

Political Economy and the Normative: Marx on Human Nature and the Quest for Dignity

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"He who would criticize all human acts, movements, relations, etc., by the principle of utility, must first deal with human nature in general, and then with human nature as modified in each historical epoch."¹

1. Introduction

One of the central issues of Western philosophy, and indeed the philosophies of most other cultures, has been the normative or ethical question. What are the standards of the good, the goals that govern behavior and tell us how we should live? Plato's answer was the pursuit of "justice" achieved by "giving every man (sic) his due", depending on his location in the social hierarchy of the Republic. Aristotle, seeing that men (sic) were political animals saw the "good life" as fulfillment in civic participation. However, Aristotle defended private property and indeed, defended both democracy and slavery. Yet both philosophers agreed that the polis was the place that not only enabled self-fulfillment that perhaps enabled happiness as the gratification from the good life. But neither philosopher saw that as a possibility for all, indeed, such participation in the political has typically been the prerogative of affluent male elites-till this day.

For Marx, the critique of capitalism began with wage labor and alienation that robbed workers of their freedom, humanity and dignity. Less interest has been paid to the normative or ethical basis of those concerns, why is freeing workers from alienation and wage slavery a "good" while subordination, servitude, denigration have been justified. While Marx avoided discussions of ethics, he yet embraced an ethical position. Blackledge (2007) argued that Marx did consider issues of freedom and justice as part of his normative stance that we claim rests on Marx's view of human nature and desire, but that nature is always expressed in historically particular forms. We will argue that, first, Marx's had a tacit notion of "human nature," and desire play a fundamental role in his theory of history while thwarted desires provided an ethical basis for his 1844 critique of wage labor as a source of misery, frustrations of "natural" desires and distortions of self. Second, Marx was quite clear how capitalism fostered the indignities, abasement and indignation of workers based on the contradiction of its human nature and the condition of its life.² This would be overcome by socialism, but his observation needs to be grounded in basic life process rooted in human nature and desire. While basic affects may be "hard-wired," humans are subjected to socialization processes to dispose motives, actions and feelings. Uniquely human desires emerge, *especially as will be argued, the need for dignity as both an emotionally*

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. (London, Lawrence & Wishart) 1967, pg. 571.

² Geras, Norman. *Marx and Human Nature* (London: Verso, 1983). pg. 62-3.

based desire and a normative principle. ³ Third and finally, we will therefore argue that Marx's critique of alienated labor rests upon an ethical critique that saw human desires in general and capacities for self-realization and dignity in particular frustrated by political economy and sustained by ideology. Transcending the political economy, which depends on unmasking ideological distortions, was the precondition of emancipation and freedom, self-realization and dignity for all. But his notion of dignity was not based on some kind of disembodied "recognition" of selfhood that was independent of political economy.⁴ The ethical must be grounded in the ontological-which must consider human nature and *an essential part of that nature is its emotional bedrock.*

Arguments over concepts of human nature typically bring in highly selective historical evidence, for example consider the many attempts to justify contemporary behavior as "normal" and "inherent." Are people naturally greedy? Indeed, someone go so far as to say that capitalist acquisitiveness is part of our DNA; just look at all the apes and chimps on Wall Street/Silicon Valley (but not bonobos). There is *very little evidence* to suggest an evolutionary basis for a particular ideology/social system whether Social Darwinist claims that justify capitalism as "survival of fittest" nor others who see primate cooperation (if not copulation) as the basis of socialism. Sorry, the bonobos did not anticipate Marx. Similarly, to argue that human aggression is inherent means that war and conflict are inevitable which ignores the many societies where that is not the case, and indeed the existence of pacifist tendencies in some communities make it questionable. We would argue the histories of war, torture, genocide and cruelties can be better explained by social factors than appeals to genetics or "inherent aggression". (The reasons groups go to war, i.e., for land (resources), wealth and power, are not the reasons individuals are willing to fight.)

