.... this struggle is a conflict defined not by the indifference of the two sides in their distinction, but by their being bound together in one unity. I am not one of the fighters locked in battle, but both, and I am the struggle itself. I am fire and water ....

G.W.F. Hegel

Chapter - 1

DIALECTICAL LOGIC:
THE HEGELIAN ROOTS OF MARX'S METHOD
The method that is common to both Marx and Hegel usually goes by the name of 'dialectics'. It is true that a wide variety of interpretations has been given to the notion of dialectical method and hence, it is not very easy to have an undisputable account of it. But, at least in both Hegel's and Marx's sense, it can be safely maintained that it is a notion that refers precisely to the idea of 'overcoming the contradictions'.

The fundamental thrust of Hegelian method is to resolve the opposition between reason and reality by establishing the supremacy of the former over the later. The antagonism between the subject and the object, thought and reality, in Hegel's account, gets dissolved in the process i.e., in the process of self development of reason. In the present chapter, we shall attempt to view Marx's philosophy of praxis as being rooted, in Hegel's dynamic conception of reason. Precisely, the aim of this chapter is to trace out the Hegelian roots of Marx's concept of man as a being of praxis, as a being who 'shapes' the reality.

To understand the Hegelian concept of reason it is necessary to have a close look on Hegel's critique of Kant. It has been commonly argued that the whole of Hegelianism is methodologically founded upon his critique of Kant's formalism especially of his noumena-phenomena distinction. We shall have a brief discussion on this critique and then proceed to the details of Hegel's non-formalistic logic as exposed mainly in *Science of logic*.

**Critique of formalism and the foundations of dialectical logic**

The basic thrust of Kant's *critique of pure reason* is a synthesis of empiricism and rationalism. Kant openly admits the empiricism thesis that experience generates knowledge. He agrees also with the rationalist claim that human mind possesses certain universal forms which are *a priori*. A synthesis of these two theses is possible, as Kant says, when
we observe that the sense experience that generates knowledge itself is dependent on the *a priori* forms possessed by human mind. Perception is not an isolated process. When we perceive something we apply certain categories and organise the perceptual phenomena. Knowledge is not possible in the absence of this mechanism of organisation. In other words, knowledge involves the mechanisms of both sense experience and the ordering or the arranging of the sense-data through the universal forms.

Knowledge is constructed by two factors: Sense experience (sensibility) and mechanism of organisation (understanding). The objects are given to us by means of sensibility and they are thought through the understanding. In other words, sensibility, (i.e., the faculty of intuition) furnishes the minifold materials, the discrete particulars of the world, while understanding, (i.e., the faculty concepts) organise and make them intelligible. But, "understanding must directly or indirectly, relate to intuitions, and therefore, with us, to sensibility because in no other way can an object be given to us". ¹

Empiricists commit the mistake of not taking into account the concept as the necessary factor of human knowledge. Empiricist enquiry, as Kant assumes, results in a position where human reason is confined to the limits of the 'given'. Rationalist, on the other hand, fails to notice that the categories themselves cannot give us any knowledge, but they can simply determine the objects which are given to us by means of sensibility. Both empiricism and rationalism are wrong with respect of their partial perspectives of knowledge, and what we need, according to Kant, is a synthesis, i.e., a holistic perspective in which knowledge involves both the faculties of intuitions and concepts.

The forms of intuition (space and time) and the forms of understanding (categories)

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¹Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 65.
are the universals that human mind originally possesses. Human mind organise the objects given to it through these forms. They are completely independent of the sense-experiences. They are not derived from experience, but, rather experiences are 'organised' through them. They provide necessary conditions for all our experiences. They are universal because they are common to all individuals; they constitute the basic structure of human mind. In short they are a priori.

Mind, therefore, possesses certain universal forms through which the given objects are 'organised'. 'Organisation' is the a priori activity of human mind. Certainly, this a priori activity depends wholly on the data received through the senses. It depends on the 'impressions', on the objects as appeared or as presented to it. Mind cannot know what constitutes the appearances. It cannot reach the ground of the impressions which are presented to it. The 'ground', Kant observes, remains always outside the forms of the mind, beyond our reach. In other words, mind can operate only on the things which are given to it; it can never penetrate the givenness. It can never reach the 'thing-in-themselves'. Thing-in-itself is unknown and 'unknowable'.

Mind can know only impressions. Human knowledge is confined to the 'realm' of impressions. Reality that we know is that which appears to us. In other words, all the reality we know is 'appearance' or, all the objects of knowledge are 'appearances'. Kant says that these appearances can exist independently of the categories of understanding or they can be given in intuition independently of the function of understanding. But they cannot exist independently of the way in which they are presented or related to our sensibility. They can never be something other than appearances. They remain 'phenomenal'. Thing-in-itself, on the other hand, is completely unknowable; it remains outside the realm of knowledge. In Kants terminology it is 'noumenon'.
This noumena-phenomena distinction has been the main target of attack for Hegel. Such a distinction, as Hegel assumes, provides the methodological ground for dualism and formalism i.e., for the separation of thought from reality and also for conceiving thought as a formal category which is incapable to penetrate into the thing-in-itself. Therefore, Hegel’s critique of appearance-reality (thing-in-itself) distinction amounts to the critique of dualism and formalism. We shall see how the Kantian programme has been criticised in Hegel's system.

Hegel's observation is that in Kant’s account reason becomes a passive, ‘subjective’ principle. “As long as thing-in-them-eselves were beyond the capacity of reason, reason remained a mere subjective principle without power over the objective structure of reality. And thus the world fell into two separate parts, subjectivity and objectivity, understanding and sense, thought and existence”.² It is plain that Kant’s basic intention in rejecting the empiricist hypothesis that experience is the only source of knowledge is to save the autonomy of reason. But, when he says that human knowledge is restricted to the phenomenal realm, it amounts to denying the creative content of rationalism, that it amounts to contradicting the concept of reason as a creative principle. In Kant’s hand, reason becomes a subjective principle which possesses no power over reality. Reality becomes an ‘alien being’ or in other words, it assumes an alienated objectivity. To put it in Hegel’s own words, “thought, according to Kant although universal and necessary, are only our thoughts - separated by an impassable gulf from the thing, as it exists apart from our knowledge. But the true objectivity of thinking means that thoughts, far from being ours, must at the same time, be the real essence of the things and of whatever is an object for us”³.

