This is an extrapolation. Marx nowhere in The German Ideology gives a precise account of the process.

⁷⁷Marx, The German Ideology, pp. 21-22.

man.⁷⁸ Destroying involuntary labor involves acquiring rational control of natural conditions and attributes. For example,

Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all early relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all natural premises as the creatures of men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of individuals united.⁷⁹

The involuntary character of labor is stated much more broadly by Marx. I have referred only to the involuntary character of labor in a natural division of attributes.

⁷⁸This is an inaccurate way of stating the point. While natural inequalities have their roots in biology of the species, it is men who make use of these inequalities.

⁷⁹Marx, The German Ideology, p. 70.

EPOCHS OF THE DIVISION OF LABOR

I have described the division of labor as a division entailing a class relation between laborers and owners of capital. The discussion has been extremely specific. I have referred exclusively to the class relation of capital and labor. Furthermore, I have treated capital and labor as if they were unitary phenomenon. I have neither referred to distinct forms of labor and capital, nor to the extremely important point that different kinds of labor produce different forms of capital. In order to expand the scope of the discussion, it is necessary to shift away from an analysis of class relations. Part of the shift involves moving to a different level of abstraction. I have already suggested that Marx described the division of labor from other points of view than the division of capital and labor.⁸⁰ I have selected one of his formulations. There are several others. To describe them extensively would put me too far afield of the main purpose of this essay, an examination of power relations and the division of labor. To close the discussion at this point would lead to some confusion as most discussions of Marx's view of the division of labor do not refer to the conception I have

⁸⁰See footnote 24.

emphasized. Two additional formulations of the division of labor will be briefly developed: the division of interests and the distribution of dependence. They are formulated at similar levels of abstraction, and are developed together in The German Ideology.

In The German Ideology, Marx described the division of labor from the point of view of different kinds of labor and different epochs of labor. This means that several types of labor rather than a single category of labor are being referred to. Different kinds of labor involve different modes of work.⁸¹ For example, agricultural labor has a different mode of work activity than commercial or industrial labor. In addition, the instruments of agricultural labor are different from those of industrial labor as is the setting of labor. "The division of labor implies from the outset the division of the conditions of labor, of tools and materials. . ."⁸² Different modes of work

⁸¹I am using 'mode' to suggest a broader meaning for work than function or task. A mode implies both a labor process and a context in which work takes place. For example, agricultural labor as a mode of labor refers to both a type of labor and to a setting of labor. It is very easy to misinterpret Marx's meaning and to think of labor in a narrower sense. With a narrow sense of the meaning of the term, it is extremely difficult to come to understand Marx's discussion of the division of labor as a division between town and countryside.

⁸²The full quote is the following. "The division of labour implies from the outset the division of the conditions of labour, of tools and materials, and thus the splitting up of accumulated capital among different owners, and thus, also, the division between capital and labour, and the different forms of property itself." Marx, The German Ideology, p. 65.

produce different forms of property. The product of agricultural labor, for example, is different from the product of industrial labor. Where there are different modalities of labor, there can be different kinds of ownership relations, e.g. communal or class ownership. Given property and ownership relations which property implies, social structure can be described as epochs of the division of labor. Epochs contain different labor processes, different forms of property, different kinds of ownership relations, and different kinds of interests.⁸³

The Divisions of Interests

When Marx refers to different kinds of labor and different kinds of property, the particular relations of classes to each other are less prominent in the analysis than are antagonistic interests of 'classes' vis-a-vis different modes of labor.⁸⁴ It will be recalled that the division of labor produces a fundamental and qualitative difference in the ways in which men live and work in the world. It produces a division among men in their conditions of existence. This must be taken in a less precise

⁸³Marx describes four epochs of the division of labor in The German Ideology: tribal, ancient-state, feudal, and capitalist. For another discussion of these epochs see Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations.

⁸⁴It was to this difference I was referring when I indicated above that these formulations are developed at a different level of abstraction than class relations.

sense than a class relation between capital and labor. Conditions of existence imply interests in relation to conditions. The division of labor can be seen as a division of interests.⁸⁵

Divisions of interest can be described in terms of their full complexity or 'reduced' to specific kinds of oppositions such as the opposition of capital and labor. To the extent that they are reduced to such fundamental oppositions, there is no opportunity to examine, for example, the forms of opposition which occur between different kinds of capital (e.g. landed and industrial capital) or different kinds of labor (e.g. agricultural and industrial labor).⁸⁶ In addition, there is no way of emphasizing the development of divisions of interest per se. If you recall, the production of a social world is both a social and a technical process. A scheme of class division emphasizes specific aspects of the social process in order to bring class relations to the forefront. A scheme of interests emphasizes the technical process, the particular conditions

⁸⁵This does not mean that the power relations entailed in the division of labor have been discarded, but that the direction of the analysis has shifted to emphasize conditions of labor rather than relations of labor.

