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### Needs: Value in Command

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## Abstract

This paper reviews one of the mechanisms with which capital weaves a new type of subjection of the human being, the production of needs. Unlike other living beings, whose needs are determined by their biology, human beings are the fruit of the social relations that they establish within their culture. Humans need objects, but their needs arise through the objects called to satisfy them, objects that in capitalist society are capital –value in process of valorisation. In this way, need is itself a product of capital, and capital thus appears as a force that imposes itself on the human being from within, not only in the labour process but in the very constitution of the human needing being.

The article discusses the triple human condition that gives rise to this phenomenon –the objective being (the need for the object), the being of desire (the need beyond the object) and the object's being (the need as product of object)– and concludes that capitalist market, that civilizing force that gives rise to the modern, autonomous individual, reduces freedom to a simple means of capital valorisation.

## Keywords

Marx, subjection, need, fetishism, object, freedom, wealth, capitalism, capital

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## Wealth: Freedom and Subjection

"Der Reichtum" – wealth – are the words chosen by Marx to start his great book. With it he does not refer to human wealth in general, as Smith and Hegel, authors of *Wealth of Nations* and *Philosophy of Law*, pretend, but to "Der Reichtum der Gesellschaften, in welchen kapitalistische Produktionsweise herrscht," that is, to the wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production dominates, wealth whose elementary unit is the commodity. "Our investigation must therefore begin," he says, "with the analysis of a commodity"; not any commodity but that which is produced as capital by wage labour.

Marx's study of the production and distribution process reveals the historical character of capitalism; for that reason, it also constitutes a critique of economic theory since the latter approaches capitalist society as if its phenomena and the laws that govern them were common to any human society and transcended all historical limits. The title and subtitle of his book underline the dual purpose of criticizing capitalist wealth (*Capital*) and its representations in economic theory (*A Critique of Political Economy*).

In effect, the generalization of commodity production has for Marx, as for Smith and Hegel, a civilizing character. The human being is released of the personal ties that oppressed her in pre-capitalist societies and emerges as a free individual. For Smith, the development of mercantile relations "gradually introduced order and good government, and with them, the liberty and security of individuals"; by liberating the individual "of servile dependence upon their superiors,"<sup>1</sup> it becomes morally obligatory, for the first time, to attend to "the interests of the excluded."<sup>2</sup> For Hegel, with the development of the market "everything private becomes something social,"<sup>3</sup> and in that way the individual "behaves, therefore, towards others in a way that is universally valid, recognizing them –as he wishes others to recognize her– as free, as persons."<sup>4</sup> Thus, with the generalization of mercantile relations arises "the fundamental principle of modern political life, the principle of the autonomous personality," the individual capable of exercising her freedom.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Smith A. 1776 *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. New York: Liberty Fund Inc, 1981. III.iv.4, 412.

<sup>2</sup> Holmes S. 1990 "The Secret History of Self-Interest". In: *Beyond Self-Interest*. Mansbridge J. (ed), Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990, 284 (note 100).

<sup>3</sup> Hegel G.W.F. 1821 *The Philosophy of Right*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1942, §192A, 189.

<sup>4</sup> Hegel G.W.F. 1830 *Encyclopedia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, §432A.

<sup>5</sup> Buchwalter A. 2012. *Dialectics, Politics, and the Contemporary Value of Hegel's Practical Philosophy*. New York: Routledge, 2012, 267. This civilizatory force with which the market burst into the relations of domination characteristic of the *ancien régime*, has given rise to a discourse that overestimates the empowerment and the real freedom of the individual in capitalist society. See for example Von Mises L. 1949. The individual in society, reprinted in *Free Market Economics. A Reader*, Bien-Graves B. (ed) New York: The Foundation for Economic Education, 1975, 7: "Liberty and freedom are the conditions of man within a contractual society. Social cooperation under a system of private ownership of the means of production means that within the range of the market the individual is not bound to obey and to serve an overlord. [...] In the market economy the individual is free to act within the orbit of private property and the market. His choices are final."