Obviously, what Hegel advances here is the thesis which overcomes the gulf between thought and reality, that, reason is not a subjective principle, but is ‘objective’; its objectivity means that thought must be the essence of the reality. To view thought as the essence of reality is to assert the creative content of reason and also to refute the alien status of the reality. More clearly, it is to reject both the ‘passivity’ of the subjective domain and the autonomy of the objective domain.

Thought, viewed as the essence of reality, can never be a ‘formal’ category, obviously because it cannot be confined within the limits of appearance. It is conceptually prior to reality or, reality is the manifestation of reason. “The world which is supposedly beyond thought is really posited by thought, that it is a manifestation of rational necessity”.

Assigning conceptual priority to reason is equal to denying outrightly all kinds of formalistic approaches or, to substituting the formalist logic with the essentialist logic. As a matter of fact, what Hegel does in developing his system of dialectical logic is this substitution. We shall observe, in the next section, the essentialist undercurrents of Hegel’s dialectical logic.

The Central Themes of Dialectical Logic: An Exposition.

Formalism has been challenged by Hegel through his doctrine of essence. Concept of universality as the real being which makes the particular what it is most fundamental to Hegel’s doctrine of essence. A particular thing, Hegel explains, gets its unique individuality from its ‘membership’ in a specific class. The ‘class identify’ i.e., the universal, makes the individual what it really is. An individual which belongs to the class ‘X’ is

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4Charles Taylor, Hegel and Modern Society, p. 47. Taylor says that we overcome the dualism between subject and object, between knowing man and the nature, in seeing the world as the necessary expression of thought, or rational necessity, while we see ourselves as the necessary vehicles of this thought, as the point where it becomes conscious”. Ibid - p. 47.
distinguishable from another individual of another class only because of its 'X-ness'. A man is different from animals only because of his 'manness'. Universality, therefore, is not to be understood merely as a common feature shared by the individuals, but as the 'real essence', conceptually prior to the individuality of the individuals. To put it in Hegel's own words: "Every human individual, though infinitely unique, is so only because he belongs to the class of man, every animal only because it belongs to the class of animal. Being-man or being-animal is the prius of their individuality".\(^5\)

To say that 'manness' is a quality shared by every member of the human community is to conceive essence as 'mere abstraction'. Hegel evidently opposes this idea with the claim that essence is 'concretely' real. It is not dependent on the reality of the particulars. But, on the contrary, the particulars are dependent on the reality of the essence. It is the 'concrete universal' that can never be conceived in terms of 'abstraction', rather, it is to be understood as 'something self specifying and self-particularising'. As Hegel maintains, "it is of the greatest importance, both for knowledge and practice, that the merely common should not be confused with what is truely universal".\(^6\)

Essence is the source without which a particular thing cannot appear as it is. It is the necessity which underlies everything that appears. Essence therefore preceeds appearance. But, as Charles Taylor observes, essence here is not a posited substrate; "it is the necessity which underlies everything and posits the observed fact as something external".\(^7\) The meaning of this observation is plain that the essence in Hegel's sense must not be conceived as something posited by the facts, but as the primary reality which posits everything as something external. The conception of essence as something

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\(^6\)Hegel, lesser Logic, Quoted in *Hegel - A reexamination*, by J.N. Findlay, p. 225.
\(^7\)Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 259.
posited by the appearing facts presupposes the method of starting from appearance and reaching the essence, that it follows the position that essence is to be understood in terms of appearance. The conception of essence as the underlying necessity which posits the observed facts as something external, on the other hand, involves a quite different methodological position that appearance is to be understood in terms of essence. Essence, for Hegel, is the starting point, the true being. Appearance is the manifestation of the essence. Hegel derives from this the fundamental thesis of his dialectical system that the world of appearances is the manifestation of the underlying rational necessity, i.e., the essence.

Being and Nothingness.

Hegel’s essentialist enquiry does not stop at the level of the primacy of essence. Rather, it starts from this level and proceeds to the conception of the ‘first universal’, of the first principle that determines everything. The conception that he arrives at is the conception of pure Being. Hegel says: “Pure Being makes the beginning: because it is on one hand pure thought, and on the other immediacy itself, simple and indeterminate; and the first beginning cannot be mediated by anything or be further determined”.8 Explicitly, two ideas that are implied here are:

1. Being is the absolute beginning of everything.

2. Being is indeterminate.

Thought is possible only when we acknowledge ‘something’ which is simplest and most fundamental than everything thought of. This something, in Hegel’s observation, is a logical category. Hegel calls it as ‘Pure Being’. “It is only when there has been such

8Hegel, Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Trans. as Hegel’s Logic, p. 124.
an acknowledgement that we can begin to say of what has been acknowledged that is so and so determined, so and so related, numbered and so on".\textsuperscript{9}

Being is presupposed in every act of thinking. Without such a presupposition nothing can be thought of or nothing can be determined. In other words, all determinations start from the presupposition of the logical category of Being. Being therefore is the absolute ground of every determination, the pure beginning of everything. Logically, the first thing which determines everything should be placed outside the realm of determination. The first principle which explains everything cannot be explained by something else; it must not be determined in terms of some other principle. Being therefore is indeterminate. It determines everything but, itself is not determined. It is pure indeterminacy, absolute immediacy.

Here we encounter with the difficulty of explaining the Pure Being. This difficulty is of complex nature, since, Being in Hegel's sense, cannot be explained in terms anything else, that it is absolutely indeterminate. The only possibility is to define Being as '1=1', as 'Absolute indifference' or Identity, and so on.\textsuperscript{10} To say 'X is equal to X' is to say nothing in addition to that which is already known. What we do is only to reveal the impossibility of an explanation. When we try to explain or, think pure Being, as Hegel observes, we, in fact, explain or think nothing at all. All our ventures are left with an empty space or, in Hegel's language, 'nothingness'. It can be derived from this that pure Being is just nothing.