Nevertheless one might note that for most of pre-history, people lived as simple hunter gatherers or small horticultural societies where sharing, caring and cooperation, living in harmony with nature and each other were typical. In such societies the accumulation of goods was a hindrance-potlatch ceremonies redistributed goods. Moreover there was little hierarchical stratification and instead a great deal of equality – especially between men and women. But can we then say that human beings are socialist by nature? No! You cannot

³ We must differentiate dignity from pride or self-esteem. Rousseau considered self-esteem as self-love, distinct from pride, that led people to compare themselves with others and take pleasure in being "better" and often enjoying the suffering others. Pride, like dignity, requires recognition, typically through accomplishments whether prowess in war, business, academics or the arts, or simple decency in one's everyday acts. This can be seen as a person's "worth" based on effectiveness for a system or organization that may however well depend on exploitation and that may well foster inequality, degradation and alienation of others-eg business "leaders" who close plants, fire workers, cut wages/benefits and enhance corporate value, stock owner wealth and their own incomes (CF Bonefield and Psychopedis, 2005). Therefore, self-esteem, pride self-worth, are not only individualistic, but can come from acts without social benefit-or indeed, acts with horrendous impacts on others. Eichmann's pride in doing a "good job" sending Jews to camps, Stalin's pride in the extermination of the Kulaks or Bush's pride in declaring "mission accomplished."

⁴ More specifically, the notion of "recognition" has become the focus of recent Critical Theory, especially in the work of Axel Honneth. But his perspective has dismissed the historical context of capitalism as the material foundation of a class society based on private property that alienates labor, appropriates surplus value and whose ideologies and cultural distractions sustain domination.

transpose a modern industrial political economy to a band of nomads, simple societies differ from those that are more differentiated. As societies were able to produce surplus food and in turn enable permanent settlements, classes of chieftains, warriors, and priests, all based on the ownership/control of land and concentrated wealth, then claimed political power and possessed force to sustain those claims. How a society has organized its sustenance and production impacts the ways people live and the qualities of a “human nature” are articulated, transformed or suppressed. Most history has been shaped by the need for fertile deltas, classes of landowners, warriors and priests to sacralize these arrangements.

Norms governing social life are products of a specific historical period. Members of elite classes, literati/intellectuals, typically priests, articulated formal ethical systems that typically facilitated social behavior, regulated interaction and normalized the rule of elites as either Gods or chosen by Gods. Ethical codes typically attempted to regulate behavior and belief to both maintain social harmony and legitimate class domination. As societies produced greater surplus that might precondition a move from necessity to freedom, ruling class control of the State, dominant ideology, laws and instruments of coercion, limited the freedom of the majorities and obfuscated consciousness of inequality and possibilities of change. For Chomsky (2014) the historic development of mankind strives for "the free unhindered unfolding of all the individual and social forces in life..culminating in anarcho-syndicalism a variety of "libertarian socialism." ⁵

2. Human Nature and the Ethical

Considerations of the ethical basis of the good life - for both the individual and his/her society must deal with three fundamental questions. Firstly, there is such a thing as human nature? Is it inherent or simply determined by society – or how do these moments interact? While many claim that in the 6th thesis on Feuerbach, that people were nothing more than “an ensemble of social relations”, Geras (1983) claims that Marx’s comments were specifically addressed to his critique of Feuerbach-which came after the *1844 Manuscripts*. He shows that Marx had a conception of “human nature.” *The critique of alienated labor required a philosophical anthropology of human desire, emotion and the possibility of dignity under conditions of freedom*. But the expressions of that nature and the attainment of human dignity depended on historical contexts which might not only thwart that possibility, but foster its very opposites, degradation, indignity, submission to authority, hostility, and even harm to the Other. The key to elaborating Marx’s concept of human nature, and in turn, basing an ethical system on that nature rests on understanding human needs, desires or tendencies.

"Man is directly a natural being. As a natural being and as a living natural being he is on the one hand endowed with natural powers, vital powers – he is an active natural being. These forces exist in him as tendencies and abilities – as instincts. On the other hand, as a natural, corporeal, sensuous, objective being he is a suffering, conditioned, and limited creature, like animals and plants. That is to say, the objects of his instincts exist outside him,

⁵ Chomsky, 'How Can We Escape the Curse of Economic Exploitation?' <http://www.alternet.org/visions/chomsky-how-can-we-escape-curse-economic-exploitation-and-political-and-social-enslavement> (Accessed 6/24/2014).

as objects independent of him; yet these objects are objects that he needs – essential objects, indispensable to the manifestation and confirmation of his essential powers."⁶