Marx also considers that capitalism constitutes a powerful civilizing force, and among its contributions mentions that it replaces the personal relations of domination that subjected most of the population in pre-capitalist societies with impersonal relations that take place through the market.<sup>6</sup> However, his critique of capitalism is absolutely radical, even if it only consisted of one of its components, the elucidation of the bloody historical process that makes possible the substitution of personal relations by the market, the so-called *original accumulation*: the free individual arises as a result of the process of separation between the population and their material conditions of living (means of production and means of subsistence), which are concentrated in few hands and destined to the production of merchandises through the hiring of wage labour. The freedom that emerges from such a process is the prelude to a new form of subjection of the free individual more intrinsic, as will be seen, than that of the slave, the vassal or the serfs. The autonomous personality that emerges from this process, realization itself of "the fundamental principle of modern political life", is the proletariat; stripped of all property, she has only her own body and the legal right to put it at the disposal of capital. "Due to this historically unprecedented separation from their objective conditions, individuals are forced to put their creative powers at capital's disposal, making them in effect capital's powers."<sup>7</sup> In Marx's words,

In exchange for his labour capacity as a given magnitude [i.e., a wage] he [the worker] surrenders its creative power, like Esau who gave up his birthright for a mess of pottage. . . . [T]he creative power of his labour establishes itself as the power of capital and confronts him as an alien power.<sup>8</sup>

This separation between individuals and their objective conditions, without which neither generalized production of commodities nor this autonomous individual would be possible, forces individuals to put their creative powers at capital's disposal not only, as Locke affirms,<sup>9</sup> by their will of not starving, but also by at least one more reason. It is

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<sup>6</sup> See for example Marx K. and F. Engels 1848 Communist Manifesto. In: Marx-Engels Collected Works, Volume 6, New York: International Publishers, 1976, 486-489: "The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part. The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors' and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment,' [...] The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. [...] The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together."

<sup>7</sup> Smith T. 2015 "Hegel and Capitalism: Marxian Perspectives". In: Buchwalter A. (ed) Hegel and capitalism, New York: State University of New York Press, 2015, 194.

<sup>8</sup> Marx K. 1857-1858. Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy Rough Draft of 1857-1858. In: Marx-Engels Collected Works, Volume 28, New York: International Publishers, 1986, 233.

<sup>9</sup> For Locke the subjection of workers is the result of the exercise of their freedom, because in capitalism they are free to decide: "the authority of the rich proprietor, and the subjection of the needy beggar, began not from the possession of the lord, but the consent of the poor man, who preferred being his subject to starving." Locke J. Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration. London: Yale University Press, 2003, First Treatise, §43, 30.

true that the wealth that the workers produce further deepens their subjection to capital because it perpetuates them as proletarian –since they receive as wage a portion of that wealth scarcely sufficient to force them to stay employed as wage earners. However, there is a second reason for workers to put themselves at the service of capital: that wealth, "an immense collection of commodities,"<sup>10</sup> generates needs that overwhelm them as being in need. Marx glimpses this second form of subjection from the second paragraph of *Capital*. There he refers to the needs as follows:

The commodity is, first of all, an external object, a thing which through its qualities satisfies human needs of whatever kind. The nature of these needs, whether they arise, for example, from the stomach, or the imagination, makes no difference.<sup>11</sup>

In the three following sections, at least three ideas related to this passage will be discussed, with which Marx elucidates the mechanisms by which capital imposes its domination on the entire living space of humanity.

### **The Need for the Object: The Objective Being**

A first idea that stands out in this second paragraph of *Capital* is that Marx refers only to needs linked to the use or consumption of objects, and more precisely of merchandise.<sup>12</sup> These are the needs whose existence is not indifferent to the reproduction of capital, unlike other needs that the human being resolves without objects, such as could be the need for affection, expression or sleep. The needs relevant for the reproduction of capital are those related to the use and consumption of objects since, in effect, an object can only be a commodity –and therefore be produced by capital– if it is capable of satisfying a human need. The need, consequently, manifests itself at once as a condition of the existence of merchandise and capital. These needs linked to objects are part, if those objects are merchandise, of the process that gives rise to capital. Needs must be included, therefore, in the critique of Political Economy.

This link between need and object brings us to the objectivity of the human being. Although the biological determination of need is mediated by its social determination and is only resolved in that framework, the truth is that the need of the body is the substance of human being as an animal and ultimately the foundation of human being's dependence on capital, the very dependence on which workers risk their lives.

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<sup>10</sup> Marx K. 1872-1873b. *Capital I*. New York: Vintage Books, 1977, 125.