But, does it mean that there is nothing called pure Being, that when we try to think pure Being, we think absolutely nothing at all? Hegel's answer would be in negative,

\textsuperscript{10}Cf. Hegel, \textit{Encyclopaedia of the philosophical Sciences}, Trans. as \textit{Hegel's Logic}, p. 125.
because an affirmative answer would definitely put him in trouble of defending the validity of the introduction of the concept of pure Being. Hegel avoids this trouble by insisting that when we try to think pure Being, it is not the case that we think nothing at all, but we think the ‘impossibility of thinking’ the pure Being. In other words, we think the ‘disappearance of the category of pure Being into mere Nothingness’. The character of the indeterminacy of pure Being is revealed in this disappearance of the category of pure Being into Nothingness.\textsuperscript{11}

This point needs to be elaborated. In Hegel’s account, the impossibility of thinking the pure Being is due to the fact the moment we try to think it, Being disappears into Nothingness. Our thought, therefore will be left with this ‘disappearance’ of the pure Being into Nothingness. When we try to think Being, we think the disappearance of Being into Nothingness. Being does not have a determinate content. It always reveals in its disappearance into Nothingness, and also, for this reason, Being cannot be comprehended in isolation from its disappearance into Nothingness. Hence, “the category of pure being is revealed to be equivalent to the category of nothingness” (Ibid p. 132). Hegel draws his fundamental logical claim from this, that being is both ‘is’ and ‘is not’. Being is both ‘being’ and ‘nothing’. It constantly wavers between being and being nothing at all. This logical tension between being and nothingness, as Hegel observes, is revealed to constitute the logical character of pure Being itself; it is what pure Being is.\textsuperscript{12}

The significance of the doctrine of Being lies in two ideas upon which the whole of Hegelian metaphysics is based. First one is the idea of negative totality, which means that reality is not a positive unity, but a negative totality; a unity of opposites. Second

\textsuperscript{11}Cf. Stephen Houlgate, \textit{Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics}, p. 132.

\textsuperscript{12}Cf. Ibid p. 132.
one is the idea of change, that reality is not static or permanent, but inherently unstable, because it involves 'becoming'. We shall try to have a close look on these two.

We have seen that, the logical character of pure Being is constituted by the contradiction between being and nothingness. Being disappears onto Nothingness, and this 'disappearance' is the only 'medium' through which Being reveals. In other words, Being is identified with its disappearance into Nothingness. Being, therefore, is 'Nothing', essentially negative. The two opposites, absolutely distinct, and yet unseparated and in-separable, each disappearing immediately in its opposite, constitute the logical structure of being. Hegel makes it plain by concluding that being is the negative totality, the unity of opposites, that is, 'becoming'.

"Pure Being and Pure Nothing are, then the same; the truth is, not either Being or Nothing but that Being-not Passes - but has passed over into Nothing, and Nothing into Being... their truth is therefore this movement, this immediate disappearance of the one into the other, in a word becoming; a movement wherein both are distinct, but in virtue of a distinction which has equally immediately dissolved itself".\(^\text{13}\)

With the conception of becoming, Hegel's logic assumes a dynamic form. The logic of becoming leaves no space for 'Positivity' and 'Permanence' in reality. On the one hand, it refuses to accept a given fact as positive, precisely because, its reality is the unity of opposites, is constituted by the logical tension between Being and Nothingness, and, on the other, it discards the possibility of reality to be permanent, since the truth of everything lies in 'becoming', in the movement wherein both Being and Nothing dissolve themselves. A given fact is not a positive unit, a 'dead objectivity', since it involves

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its own negation in its very essence. It is not fixed or permanent either, as its inherent negativity transforms its being into a dynamic process - that is, becoming. Being is essentially Becoming. Reality is inherently dynamic. Hegel’s rejection of empiricism is based on this dynamic logic which conceives reality not as a ‘dead fact’, but as a process. At the later part of this discussion we will show how Hegel uses this idea in formulating his critique of empiricism.

**Being Determinate**

It is quite clear from above that there is a shift of attention in Hegel from Being to becoming, or as Hegel explains, from indeterminate Being to Being determinate. “In Becoming, the Being which is one with Nothing and the Nothing which is one with Being, are only vanishing factors; they are and they are not. Thus by its inherent contradiction, Becoming collapses into the unity in which the two elements are absorbed. This result is accordingly Being determinate. (Being there and so)”\(^{14}\) When we reach at Becoming, we actually reach at Being determinate. It is determinate, because it has a determinate content. It is a unity where Being and Nothingness are constituent elements. It has both being and nothingness. It is both negative and positive. It is to be noted that, negativity of pure Being is different from the negativity of determinate Being. Hegel is very much emphatic on this point when he maintains that negativity is not a quality or an attribution of Pure Being. Pure Being is same as ‘Nothing’. It is indistinguishable from ‘Nothing’. But, in the case of Being determinate, nothingness becomes the negative moment of it. This distinction can be better illustrated as follows:

\(^{14}\)Hegel: *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Trans. as “Hegel’s Logic”, p. 133.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pure Being</th>
<th>Being determinate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pure, without any quality, mediation, determination. The moment we try to think it, it dissappears into nothing. It is emptiness, same as Nothingness. It is indistinguishable from Nothingness</td>
<td>It is the unity in which the categories of being and nothingness are absorbed and become its constituent elements. 'Nothing' Becomes the character, the negative moment in it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Being is just ‘Nothing’. This sentence cannot be elaborated anymore, precisely because nothing can be said about pure Being. But, Being determinate is not just ‘Nothing’. It involves ‘nothingness’, since it is the unity of being and nothing. In other words, being and nothingness are the constituent elements of the Being determinate. ‘Nothingness’ becomes the element of being, the negative moment of being. More clearly, ‘Nothing’ constitutes the negative character of Being determinate. The above idea can be expressed more clearly as follows:

1. Pure Being is Just Nothing  
   True statement
2. Pure Being has negative character  
   False Statement
3. Being determinate has the negative character  
   True Statement
4. Being determinate is just Nothing  
   False Statement

First statement is true, because pure Being is indistinguishable from ‘Nothing’. Second one is false, because pure Being does not have any character, as it is purely indeterminate. Third one is true, because ‘Nothing’ constitutes the negative character of Being determinate. Fourth statement is false, because Being determinate is actually the unity of being and nothingness.