Marx sees human nature in terms of 'tendencies', 'drives', 'essential powers', and 'instincts' to act in order to satisfy 'needs' for external objectives. But these were thwarted. For Marx, alienation, meant that social ties and bonds of community were frustrated and attenuated. Further, people, unlike animals, were "species beings", *Gattungswesen*, aware of being a species with the capacity shape their own nature. But wage labor created a system that stood outside the worker acted as an alien force that denied people creativity and agency to create (realize) themselves, life was simply reduced to survival. Thus workers were without the freedom to create and realize themselves and without recognition of their fundamental humanity and dignity. We will develop this point later, suffice to note that his critique of alienation rested on notion of a thwarted human nature and frustrations of desire that were not fully developed. Similarly, Tabak (2013) argues that the concept of human nature is the "Archimedean point" of Marx's philosophy. "Marx's concept of human nature, as the dialectical unity of essence and appearance in existence, envisions a being whose essential characteristics explain his or her own self-transformation."⁷ This implies that there is a human nature in general (human essence) and human nature in particular that is a contingent, historically modified existence that, under conditions of domination and alienation, may be thwarted and distorted. Thus, we must interrogate Marx's concept of human nature and desire which requires considerations of affects and emotions. So that the argument is clear: we will later argue that desire is the pursuit of, or avoidance of certain emotional states. But, this is not a simplistic hedonism.

In *The German Ideology*, Marx considers worker's *needs* and consequently their nature requires explaining people's needs and how they act to satisfy those needs, and the proletariat were hardly in a position satisfy their needs. Similarly in the *Grundrisse*, humans were seen as a totality of needs and drives which exerts a force upon men. Finally, Marx sees the importance of new, uniquely human needs arising when people are free of alienation/domination and might realize their potentials. They will have a richness of needs instead of a need for riches. But such needs depend on society and what it provides. For Geras (1983) people had needs,

"for other human beings, for sexual relations, for food, water, clothing, shelter, rest and, more generally, for circumstances that are conducive to health rather than disease. There is another one ... the need of people for a breadth and diversity of pursuit and hence of personal development, as Marx himself expresses these, 'all-round activity', 'all-round development of individuals', 'free development of individuals', 'the means of cultivating [one's] gifts in all directions' ... The *German Ideology* describes the proletariat similarly: as one who is not in position to satisfy even the needs and yet, with all human beings: one whose position is to not even allow him to satisfy the needs right directly from his human nature."⁸

⁶ Marx, Karl. 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy in General' in Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 in *The Marx-Engels Reader* pg. 115.

⁷ Tabak, Mehmet, *Dialectic of Human Nature in Marx's Philosophy* (Palgrave, 2012), p 23.

⁸ Norman Geras, *Marx and Human Nature*, (London: Verso, 1983) p. 63

Unfortunately, Marx would not live long enough to meet with or read the books of Freud to find a framework for understanding character, desire and emotion. That task would befall the Frankfurt School to which we will return.

Secondly, an ethical system must ask if people are “basically” good, decent, empathic, caring creatures that get warped by society; especially a class society with hierarchies of wealth and power. As Rousseau would claim - and in ways that would influence Marx - people were basically good but became corrupted by class system with competition and hierarchies that led to jealousy and callous indifference toward the less fortunate. As Rousseau (1754) put it,

The first man who, having fenced in a piece of land, said "This is mine," and found people naïve enough to believe him, that man was the true founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows: Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody.”⁹

Conversely, for Hobbes, people were by nature selfish and competitive, in the “State of Nature” there was a “war of all against all”, *bellum omnium contra omnes*. Life was short, nasty and brutish. Only a social contract where people gave up some of their freedom could “tame” men’s violent ways. Freud similarly claimed humans were instinctively aggressive, evil predators, *homo homini lupus*. Without the constraints demanded by civilization, internalized as superego, people would easily fight, torture, battle, and kill each other. Even with such constraints one could look at most civilizations in terms of conquest, war, brutality and cruelty. It is all too easy to side with Hobbes, Kant, and Freud and conclude that human beings are simply selfish, evil and aggressive, albeit suppressed by force, Reason and/or the internalization of repressive social norms within a harsh superego that mediates the social contract whereby “destructive” aspects of humanity are subdued for greater collective security. That view, embraced by most conservatives would suggest that progressives not waste their time seeking social amelioration. Freud himself suggested that communism would not eliminate human aggression that was rooted in “human nature”, not the individual or collective ownership of property. While history has focused on wars and destruction, and of late genocide, there are many societies that are peaceful and free of violence.