<sup>11</sup> Marx K. 1872-1873b, 125. In the original text it reads as follows: "Die Ware ist zunächst ein äußerer Gegenstand, ein Ding, das durch seine Eigenobject-schaften menschliche *Bedürfnisse* irgendeiner Art befriedigt. Die Natur dieser *Bedürfnisse*, ob sie z.B. dem Magen oder der Phantasie entspringen, ändert nichts an der Sache." Ben Fowkes translates the word *Bedürfnisse* into English as *needs*, while Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling translate it as *wants*. See Marx K. 1872-1873a. *Capital I*. In: Marx-Engels Collected Works, Volume 35, New York: International Publishers, 1996, 45. The usual practice is that of Fowkes, while the word *wants* is normally used to translate German words *Trieb* and *Wunschare*.

<sup>12</sup> See Marx K. 1857-1858, 29: "Consumption without an object is no consumption."

Marx is aware of this material determination of the human being. Some of the passages of *Capital* cited as proof of their supposed trans-historical conception of humanity can be interpreted rather as attempts to highlight this objective determination of the human being as an animal, the subjection to needs of the body that are resolved only through the use and consumption of objects without which the human being would perish. The following passage is an example:

The labour process, resolved as above into its simple elementary factors, is human action with a view to the production of use values, appropriation of natural substances to human requirements; it is the necessary condition for effecting exchange of matter between man and Nature; it is the everlasting Nature-imposed condition of human existence, and therefore is independent of every social phase of that existence, or rather, is common to every such phase.<sup>13</sup>

This passage could be interpreted not as an apology of labour as essentially constitutive of the human being but rather as an attempt to highlight the vital constraint of the need of material objects suffered by the human being, beyond the social forms in which objects are produced. This vital dependence on objects expresses the objective reality of the human being, beyond the delights of her spirit. Fischbach says it this way:

An objective being, explains Marx, is a being who is in a relationship of vital dependence on other objects; it is a being who cannot deploy nor assert his own activity without the help of these natural objects, external to him: men are thus in a necessary vital relationship with objects that are the objects of their needs –objects, says Marx, that are 'essential and indispensable for the activation (*Betätigung*) and the confirmation (*Bestätigung*) of their essential forces. To be an objective being is to be in a necessary relationship of vital dependence on external objects; to be a natural being, is not only to belong to nature, to be included in it, but, first and foremost, to relate to nature as to an exteriority on which one depends in the sense that one's natural forces must feed on it.<sup>14</sup>

The historical process that gives rise to capitalism and the modern proletariat, consisted in the loss for the majority of the population of the objective conditions for the production of objects. This process has dramatic consequences on the autonomy of the great majority of men and women, precisely because of the vulnerability linked to this condition of vital dependence on the object.

### **The Need Beyond the Object: The Being of Desire**

This second paragraph of *Capital* contains another idea, complementary to the previous one. The object is a condition, a *sine qua non*, of its use or consumption, but the act of

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<sup>13</sup> Marx K. 1872-1873a, 194.

<sup>14</sup> Fischbach F. *Sans Objet. Capitalisme, subjectivité, aliénation*. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2009, 142. My translation.

use or consumption is not reduced to it but exceeds it and goes further: it is a social act that originates in culture and that constitutes the person as part of that culture. A clear illustration of this is given by Marx himself when he affirms that "hunger that is satisfied with cooked meat and fork differs from hunger that devours raw meat with the help of hands, nails and teeth."<sup>15</sup> Needs are a result of historical development, as are the ways of satisfying them. If she does not eat meat, the human being eats fish, wheat or cheese; the mutineers of the French Revolution demanded bread, in Central Europe they would have demanded tubers, in Far East rice, in Mesoamerica corn. The needs are historical: result of culture and passagers; the human being creates objects that transform her needs and thus gives rise to a history of needs that frees her from them while maintaining her as a needy being. Because behind the colourful world of objects with which the human being tries to respond to her needs, beats, imperious, the need of the body that keeps it tied to the earth and its fruits, and it is this irremediable determination of the human being as a living being that makes its way in modern history, tying the human being to capital and to a specifically capitalist consumption culture.