Negativity of a being determinate according to Hegel is in its otherness. What is
‘otherness’? To say that a particular thing called ‘X’ has certain qualities is to say that X excludes certain other qualities. Precisely, this exclusion determines the nature of ‘X’ as distinct from that of Y or Z. X ‘is’ only when it is not Y or Z. A thing is what it is by virtue of what it is not. In other words, a being is what it is only in relation to other beings, and these relations determine the very nature of it. Hegel calls this as ‘otherness’. "Negation is no longer an abstract thing, but, as a determinate being and somewhat, is only a form of such being - It is as otherness".15

Obviously, ‘otherness’ is that which makes a thing what it is by determining what it is not. A thing exists with the dimension of ‘otherness’, that it’s existence implies the negation of other. Everything involves this negative moment in itself, by virtue of which alone it can be determined. ‘Is’, implies ‘is not’. Existence implies negativity. Evidently, Hegel’s assumption is that Negativity exists in every being in the form of its otherness.

Hegel derives from this analysis the thesis that every determinate being has two dimensions. (1) being-for-other and (2) being-by-itself.

1. A thing has ‘otherness’ - the negative moment in itself, by virtue of which alone it exists as distinct from other. A thing, therefore, has a ‘being’ in relation to others. (Being-for-other).

2. A thing has something which stands against the otherness, as what the thing is in itself. A thing, therefore has a ‘being’ in relation to itself (Being-by-itself).

Hegel goes on by operating with this conceptual scheme composed of two elements, namely, Being-by-itself and Being-for-itself, to show the dynamic nature of reality. We have seen that, a particular thing can be determined or defined only with reference to

15Hegel, Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Trans. as Hegel’s Logic, p. 135.
another. This 'another' is obviously that with which it is contrasted. A 'straight line' can be understood only by reference to a non-straight line with which it is contrasted. Red colour, can be described only in relation to other colours, such as blue or green with which red colour is contrasted. Certainly, red colour is the 'negation' of the blue colour; but red is also essentially not-blue that it can be grasped as red only if it is grasped as not blue.\textsuperscript{16} In the same way, a straight line is the negation of the non-straight line, but it can be understood only if it is grasped as the negation of non-straight line. Three possible derivations are as follows:

1. A thing can be defined only in relation to other, that a thing exists necessarily with the dimension of otherness.

2. The dimension of otherness is the dimension of negativity, that negativity exists in every being in the form of otherness.

3. Every thing, therefore, involves its own negation.

If X can be understood only in relation to Y, then 'Y' is the essential dimension of X. If Y is that with which X is contrasted, that it is the negation of X, then it can be rightly argued that X involves its own negation. In other words, X is in essential relation to its own negation. Every determinate being, Hegel assumes, involves its own negation, and hence, is contradictory. To be is to have a determinate nature, and to be determinate is to be self contradictory. Whatever contains, its own negation obviously cannot survive. It necessarily has to change or, to perish. Every being is finite and contains in itself the seed of its own destruction. Everything is bound to perish, or to change into another form. "Things are only in so far as they arise and pass away, or, being must be conceived

\textsuperscript{16}Cf. Charles Taylor, 	extit{Hegel}, p. 234.
as becoming".  

Hegel derives the idea of finite being from the above idea that everything contains the seed of its own destruction and therefore necessarily finite. Let us have a close look on it. Every being, as Hegel points out, involves its own negation and thus, subjects to change. It is, rather, a conceptual necessity for every being to have its own negation, the seed of its transformation into another form. A determinate being, therefore, is finite. Because of its finite nature, it is said to be dynamic, or potential enough to change into other form. This change, in Hegel's view, does not lead to the disappearance of the being, but on the other hand, it leads to another determinate form. Obviously, this process continues as the new form which takes birth is also determinate and self contradictory.

A finite being is finite precisely because of its inner negativity. This negativity makes the being dynamic, potent enough to go beyond its own finite nature. This 'going beyond' does not lead in any way to the disappearance of the being, but it opens up the possibility for a new form of being — another determinate being. Strictly speaking, it is not completely new, but the 'explicit manifestation' of that which was potentially contained in the old. It takes birth from the death of the 'first' finite being. Here, it can be rightly assumed that, one finite being is not 'real' in itself, because the 'truth' of which has to be made explicit in its other form, which is only possibility contained in it. Therefore, a given form i.e., a determinate being, is equal to a 'possibility'. One possibility gives rise to another 'possibility', that is, another determinate being which again has to transform into another. The second one contains the truth of the first, might be real in relation to the first, but not absolutely real, because it resolves its inner contradictions only by going under the conceptual necessity of becoming another. Each 'fact' is real in relation

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to the old, but only ‘potentially real’ in relation to the next. It is both real and unreal. Hegel bases the whole of his metaphysics upon this dialectical scheme.

The above analysis certainly introduces the notion of ‘infinity’. But, we are reminded by Hegel that the infinity we are forced to admit once we realise the fact that every finite being has to transform into another, is not the same infinity which we are familiar with. In what respect, Hegel’s infinity is different from the usual sense of the term? We shall try to see it in a more clear manner. Hegel claims that every being is self contradictory, it essentially collapses into another, which again passes over to another because of its inner negativity. “What is passed into is quite the same as what passes over, since both have one and the same attribute, viz., to be an other, it follows that something in its passage into other only joins with itself”.¹⁸ Both the beings, i.e., what is passed into and what passes over are ‘possibilities’. They are not real in themselves, since they are bound to go under the conceptual necessity of becoming - a dialectical process through which their truth gets actualised. This process, Hegel assumes, is to be found in the very nature of beings. The very nature of being is becoming. Infinity is to be observed in finite thing itself. It is, in Hegel’s terminology, genuine infinity.