⁸⁶For example, once types of capital are distinguished it is possible to pose questions about the asymmetrical relations that are associated with different forms of capital. What kinds of capital have greater potential for expansion or greater potential for concentration? What antagonisms link different kinds of capital?

of labor, the ways in which these conditions develop, the environment which shapes the technical process in terms of divisions of interests.

As a division of interests, Marx characterizes the division of labor as the division of town and countryside, the division of physical and mental labor, and the division of communal and private interests. These are global social processes.⁸⁷ It is very easy to confuse Marx's discussion with a different conception of division of interests. A division of interests involves some framework which connects different interests. To the extent that some framework connects antagonistic interests, a division of interests involves mutual interests and antagonistic interests.⁸⁸ For example, in a division of labor between town and country, an exchange of products, an exchange 'system,' may link town and countryside and antagonistic interests may divide them. Both may have mutual interests in the exchange of products, their interests may be divided in relation to the price of objects of exchange. What is at issue is whether the division of labor is seen from the point of view of the exchange relation (mutual interests), or from the point of view of antagonistic interests (division). To see the division of

⁸⁷They are thus abstractions of a particular type. Divisions of interests do not refer directly to the relations in which these interests are embedded; they also do not specify whose interests clearly.

⁸⁸To rephrase these divisions of interests as social relations among men would involve describing these divisions as power-dependence relations.

labor in relation to the exchange system, means seeing it from the point of view of a system of mutual relations which involve interdependence. Antagonistic interests are thus circumscribed by the mutual interests of the exchange system. To see the division of labor in relation to the antagonistic interests, from the point of view of its elements, involves seeing the exchange 'system' in terms of the conditions of existence, including the disparities in the conditions of life which exist between town and country.⁸⁹ Divisions of interests are always embedded in a division of conditions of life as Marx describes them. This is a matter of vantage point. Marx saw divisions of interests in this way. Divisions of interests need not be interpreted in this way. The level of abstraction at which Marx's discussion is undertaken easily leads to misinterpreting his

⁸⁹"The greatest division of material and mental labour is the separation of town and country. . . The existence of the town implies, at the same time, the necessity of administration, police, taxes, etc., in short, of the municipality, and thus of politics in general. Here first became manifest the division of the population into two great classes, which is directly based on the division of labour and on the instruments of production. The town already is in actual fact the concentration of the population, of the instruments of production, of capital, of pleasures, of needs, while the country demonstrates just the opposite fact, their isolation and separation. The antagonism of town and country can only exist as a result of private property. It is the most crass expression of the subjection of the individual under the division of labour, under a definite activity forced upon him--a subjection which makes one man into a restricted town-animal, the other into a restricted country-animal, and daily creates anew the conflict between their interests." Marx, The German Ideology, pp. 43-44.

analysis.⁹⁰

The Distribution of Dependence

When Marx refers to different kinds of labor rather than a single mode of labor, the division of labor is also examined as a distribution of labor. This means that it is conceived abstractly, from outside relations of labor.⁹¹ Where there are different modes of labor, there is a distribution of labor. A distribution of labor means that men have a specific sphere of work which is forced upon them. Laborers are confined by virtue of their existence at a specific point in time and space in the distribution of labor. The division of labor has an independent existence over against the individuals who work. Individuals work in a condition of dependence by virtue of a distribution of labor. Their labor is thus involuntary. It is unrelated to their potential. It is non-rational from the point of view of their choices, and it is impersonal, disconnected

⁹⁰I will return to this issue again in the section "On the Division of Labor and Social Inequality." Although I cannot pursue all the implications of the vantage point taken, one implication is that the phenomenon described as a division of interests can be characterized in advance by the vantage point--using the exchange system as a vantage point leads to a different picture of antagonistic interests than using the vantage point of the antagonisms.