In relation to this Marx subtly alludes to the theme of desire, by interposing person. In his first reference in *Capital* to an author who is not himself, Marx quotes "old Barbon":

Desire implies want; it is the appetite of the mind, and as natural as hunger to the body... The greatest number (of things) have their value from supplying the wants of the mind.<sup>16</sup>

To affirm that "desire implies necessity" involves the recognition of at least two facts: that desire and need are not the same, and that there is no desire without necessity. Barbon emphasizes that necessity and desire have in common their imperative character, but he does not clarify what their difference consists of. Marx also avoids referring to the difference between the needs that originate in the stomach and those that originate in the fantasy, affirming that from the point of view of the merchandise the origin of the needs "does not change the problem."<sup>17</sup> "The desire" in Barbon and "the needs of the imagination" in Marx, both appetites of the mind, are directed in the first instance towards the object, while most of the objects originate according to Barbon in the needs of the mind. For this reason, it can be stated that in the need for objects something is played beyond the purely biological need, may be Hegel's desire for recognition, Smith's desire for esteem, Lacan's desire of the other...

Most needs originate in imagination, and even those that originate in the stomach involve not only biology. It is true that without hunger it is generally not eaten, but equally true that it is not eaten only by hunger, at least not in the "normal" conditions

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<sup>15</sup> Marx K. 1857. Introduction. In: Marx-Engels Collected Works, Volume 28, New York: International Publishers, 1986, 29-30.

<sup>16</sup> Nicholas Barbon, quoted by Karl Marx 1872-1873, 45.

<sup>17</sup> See Marx K. 1872-1873a, 194: "Neither are we here concerned to know how the object satisfies these wants, whether directly as means of subsistence, or indirectly as means of production."

of sociality. The mind and imagination are no longer present in cases of extreme need, when culture no longer matters: people eat from hunger to save their lives, when what they eat does not matter, and this happens in conditions of radical exclusion from the culture, when the human being is reduced to the urgency of her biology. As long as that desperate social situation is not reached, consumption compromises desire, much more than the biological need of the body.

Most of the things of the human world are part of it not for what they are but for what they mean, that is, for the role that play in the relationship of the human being with others, by desire. The need of a subject implies the existence of the object, but above all the desire of the other, as pointed out by Hegel and Smith, Lacan and Honneth; the need for an object is a mediation of subject's desire for that other.<sup>18</sup> Among the talking beings there is no need for an object that is not over-determined by the desire of the other, and therefore there is no need without desire.

As her needs for objects originate more than in her biology in her social being (that is, in her relationship with others, in her desire), the human being, unlike the animal, never finishes needing.<sup>19</sup> The more the human being is included in the culture, the more she is a being that needs:

the fewer things a man wishes for, the more easily his necessities may be supplied.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Need as Product: The Object's Being**

The third idea that will be discussed, consistent with that second paragraph of *Capital*, is found in other passages of this book and its preparatory writings: a distinctive feature of capitalism is that human need is an immediate result of the accumulation of capital and constitutes a powerful instrument of domination over the human being. Let's see.

That desire is the appetite of the spirit and that most objects derive their usefulness from that desire highlights that these objects have a historical and symbolic character,<sup>21</sup> but at the same time explains that human needs do not exist before the object but that, on the contrary, arise with it. In effect, human needs originate in the relationships

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<sup>18</sup> Unlike the need in the animal, which is always specific and is directed to a particular object that can eventually be replaced but that in any case is capable of satisfying it, human desire is not specific or conscious, or said in Freud's words "it has no object."

<sup>19</sup> See Hegel G.W.F. 1821, §192, 188-189: "An animal's needs and its ways and means of satisfying them are both alike restricted in scope. Though the human being is subject to this restriction too, yet at the same time he evinces his transcendence of it and his universality, first by the multiplication of needs and satisfaction is reciprocally conditioned. When needs and means become abstract in quality (see § 191), abstraction also becomes a determination of the reciprocal relation of individuals to one another."

<sup>20</sup> de Mandeville B., quoted by Marx K. 1872-1873a, 610.