1. Every finite being is a ‘possibility’.

2. Its ‘truth’ lies in the process in becoming another.

3. What is real is the process, genuine infinity.

4. Infinity is to be observed in the very nature of being themselves.

A is not real in itself, it is selfcontradictcotry and for resolving its contradiction it has to pass into B. Again, B has to transform into ‘C’ for transcending its inner negativity.

¹⁸Hegel Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Trans. as Hegel’s Logic, p. 139.
This goes on as an infinite process. A, B and C are, therefore ‘possibilities’. Their ‘reality’ lies in the process, i.e., in the process in which the truth of each gets actualised in other. But, this process is not something beyond the realm of A, B and C, but, it is the very nature of it. Precisely, ‘the process of becoming B’ is not something alien to A, but it is the very structure of its being. A is both finite and infinite. Finitude contains infinity, i.e., being is becoming. “... the infinite and the finite are therefore one and that the genuine unity, the truth, must be defined and enunciated as the unity of the finite and infinite” (Ibid p. 140).

Becoming, in Hegel’s account, is a process purely of conceptual necessity. Nothing explains it or makes it possible from outside. A finite being collapses only because of its inner contradiction and a new being arises as the resolution of this contradiction. One finite being gives rise to another that the death of one is the birth of another. There is no principle beyond the realm of finite beings, in terms of which we can explain the death of one finite thing or the birth of another. Passing away of one finite thing is the coming to be of another, and coming to be of the new is just the passing away of the old. As Charles Taylor observes, “the predecessor goes under of conceptual necessity. For its demise is the resolution of a contradiction. Hence the successor comes to be of conceptual necessity. But all finite things are the successors of some others. So that not only the passing away but also the coming to be of finite things happens of necessity.”

If the whole process of changing finite things is simply the unfolding of conceptual necessity and there is no other principle outside the process which explains the transformation of things, then it can be rightly assumed that the source of the process is contained in the finite things themselves. The roots of ‘infinity’ are then to be found in

the necessity which underlies every finite being. This is to say that infinity is present in finitude.

The above idea can be expressed more clearly as follows. A given form, as we have seen, is the manifestation of that which was contained in the past form, and, by the same logic, it potentially contains its future form. Both past and future are present in each form or that the whole process of 'passing away' and 'coming to be' of finite beings is present in every being. Each finite being entails 'infinity' in itself; it can never be conceived in isolation from its past and future, or to put it in a different terminology, from its 'historicity'. More clearly, infinity is strictly present in every given fact as its historicity.

History, in Hegel's account, is the process of becoming; it is the process of 'passing away' and 'coming to be' of finite beings. This process, as we saw, is potentially present in each finite being as the very life of it. A being cannot be conceived in abstraction from its inherent process of becoming, that it is inconceivable as an ahistorical fact. To say that being is becoming is to say that every finite being is infinite, that infinity is inherently present in each finite form. This is actually to say that every being is historical, that, history is the 'necessity' which underlies every thing; it is the essence, in isolation from which nothing can be conceived.

The principle of historicity embodies the epistemological assumptions of Hegelian system, the major thrust of which is undoubtedly against empiricism. Hegel's observation is that any system which does not accommodate historicity of the facts would definitely fall under empiricism. Empiricist generally assume that whatever is true must be in the actual world and present to sensation. To confine truth merely to the world given to the
senses is equal to treating every fact as true-in-itself. Hegel stands against this position by claiming that what is given is only a possibility, not true-in-itself. It contains the potentiality of becoming another, by which it goes beyond its own given form. Every finite thing contains the power of leading beyond its given limits. It is impossible for Hegel to conceive a fact in isolation from this potentiality. Empiricism abstracts being from its inherent potential nature, and thereby de-historicise it. Consequently, it reduces reality into mere 'observable' facts, into 'dead objectivity'. To put it in Hegel's own words:

"Empiricism - being in its facts limited to the finite sphere - denies the supersensible in general, or at least any knowledge of it which would define its nature, it leaves thought no powers except abstraction and formal universality and identity".20

To detach a particular fact from its inherent process of becoming is to place it outside of its essence, its 'historicity'. That is to treat it as a life-less object which is impotent and ahistorical. According to Hegel's essentialist logic, the particular has to be understood in terms of its essence which maintain itself behind the range of its manifestations, as the process of its self realisation.21 That is, the particular is real only in so far as it exists as a particular expression of the process of its self realisation or, as a form which contains the possibility of becoming another. In empiricist scheme, Hegel observes, the given reality gets divorced from its essence - the process of its self realisation, and is treated to be static or fixed. When the 'living spirit' gets eliminated, the reality ceases to be dynamic and becomes a 'dead object'.

20Hegel, Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Trans. as Hegel's Logic, Pp. 61-62.
Hegel strongly opposes the empiricist conception of universal as the common feature shared by the individuals of a particular class. This conception, in Hegel's observation, is the outcome of the ahistoricist view of reality. Every particular thing, as Hegel perceives, is to be understood in terms of its universality; universality is the essence without which an individual cannot appear as it is. Empiricists fail to perceive the essence of reality, the true being, the real starting point of everything. They commit the fallacy of starting from the observed facts and treating them as true-in-themselves. They arrive at the wrong conclusion that essence is merely an abstraction. In other words, their enquiry results in formalism, in treating thought as a formal category alien to, and dependent on, the 'reality', which has no powers 'except abstraction and formal universality and identity'. Hegel rejects this formalist hypothesis, with the claim that thought is the essence of reality. The points of difference between Hegel's dialectical logic and the logic of empiricism can be illustrated in the following way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logic of empiricism</th>
<th>Hegel's dialectical logic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Formalism, treating thought as a formal category</td>
<td>1. Concept of thought as the essence of reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reality as discrete individual facts devoid of essence</td>
<td>2. Concept of essence as the underlying necessity 'which posits the observable facts as something external'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Particular facts as positive units, which are static, permanent and ahistorical</td>
<td>3. Reality as essentially negative, dynamic and hence a 'historical process'</td>
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To sum up, we may say that Hegel's metaphysics centers around the three fundamental themes such as the principles of essence, negativity and historicity. These principles, as
we found provide the epistemological foundation for the whole of Hegelianism. In the next section, we shall see how the basic categories of Hegel’s logic have been absorbed in the theoretical scheme of Marxism.