⁹¹It is no longer possible to retain a consistent terminology. Because the distribution of labor is taken apart from relations of labor, terms like 'power' and 'dependence' which were tied to relations of labor take on different meanings.

from their framework of possible actions. Dependence among laborers in a scheme of the distribution of labor is not defined in opposition to power as it is in a class analysis. Dependence is involuntary labor, in the same sense referred to in the natural division of labor. It is labor without choice or potential development. It is un-free labor. It is referred directly to the division of labor rather than to a class of capitalists.

In a scheme of the distribution of dependence, power is not a power advantage. Power is taken apart from a class relation between laborers and owners of capital. Power refers to productive forces. Land, for example, is a productive force. This should be taken in a dynamic sense. Land is not a fixed entity but a developing means. It is developed through labor. How far the productive forces have developed can be seen by how far the division of labor has been carried.⁹² Each new productive force brings with it further development of the division of labor. Power is a developing productive force, or a network of productive forces. Labor is divided in terms of different productive forces. On the one hand, productive forces develop through labor. On the other hand, the development of productive

⁹²Productive forces are of course owned by men as instruments of production. Marx's discussion of the distribution of dependence involves a level of analysis different from the level on which class division is described. To recast the discussion, to shift to an analysis of class division, required only raising the issue of who owns the productive forces.

forces enlarges the distribution of dependent laborers. Furthermore, the internal development of particular productive forces intensifies the dependence of particular laborers, makes them subject, for example, to machines.

When the division of labor is regarded from the point of view of the distribution of labor, a re-distribution of resources of a social structure does not affect the distribution of dependence. It merely redistributes dependent laborers. Only destruction of the division of labor can erase the distribution of dependent laborers.⁹³

Both these formulations, the division of interests and the distribution of dependence, are abstracted from social relations. They take up the issue of the division of labor without direct reference to a particular class division for example of capital and labor. They thus produce a different view of the division of labor. Both also fit more closely a structural analysis of social formations, although an analysis of class division (a processual

⁹³"For as soon as labour is distributed, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for men to do one thing to-day and another to-morrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic." Marx, The German Ideology, p. 22.

analysis) is quickly brought forward when the issue of 'whose' interests is raised in an analysis of the division of interests or when the issue of 'who' owns productive forces is raised in an analysis of the distribution of labor.

ON THE DIVISION OF LABOR AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

There is a distinction which must be made between a phenomenon described as a division of labor and the meaning of the division of labor in a general sense. The distinction is very much connected with the difference between talking about epochs of the division of labor and talking about a particular division of labor. A confusion occurs when a particular characterization of the division of labor is taken to represent the division of labor. The confusion is quite like the one earlier discussed as treating a particular form of class structure as class structure. For example, capitalism is a system of commodity production. Commodity production involves a division of labor. However, the division of labor in commodity production does not encompass the meaning of the division of labor, at least not in Marx's sense. When an analysis of the division of labor begins with commodity production, it is extremely difficult to understand Marx's conception of the division of labor as the basis of class structure; the division of labor in commodity production does not produce class structure although it exemplifies it. When a discussion of the division of labor begins with Marx's early conception of the division of labor, this difficulty does not arise. The division

of labor in commodity production can be encompassed within a wider conception of the division of labor. It can be taken as a particular form of the division of labor.

There is, however, another kind of distinction which I have alluded to but not brought out. A confusion occurs between the phenomenon described as a division of labor and several vantage points which can be used to develop a description. Marx called the division of labor in commodity production, "the division of labor in detail." It is now commonly referred to as the technical division of labor. Seen from the point of view of the objects produced, the system of production, the division of labor, involves task specialization. Task specialization is a conception of the division of labor. Seen from the point of view of the task, the detail worker, the division of labor involves a condition of extreme dependence, a class condition. When an analysis of the division of labor begins with task specialization, it is very difficult to penetrate to an analysis of class conditions involved. Task specialization limits in advance the field of observation because the conception is taken apart from those who perform tasks. This means that inequalities which exist are obscured by the approach used to depict the division of labor.

