UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

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Dear RD,

I too am sorry that we did not meet again, but the press of work was such that I just could not arrange it. In any event, I have finished a second, more careful reading of your chapter on Marx, which I found really breathtaking, not only for its scope, but in the dynamism of its several transitions. I think that you are right about the pervasiveness of the dialectic in all phases of Marx's thought, from first to last, and both right and original in the way in which you set Marx's experience of praxis in the center of his "materialization" of the dialectic, against the reductionists who simply see him as "inverting" Hegel or in eliminating the dialectic altogether. The identification of the subject of the dialectic as the proletariat is convincing to me. I learned much from this chapter, and I hope to see it in print soon.

One point only occurs to me. You are of course right that the dialectic in Marx's conception of it is no mechanical-logical "method," to be applied to the data of economic history or history of society ingeneral. But is it not possible to say that for Marx it is also a method of analysis. I am thinking of the second half of Chapter I of Capital, where Marx discloses the operations of that variety of false consciousness by which the fetishism of commodities is explained. I.e., the transition from the Equivalent, through the Extended and Generalized forms of value, to the constitution of the Money Form as the characteristic form of bourgeois relations, human relations mediated by the cash nexus. As Lukacs points out in Geschichte und Klassen..., it is not Marx's originality to have seen this form of mediation (he cites Carlyle's perception of that fact), but to have understood how this could be the case in a certain kind of society(and to have shown, I would have said, by a dialectical analysis of consciousness itself, how it came about that man could come to accept as a truth for alleternity what was in reality a reflection of a mode of social relationship and praxis in a particular stage of social evolution).

As for the rest, bravo. I especially liked the analysis of the Contribution....

With all best wishes, and good luck, I am

Hayden White

Hayden White

P.S. I enclose the chapter on Sartre which you sent to me directly; I return the Marx chapter to Eugene Gogol.

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