Marx’s framework: An Introduction

It has been argued by many, especially by the positivist Marxists that Marx’s theory embodies a methodological reversal of Hegelian metaphysics. This view has been commonly accepted in conventional Marxist circles, particularly in those circles where Marx has been treated strictly as a materialist. It is quite necessary for those who perceive Marxism as an empiricist theory, to have a non-Hegelian view of Marx, since the major thrust of Hegel’s metaphysics, as we have seen, is against empiricism. But, in recent times, the above interpretation has been challenged from different angles, mainly with the claim that Marx’s philosophy is basically an outcome of Hegelian metaphysical tradition. It has been pointed out by the exponents of this approach that even though Marx is highly critical of the idealistic scheme of Hegel, the categorical structure developed by Hegel on the basis of his essentialist ontology has been retained in Marxism as its very methodological ground. This perspective becomes evident when we look deep into the Hegelian orientation of Marx’s dialectics.

The difficulty we face here is of crucial importance, that both Hegel’s and Marx’s systems differ from each other in terms of their respective orders of truth. Hegel’s system is truely philosophical; its main concepts are logical and epistemological categories. Marx, on the other hand, does not speak anything systematically about logic or epistemology; his concepts are mainly socio-economic. Comparing philosophical categories with socio-economic concepts does not seem to be worthwhile pursued. Therefore, for an enquiry
into the Hegelian roots of Marxism to be fruitfull, what is needed is not a comparison of an ordinary type but a reading of Marx’s concepts in the light of Hegelian scheme or, in other words, a Hegelian reading of Marx.

In our search for finding out the Hegelian roots in Marx’s thought, we may specially take note of the three fundamental concepts of Marx which undoubtedly have their roots in the three basic principles of Hegel, namely, the principles of essence, negativity and historicity. Before discussing these concepts let us explain, at a preliminary level, the strong Hegelian resemblances which are found in these particular concepts employed by Marx. To start with, the concept of praxis, on the one hand, is the concept of man as a being who creates reality, and, on the other hand, is the concept of objective reality as the product of man or, as the manifestation of human labour. This reminds us of Hegel’s concept of reason, that, of the thesis that essence is conceptually prior to existence or, the objective reality is the manifestation of reason. Undoubtedly, the conception of alienation as ‘the negativity of capitalist system’ has its roots in Hegel’s idea of negativity, that in the Hegelian thesis that every being contains its own negation. Similarly, Marx’s concept of history as the dialectical process through which society develops has an obvious influence of Hegels’ idea of becoming, of the idea that every being, for resolving its inner contradictions, has to go under the conceptual necessity of becoming another.

In the light of these preliminary remarks showing the resemblance between the respective concepts employed by Marx and Hegel, we shall now go into the detail discussion of the three fundamental concepts as mentioned earlier. This discussion will substantiate the claim which we made.

Let us start with praxis. As a prelude, we shall have a few words on how this concept
is oriented towards the Hegelian non-formalist logic. We have seen that dialectical logic is non-formalist, that to treat human thought or reason as the creative source is to invalidate the methodology of formalism. Viewing thought as the essence of reality is equal to viewing reality as a ‘human product’, or to perceiving man as the essence of reality. Precisely, this is what the concept of praxis means. This conception, i.e., of man as a being who shapes the reality can be suggested as the most simple evidence for proving the non-formalist orientation of Marx’s theory. It has been well pointed out that this conception is the philosophical ground upon which the whole of Marx’s socio-economic theories (Theories of labour, value, alienation, fetishism etc.) is based. Marx’s critique of classical political economy evidently presupposes such an essentialist conception of man, that, at the epistemological level, it embodies an essentialist critique of formalism. We would come to these points at a later stage of our discussion. Here, we shall restrict our enquiry to the essentialist presuppositions of the notion of praxis.

Praxis and Essence

The fundamental hypothesis upon which the whole of Marx’s philosophy is based is that, man is a being of praxis. The expression ‘praxis’, in the sense in which it is used in Marxist tradition, refers to the activity through which human beings produce things and practically construct their lives. In a wider sense, it refers to the activity of production. Meaning of the thesis ‘man is a being of praxis’ can therefore be expressed in plain language as man is a creative being. Creativity here is not the quality, but the very essence of man, that, to be a man is to be a creative being, engaged consciously in the activity of production.

Man exists primarily by producing things. The activity of production is the activity
of transforming nature into the means of human subsistence. To produce a wooden table is to transform the natural object called wood into a 'human object'. That is, to produce is to humanise nature. Labour therefore is the humanisation of nature. Man is a being who humanises nature. He is a being who creates reality for himself; that, reality is not an objective category alien to his existence, but a product of his activity, a property of praxis.

In 'Economic and Philosophical manuscripts' Marx observes the activity of production as the life-activity of man. The whole character of human life, i.e., the species-character, is contained in the activity of production. Man produces things, transforms nature into the means of his subsistence, and in that process he realises his potentialities and transforms himself according to them. Production therefore is a creative and self-creative activity; productive life is life-begetting life. Human life goes on progressing through this creative and self-creative activity. In other words, the whole development of human life is the development of his productive life.

Man's activity of production is a free, conscious activity. He makes his life activity into an object of his will and of his consciousness. As a matter of fact, animals also produce. They build nests, dwelling places etc. But, as Marx observes, they are immediately one with their life activity. They are incapable of setting themselves mentally free from their activity. In other words, they live according to the natural needs of their physical existence, or, rather, they act as being completely subordinated to their immediate physical needs. They have no awareness of themselves as acting entities. Human beings, on the other hand, are conscious of the distinction between their life activities and

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22 Cf. Karl Marx, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', in The Portable Karl Marx, p. 139.
themselves as living beings. This self-consciousness enables them to be free from their life activities, and thereby to mould their life according to their will. Obviously, Marx comes to the conclusion that freedom and consciousness constitutes the very essence of human life activity.