<sup>21</sup> See Marx K. 1872-1873a, 45: "To discover the various uses of things is the work of history."

established by human beings;<sup>22</sup> since in capitalist society many of these relationships occur in the form of a relationship between objects (as Marx shows when addressing the fetishism of merchandise), the latter represent more than in any other type of society a sign of that relationship and its condition. Therefore, the need for an object arises when the object appears, as if the object came to the world with the need that corresponds to it under its arm.<sup>23</sup>

In the Introduction of 1857 to *Grundrisse*, which he did not publish, Marx comments on this relationship between object and necessity; it is worth reproducing the passage *in extenso*:

If it is evident that production supplies the object of consumption externally, it is [M-8] equally evident that consumption posits the object of production ideally, as an internal image, a need, an urge and a purpose. Consumption furnishes the objects of production in a form that is still subjective. No production without need. But consumption reproduces the need. This is matched on the side of production, (1) by the fact that it supplies the material, the object of consumption. Consumption without an object is no consumption; in this respect, therefore, production creates, produces consumption. (2) But it is not only the object that production creates for consumption. It also gives consumption its definite form, its character, its FINISH. Just as consumption gave the product its FINISH as a product, so production gives the FINISH to consumption. For one thing, the object is not an object in general, but a definite object which must be consumed in a definite way, a way mediated by production itself. Hunger is hunger; but hunger that is satisfied by cooked meat eaten with knife and fork differs from hunger that devours raw meat with the help of hands, nails and teeth. Production thus produces not only the object of consumption but also the mode of consumption, not only objectively but also subjectively. Production therefore creates the consumer. (3) Production not only provides the material to satisfy a need, but it also provides a need for the material. When consumption emerges from its original natural crudeness and immediacy – and its remaining in that state would be due to the fact that production was still caught in natural crudeness – then it is itself, as an urge, mediated by the object. The need felt for the object is created by the perception of the object.<sup>24</sup>

In *Capital*, Marx presents this idea more succinctly, but in the same sense:

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<sup>22</sup> See Hegel G.W.F. 1821, §192A, 189: "In dress fashions and hours of meals, there are certain conventions which we have to accept because in these things it is not worth the trouble to insist on displaying one's own discernment. The wisest thing here is to do as others do."

<sup>23</sup> Heller A. 1974. *The Theory of Need in Marx*. London: Allison & Busby Limited, 1976, 40: "Man's need and the object of the need are correlated: the need is always related to some concrete object or to an objective activity. The objects 'bring about' the needs, and the needs bring about the objects. The need and its object are 'moments', 'sides' of one and the same complex. But if we analyse not one static model but the dynamic of a 'social body' (presupposing that this 'social body' has a dynamic), then the moment of production occupies first place: it is production which creates new needs."

<sup>24</sup> Marx K. 1857, 29-30

The product, therefore, of individual consumption, is the consumer himself [...].<sup>25</sup>

Some interpreters of Marx could claim that this phenomenon, according to which "the need felt for the object is created by the perception of the object", is common to all types of society. Not so: it is a specific phenomenon of capitalist society. In pre-capitalist societies production and consumption took place within small communities where personal practices and relationships were strongly determined by tradition. Certainly, new needs could arise out of the objects that appeared sporadically for the first time in the community, but this was against the resistance of tradition, and, in any case, this arrival of new objects and needs was contingent and did not constitute a compulsive result of the social dynamics at that time.

When the production of new objects and needs became the epicentre of the new mode of production, personal relationships of domination began to dissolve, and little by little they were replaced by this new form of subjection imposed by capital that Marx calls "fetishism of the merchandise." The rupture of tradition and the personal relationships on which tradition is based constitutes the birth of the free individual, but at the same time, it is the beginning of a path that transforms the free individual into a simple force to produce capital:

In reality, the individual consumption of the labourer is unproductive as regards himself, for it reproduces nothing but the needy individual; it is productive to the capitalist and to the State, since it is the production of the power that creates their wealth.<sup>26</sup>

That need is created by the object implies that it does not precede the object but rather result from the advent of it. However, this object that provokes the need is not just any object: it is a commodity that emerges as such from the cycle of valorisation of capital and is neither more nor less "the elementary form" of the wealth of the societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails.<sup>27</sup> The objects that bring need to the world are merchandise, and specifically capital in its mercantile form, C'. Human needs are a result of capital as much as the commodities that constitute wealth. Capital not only generates "an immense collection of commodities" but, alongside it, an immense accumulation of needs. The richer the society, the needier the human beings that form it.