I have suggested that it is not possible to come to see the division of labor as a class structure when the division of labor is construed as a division of tasks. Tasks have too narrow a framework of meaning. This is

also the case when the division of labor is interpreted as a division of functions. Functions require a commitment to an over-all framework, a system which is characterized by functional interdependence.⁹⁴ In addition, functions are also taken apart from the inequalities among individuals who perform functions. A division of interests provides a way of approaching the division of labor as a class structure, although sociologically speaking, we seem to encompass a division of interests in a scheme of mutual interests more easily than we approach a division of interests from the point of view of irreconcilable differences which may be involved. Marx's conception of the division of labor entails class structure. His conception always involves awareness that the division of labor 'produces' class inequalities. Yet it is not possible to penetrate to the issue of the class structure of the division of labor when an analysis begins without conceiving of the individuals and social groups involved. The vantage point from which the discussion is taken up effects the perception of the relations involved. Marx's conception always involved awareness that the division of labor is a division of resources (conditions), a division of men, and a division

⁹⁴Durkheim never referred his formulation of the division of labor to a wider context than functions. This means his conception does not lend itself to an analysis of antagonistic interests. Conflict thus must be moved into his framework via an expansion of his conception of the division of labor.

of activity. In addition he viewed these divisions interactionally. A division of resources affects men. Resources are developed by men and effect the division among them.

I have tried to demonstrate that for Marx the division of labor entails inequalities in the conditions of existence among men which are structured as advantages for some and disadvantages for others. In addition, I tried to argue that these advantages and disadvantages refer to the relations men have with each other; that they are relational advantages and disadvantages. I described a particular set of these advantages as power advantages which are characterized by the continued extension of these advantages in terms of other men. I called the relations associated with these advantages power relations of one-sided dependence, and for my particular purposes described them as class relations. That is, that they are the particular advantages which mark fundamental divisions between men.

Yet the division of labor cannot be taken apart from the men who produce it. This is a fundamental insight which is available in Marx's conception of the division of labor through his notion of the meaning of labor itself. Labor is a productive process. It, or rather, men who labor, produce both forms or objects of work and their social relations. The division of labor is a product of the actions of men. It is men who design the divisions of

their activity and the meanings involved in these divisions. Men both produce the division of work and the distinctions between men in their work; men continue to elaborate divisions among men. The 'progress' of the division of labor, if you will, is human action. It is only in seeing from this point of view that it is possible to address the issue of how men develop class divisions and fundamental schemes of inequality.

I have not raised the issue of class structure as it is traditionally posed. Class relations in the sense of relations to the means of production have been reified; it was necessary for this reason to move outside the whole discussion of property relations and ownership relations. If Marx's conception of class structure has been reified, it is of a piece with a larger process of reification which has involved our approach to most social phenomena including the division of labor and social inequality.⁹⁵ The very segmentalization which has occurred in our discussions of the division of labor which are taken apart from our

⁹⁵Marx seems to escape this particular difficulty by using the term 'division of labor' with flexibility. This is of course part of the reason it is so difficult to understand his conception of the division of labor. For example, Marx usually modifies his description of the division of labor in the following way: the division of labor and exchange, the divisions of labor and the instrument of production, the division of interests between town and country. What is omnipresent is his perspective of 'division' which is carried across many particular and distinct kinds of phenomena.

discussions of inequalities among men and apart from class relations among men have supported and exemplified a reification process. What we require is a way of constructing an understanding of how men build up their social relations and their social formations, and as an aspect of this process, how men build up schemes of social division which become the basis of class inequalities. This means distinguishing between different kinds of power advantages and power relations. What we also require is an understanding of how men come to interpret the structures they create and sustain as inevitable conditions of their existence. To a considerable extent, a sociological understanding of class inequality has been jeopardized by reflecting the reifications of everyday life rather than examining them.

SUMMARY

Marx's account of the division of productive labor is based on his conception of the unity of man. This fundamental unity is not itself produced but given to man as a natural condition of his labor. The dissolution of the unity of man is however historical. His early expression of it was in terms of accumulated labor and labor. His later expression was in terms of ownership of the means of labor and labor. The division of productive labor entails a fundamental dichotomy in the conditions of existence among men. It is thus the basis of class relations. Class relations are power relations of one-sided dependence. They are connected in two ways with the conditions of labor. First, a division in the conditions of labor produces a power advantage in terms of some men with respect to other men. Second, class relations are connected with the continued development of these conditions. Class divisions react back on the conditions of labor. They do not refer only to men but to the ways with which men continue to develop a social world. I have tried to express several aspects of the connection of class relations and class conditions as the power advantage of capital and the development of productive forces.

The meaning of labor was central in developing an

account of the division of labor. It was given a very broad meaning, one connected with Marx's notion of materialism. It was treated as a productive process, both the basis of the emerging world of things and the basis of class relations between men.