Praxis therefore is the free, conscious and creative activity of man. To say that man is a being of praxis is to say that man is a free, conscious and creative being. This is to say that man is not a passive natural being, a being who merely co-exist with the objective world, but a being who shapes the world. The activity of shaping the world gets conceptual primacy over the world which is 'shaped'. Human subjectivity, thus, is prior to the objective domain, that it is to be viewed as the creative source of everything 'objective'. In other words, reality is not an objective category alien to man, but human reality, praxis being the essence of it.

This view is explicit in all the economic theories of Marx, especially in his labour theory of value. Labour theory of value suggests that the value is nothing but the labour-power expended to produce the object. The economic categories, in Marx's view, are the manifestations of labour, of human essence. The essence of Marx's critique of classical political economy lies in his observation that political economists detach the products from praxis, the categories of economy from the historical substratum of human praxis, and treat them as belonging to an autonomous domain. Value, thus, becomes an objective character of the product; the product becomes an independent object (commodity) devoid of any human content. Such a treatment necessarily implies a fetishist mode of thought i.e., a mode of thought in which 'forms' are conceived to be 'objective', real-in-themselves. Formalism of this variety, in Marx's observation, is fallacious, precisely because it denies the primacy of praxis, it refuses to view reality as
the property of praxis.

Fetishism, for Marx, refers to a specific condition of capitalist system of production, or of the system of alienation. The details of it will be discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation. Now, in the next section, we shall make an attempt to explore the Hegelian presuppositions of Marx’s concept of alienation.

Alienation and Negativity

Marx’s social theory is to be understood primarily as a critical theory of capitalist system of production. The mode of production of capitalism, Marx observes, is invariably connected with the phenomenon of alienation. Alienation is a social reality which seems to deny the essence of man, by separating man from his life activity, by breaking up the essential connection between the product and the producer and by isolating man from his fellowmen.

In ‘Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts’ Marx analyses the various aspects of this problematic and shows concretely how the phenomenon of alienation denies the essence of man. The essence of man, as we have explained earlier, lies in his free, conscious and creative activity, that it is expressed in his activity of shaping the objective world and himself. System of alienation denies praxis in four ways: 1) It alienates object from subject, the products of labour from the producer. 2) It alienates man from his life activity. 3) It alienates man from himself, from his species-life 4) It alienates man from othermen. These four aspects are interdependent. As Marx maintains, man’s alienation from the product as well as from the activity of production are mutually dependent and they together lead to the alienation of man from his species-life. Man’s alienation from his species-life implies his estrangement from his fellowmen.
Capitalism, in Marx's understanding, is a system of production where the worker has to sell the product of his labour for money. That is, worker in a capitalist society produce things to exchange them to others for money, that "he does not produce what he needs but what will earn him sufficient money to buy what he wants". Consequently, in such a system, the product does not have 'use value' for the producer. Worker produces things for selling them to others, and therefore, he produces use value for others.

Obviously, a product becomes useful for others, or, it gets use value only after it is exchanged. 'Exchange' forms the basis of the usefulness of the product, that it determines the value of the product. In other words, the exchange-value becomes the value of the product. Needless to say that exchange-value is the direct consequence of the alienation of the product from the producer, that, in order to be exchanged the product must be alienated from the producer. Marx derives from this the basic theme of his critique of capitalism that value in the capitalist mode of production is nothing but alienated labour.

According to Marx's labour theory of value, what constitutes the value of a product is the labour-power expended to produce it. But, in the system of alienation, as we found, the product gets alienated from the producer and appears to have a different value which is determined by the process of exchange. That is, the product becomes an object by assuming an existence alien to the worker. The activity of production, thus, ceases to be the activity of humanising the objects; it turns to be an activity of producing things which are alien to man, the non-human objects. In other words, it ceases to be an activity of shaping the reality and turns to be an activity in which labour becomes an object which stands opposed to man as an autonomous power. Instead of engaging

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24 Bertell Ollman, Alienation; Marx's Conception of man in capitalist society, p. 183.
25 A product has use value when it has the power to satisfy some human need.
himself in the activity of humanising the objective nature, man in the capitalist society engages in a relation where the objects alienate themselves from him by assuming a supra human reality. In such a system, Marx asserts, subject and object, man and nature stand opposed to each other, and thereby, the very existence of man turns to be unauthentic.

Alienation of the product from the producer is actually the alienation of the man from the activity of production. Because, the product is only the embodiment of the activity of production. If the product is alienated, then the activity of production itself must be alienated. Capitalism separates product from the producer and thereby man from the activity of labour. The activity of labour becomes external to the essential being of man; that, “in his work he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel well but unhappy, does not freely develop his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind”. Labour becomes coerced; it is forced labour, not voluntary. It is not a satisfaction of a need but only a means for satisfying needs external to it.

The activity of production is supposed to be the chief means through which man express and develops his inherent powers, or, man creates himself. To be alienated from the activity of production is to be enstranged from the self creative activity. Man, in the capitalist system, is a being alien to the creative and the self creative activity; he is like a passive natural being who lives strictly according to the laws external to him.

The products, in the system of alienation, as we found earlier, appear to be the objects independent of the producer; they assume a non-human objectivity. They ceases to be the properties of human praxis and turn to be the power superior to man. Man turns to be a slave to the objects. “...the more powerful the alien world of objects which he creates

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26 Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, In Portable Karl Marx, p. 136.
27 Cf. Ibid. p. 136.
over an against himself becomes, the poorer he and his innerworld become, ⋯.\textsuperscript{28} In short, alienation denies praxis, that it makes man a being who is controled by the objects. As Marx says, it turns the advantage of man over animals into a disadvantage.

Alienation of man from man is a direct consequence of man’s enstrangment from the product of his labour, from his life activity. The species character of man, as we have seen, lies in his free, conscious and creative life activity. If man is enstranged from his life activity, then he must be enstranged from his species-being. Alienation, Marx says, thus, makes man’s species-being an existence alien to him; it turns the free, conscious, social existence of man into a passive individual existence. Alienated individual lives not as a species-being but as an ‘isolated monad’. Society ceases to be the essence of man; it becomes something external to his ‘individual existence’. Naturally, it affects the whole of man’s relationship with other men, that he recognises the other man not as the part of his species-essence, but as an object lies completely outside the realm of his individual being. To put it in Marx’s own words; “What is true of man’s relationship to his work, to the product of his work, and to himself, is also true of man’s relationship to the other man, and to that man’s labour and the object of his labour”.\textsuperscript{29} Precisely, man’s alienation from himself implies his enstrangment from other men.