Now it is not simply a question of the quantity of needs. Capital multiplies the needs of the human being and reproduces her as being in need, but also subsumes the need in its cycle. Just as the subsumption of the labour process materially transforms the worker as producer –her skills and abilities, the quality of her attention, the relationship with her product and with her body itself–, in the same way, through the

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<sup>25</sup> Marx K. 1872-1873a, 193.

<sup>26</sup> Marx K. 1872-1873a, 573.

<sup>27</sup> Marx K. 1872-1873a, 35.

subsumption of consumption capital transforms the human being as desiring subject and reduces her to simple consumer. By modelling need, capital ravages the autonomy of the person as it does when modelling labour.

At the time of Marx, mass consumption had not developed enough for this phenomenon to be perceived in all its dimensions since most of the needs were still determined by tradition; in spite of this, Marx foresees the subsumption of the need for capital with its concept of relative surplus value: competition leads to a reduction in the cost of production of the means of subsistence of the working class through transformations that modify, among other things, workers' consumption habits. From the production process not only does the product emerge –mercantile capital– but also the worker as needed and needing being: needed because the product of her work appears in the hands of capital and the satisfaction of her needs is subject to the renewal of her condition of wage worker, and needing because in the hands of capital there also appears her incessant need as the internal determination of the subject, as imposed not from her body or direct relationship with her peers but from that unnamed social entity that constitutes the death of all sociality: capital.

Since that object is a commodity –that is, mercantile capital– the fact that need arises with merchandise implies that to the alienation of labour in capital is added an additional form of domination, the alienation of need. Capital thus appears as a force that is imposed on the human being from within, not only in the process of labour but in the very constitution of being. The needs are temporary, but need is imposed, and, in needing, capital imposes itself.

## **Conclusion**

We wanted to review one of the mechanisms with which capital weaves this new type of subjection of the human being that replaces the different forms of personal domination that predominated in pre-capitalist societies, and that could be called the alienation of need. In the first place, the survival of the human being, as a living being, depends on obtaining the objects required to satisfy her needs. Deprived of the conditions to procure those objects, the human being perishes; the emphasis on this objective dimension of the human being will never be excessive, since it constitutes the ultimate foundation of all forms of domination.

Secondly, the needs of the human being, as a speaking being, are mediated by culture and language and go far beyond biology, to the point of generating a reversal between need and object. The object is first and foremost a way of relating to others; the human being searches the object for recognition and recognizes herself in it as a member of a community. The object, which constitutes a social relation, becomes an end to which necessity is subordinate as a means: the object generates its own need that makes it useful and necessary.

Third, since the object being discussed is not just any object but a commodity that comes to the world as capital, objective form of unpaid labour, that the object creates

the need implies nothing more or less than that the need is created by capital and incorporated by it as condition of its own valorisation process.

This is the great paradox of the civilizing force of the generalized production of commodities. It gives rise to that modern, autonomous individual, who is the proletarian, realization of "the fundamental principle of modern political life, the principle of the autonomous personality," who has on her shoulders the ungrateful responsibility of exercising that which von Mises called the consumer sovereignty: by removing the person from the tradition and her immediate community, this creates the freedom of decision and imposes on the person the burden of procuring recognition within a culture of objects; in this way the person remains committed to the objects that constitute her means of recognition, which makes freedom the means of capital valorisation.

The main result of our civilization of abundance is our proletarian, that modern troglodyte deprived of her labour time –for accumulation reproduces a structure of property that condemns her to continue selling her labour– and of her formerly free time –for the accumulation of capital produces the need, wild and furious, which cements a civilization that takes us out of the stone age to crash us against the age of asphalt and plastic. It is the dementia that beats throughout *Capital*: use-value is subdued by exchange-value, need by profit, subject by object, the time of life by the dead time of capital.

In our greatest achievement, our downfall. Our civilizing societies fail because we accept the challenge of progress (productivity and economic growth) without realizing that the only meaningful path to progress is to free ourselves from the slavery of labour. How? By liberating ourselves from the need so that the productive forces of labour, instead of producing objects and needs, serve to open the floodgates of free time in order for the creativity of the human being, freed from the object, to take us to the confines of our own being, our body and our spirit. *Voilà* our old aspiration to freedom. That is what Marx proposes to us, from the *Communist Manifesto* to *Capital*: free time. No labour time, no leisure time, no consumption time – in short: no dead time–, but authentically-liberated time. That is the abolition of fetishism, the very real freedom for all.

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