There has been throughout the essay a tension between the explication of power relations of one-sided dependence and the analysis of the division of labor. It was difficult to limit the discussion to power relations of one-sided dependence and the division of labor. Marx's use of the term 'division of labor' took many forms. Not all of his usages involved power relations of one-sided dependence. Several other formulations of the division of labor were developed: the division of interests and the distribution of dependence. Because the division of labor as a division of interests could be interpreted as a scheme of mutual interests, it was possible to juxtapose two different conceptions of the division of labor. This permitted a distinction between the phenomena we refer to in discussions of the division of labor and the implications of our choices for our interpretations of social relations. It also made it possible to raise the issue of characterizing the division of labor in advance in ways which preclude penetrating to power relations of one-sided dependence and the power process.

I suggested early in the essay that to the extent that class relations are separated from an analysis of

labor, Marx's conception of class is short-circuited. It is reduced to a structural analysis of class relations, taken from the point of view of property relations, rather than understood as a processual analysis, seen from the point of view of relations of labor. In addition to being treated structurally, his analysis is particularized. The form of class division in capitalism is taken to exemplify the meaning of class structure. To utilize the class structure of capitalism to express the meaning of class structure is to work backwards from a particular class structure to class structure rather than forward, from the division of conditions of labor to class structure.

Because the class structure of capitalism is construed to mean class structure, shifts in relations to the means of production are used to deny the appropriateness of continued analysis of class relations. Shifts in ownership of the means of production do not end class divisions but particular historical forms of class divisions. The structure of class inequality is not based on particular forms of class relations but on conditions of dependence which divide men. This also implies that when appropriation of the means of production is construed as the destruction of class division, it, too, is taken after the fact of Marx's conception of class. Class structures as I have tried to show are built out of the relations men have to their environment and to each other. To appropriate the means of production is not to destroy class division but

only a form of class division. In this sense class relations must always be taken from within. The social world is a product of man's subjective activity, of his work taken in its widest sense. Class structures emerge out of the production of a social world. An analysis of classes must always begin with the question of how labor is divided among men and by men.

The limitations of most interpretations of Marx's thought appear to be connected with the limitations of our conceptions of power in a general way. Sociologically speaking, power is not treated as a process, but as an entity. Its character is fixed rather than dynamic. Our concerns are thus shaped by an analysis of its distribution within social structures rather than its development and its extension.⁹⁶ There is a marked difference in focus when power is conceived of as a process, when it is conceived of as a power advantage which involves the continued development of power advantages. Power however as a process is not disconnected from men. Power is an attribute of social relations and of the objects of the world to the extent that they are aspects of social relations. Marx's treatment of power is not disconnected from everyday life. Power is built up in activity, it is a component of social

⁹⁶This is really primarily characteristic of discussions of stratification at a macro rather than a micro level. For example, Emerson's formulation of power dependence relations is relational.

relations between men and of the environment in which men enact their social relations. It is development in two quite distinct senses. The content of power is not fixed. What involves a power advantage is shaped by specific contexts. Men are connected with power. It is men who construct and shape power relations and power processes.

I used the division of labor to develop an analysis of how class inequalities emerge. It permitted a way to reach to the process of social relations rather than its forms. It is within the process of social relations, of work and existence, that inequalities are marked and become the focus of elaborate schemes of differentiation. It is within the social process that power advantages and disadvantages develop and become consolidated or concentrated. In developing a power relation of one-sided dependence, I tried to describe a particular process that contained the continued expansion of inequalities among men. Power relations of one-sided dependence gain their meaning however only in conjunction with power relations of mutual dependence. It is with both conceptions rather than one or the other that we can begin to reach to the issues of inequality.

What has been said of our conception of power, can be said of our understanding of inequality. To the extent that we have failed to connect forms of inequality with social relations we have also failed to pose the appropriate questions about the character of social inequality. We have seen social inequalities from the point of view of their

inevitability. In this way we have obscured the possibility or reaching to the question of which forms are and which are not. We have failed thus to come to see that the elaboration of distinctions among men extend far beyond purposeful or 'rational' grounds of social organization; and that inequalities which mark men extend and cohere in ways which are intimately connected with social processes. We have in some sense been too sensitive to a conception of inequality close to everyday life, and insensitive to the possibilities of a sociological imagination.

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