Every social system is determined by a specific system of production, that, it is the labour process which determines the basic pattern of every society. Capitalism is a social system, the basic structure of which is determined by the system of commodity production. Commodity is the product alienated from the producer; it is an alien object which appears to have an independent reality. Capitalism therefore is rooted in alienation,

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid p. 134.
\textsuperscript{29}Ibid pp. 140-141
that the process of labour which determines the basic pattern of capitalist social system is that of alienated labour.

Alienation as Marx illustrates is a ‘negative ordering of labour’, that in it the activity for production assumes a ‘non-human’ form. Capitalism therefore is negative; ‘it’s negativity lies in its alienation of labour’. What seems to be negated in the system of alienation is the human essence, the creative and the self creative activity of man. In other words, what is contradicted by the alienated labour is the ‘true labour’. The picture of capitalism is that of the contradiction between true labour and alienated labour. The whole development of capitalism, as Marx assumes, is the development of the contradiction, inherent in it.

This concept of the contradiction between labour and alienated labour reminds us of the Hegelian dialectics of essence and existence. Every being, in Hegel’s logic is a union of its given form and the unactualised content, that is, of existence and essence. Essence contradicts the existence, and for resolving this contradiction being goes under the conceptual necessity of becoming another. Becoming is the resolving of the contradiction inherent in every being; it is the negation of the given form of being. Capitalism, as Marx observes, is the union of alienated labour and true labour. It is a union of contradiction. For resolving its inherent contradiction it transforms itself into another system, that it gives way to a new social order. This transformation obviously implies the destruction of its present form, the abolition of alienated labour. It is the negation of the negativity of capitalist system.

"Man’s social practice embodies the negativity as well as its overcoming. The negativity of capitalist society lies in its alienation of labour; the negation of this negativity
come with the abolition of alienated labour".  

Society’s transition from capitalism to socialism is actually a transition from the negativity to the negation of negativity, from the system of alienation to the system of unalienated labour. It is a transition from a system where the existence seems to deny the essence to a system where the existence is recognised to be the realisation of the essence, from a state of affairs where man is governed by the objects to a state of affairs where man shapes the objective reality.

History and Becoming

Hegel’s ‘becoming’ provides the conceptual ground for Marx’s theory of history. Every being, in Hegel’s logic, involve contradiction. It resolves its inherent contradiction by becoming another. ‘Another’ is not something entirely new; it is the explicit manifestation of that which is contained in the old. Every being potentially contains its future form. ‘Becoming’ can be identified with the potential nature of being. Being can never be understood in isolation from its potential nature, from its inherent process of becoming. Being therefore is becoming.

Marx’s overall view of history is that it is a process of development of man through particular social forms towards the highest form in which his inherent potentialities are fully realised. To be precise, it is a process of realisation of human essence. A social system is a definite stage in the process, that it is not an end in itself. For resolving its inner contradiction it has to transform itself into another. It contains the seed of its own destruction. Capitalism is a specific social reality which denotes a specific stage in the process of history. It contains the contradiction between labour and alienated labour.

Resolution of this contradiction comes with the abolition of alienation, the destruction of capitalism itself. Distinction of the system of alienation is the establishment of the system of unalienated labour. The ‘Passing away’ of the old is just the ‘coming to be’ of the new. That is, to say that capitalism contains the seed of its own destruction is to say that the germ of the new social order is potentially contained in it.

Every fact, in Marx’s view, is historical. It is to be understood in terms of its ‘historicity’, that as a form which potentially contains its future form. To view something as a form which potentially contains its future form is to view it as a form that contains its own negation, as a negative form. To perceive a form as negative, in Marx’s sense, is to recognise its dialectical nature, to take note of the contradiction inherent in it. That is to perceive the essence with which it is contradicted. Methodologically speaking, to assert the historicity of the facts is to penetrate into the essence of the fact, that, historicism implies essentialism.

We shall make the above idea some more clear with the help of an example. To say that ‘commodity’ is a historical fact is to say that it is not an unalterable fact, that it is a form which potentially contains the seed of its own negation. Its negative character gets realised only when we see the contradiction inherent in it, only when we perceive the real essence i.e., the human praxis with which it is contradicted. Marx’s critique of classical political economy is due to its inability to perceive the human essence behind the commodity form, due to its ahistoricist treatment of commodity as a positive unalterable fact.

By defining capitalism as a historical form of existence of human beings, Marx actually implies two ideas: 1) capitalism comes into existence as the resolution of the contradiction involved in the past form, i.e., in the feudal system 2) capitalism potentially contains
the seed of its future form i.e., of socialism, because it involves contradiction, and for resolving it, it has to transform into a new social system. This is precisely to say that capitalism is a definite stage in the process, that, in the strict Hegelian sense, the whole process of 'passing away' and 'coming to be' of forms is inherently present in it. The contradictions involved in each form get resolved in the process of histroy, i.e., in the process of becoming. To speak in terms of theorising, the theory of history to which the concepts of praxis and alienation get fused presupposes the Hegelian concept of becoming in which the concepts of essence and negativity get integrated. In this sense, it may be maintained that Marx's method is the method of historicism just as the logic of Hegel is dynamic, i.e., the logic of becoming.

In the methodological sense, historicism is the antithesis of positivism. Because the procedure involved in the former is that of essentialism, that of starting from essence, where as the procedure of the later is that of empiricism, that of starting from the appearance. Marx's social theory presupposes the method of historicism, and therefore, its epistemological thrust is against empiricism and positivism. The non-positivist epistemological dimension of Marx's social theory will be discussed in detail later on in the last two chapters. In the next chapter, we shall attempt to have a close look on one of the dominant modes of interpretation of Marx's epistemology that has been commonly accepted in conventional Marxist circles, namely the sociological mode of interpretation, and see how it contradicts the Hegelian content of Marx's philosophy of praxis.