Finally, for a Marxist critique, what is the relationship of human nature to the historically variable political economy of its context? Among pre-modern societies and contemporary hunter/gathers without full-time leadership there is more equality, less aggression, and less conflict. It was with class society in which some owned property and ruled and the many without were ruled that armies emerged for the conquest of others or defense against their armies. This rise of property owning classes, often ruled by earthly “gods” or those otherwise chose or blessed, meant that some few people would rule many others who would accept the domination of “superiors”—it was “normal.” *As a consequence we saw the rise of authoritarianism, at first structurally as some classes claimed power, and subsequently characterologically as a set of internalized dispositions of submission within the individual, thereby thwarting their freedom and pleasurable self-fulfillment.*

⁹ Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *Discourse on Inequality* (Oxford, Oxford University Press) 1994. p. 55.

All too often, exclusive focus on structure obscures Marx's concerns with the subjective, where actual human beings suffer. A one-sided focus on the structure or system, whether it be Marxist or mainstream, elides subjectivity, feelings, agency and reproduces the very alienation that Marxism aims to overcome. A great deal of Marxist critique ignores or underplays the role of culture, consciousness and character. As will be argued, an emancipatory ethic not only requires the critique of capitalist political economy that rests on alienation and is sustained by reifications and ideological agencies, but must consider the nature of the subject and his/her self-fulfillment as enabling human dignity.

As we know, authoritarian societies become more prone to violence and aggression. This idea was captured by the Bachofen thesis of the overthrow of the Motherright (*Mutterrecht*). Pre-modern people were thought to be not only kind, generous and egalitarian, but rather free about sexuality. With the rise of agriculture came civilization and patriarchy, the control of sexuality became the initial way repression was fostered, obedience instilled and compliance to oppressive work normalized. Thus we see that even today repressive, patriarchal societies indeed foster greater aggression, violence and abuse of the weak. Wilhelm Reich suggested that Freud conflated civilization with its capitalist form in which repressive norms, especially over sexuality were insinuated within the psyche; that was only the latest expression of patriarchy and sexual repression. Patriarchal repression may well foster compliant workers, whose compliance may be blessed by the priests-but it also produced distorted forms of subjectivity prone to both self-hatred and aggression to others. Such distortions of subjectivity then served to 'justify' the very repressions that made this happen. What this suggests is that with Rousseau, Marx, Fromm and Reich, contra Hobbes, Freud, *human nature is disposed to benevolence-but is easily thwarted by the demands of class society for subservient masses.*

To make our argument, it is necessary to note that Marx linked the objective conditions and the laws of political economy (capitalism) *with* culture (ideology), consciousness and subjectivity (character). This interlacing of capitalism, private property and its class structure along with its legitimating ideologies emerged from the historical conditions that led to alienated labor and the reification of social relationships constitutes the basis of Marx's work and the keys to understanding the capitalist system. For Marx, socialism was an emancipatory ethic of freedom, democracy, community, self-fulfillment that collectively enabled dignity as the "good life" that took place within "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." But this ethic presupposed a particular view of human nature.¹⁰

We would like to argue that for Marx, *there cannot be an a priori ethical system defining the good life outside of a historical context.* But at the same time, his fundamental concerns with overcoming alienation/domination/reification, *Aufhaben*, and the "self-emancipation" of the working classes, and the universal capacity for self-fulfillment, *rests on certain assumptions of an essential human nature which can be discerned throughout many of his writings; notwithstanding the lack of a systematic analysis.* Thus as will be seen

¹⁰ We must note that until we reach the stages of industrial capitalism, no political economy has produced the amounts of surplus such that the masses could be free from toiling to gain basic needs of food, water, shelter, clothing and have the time and energy to realize their potentials.

his critiques of alienation, capitalism and indeed most class systems presupposed frustrations of desires and the thwarting of self that in turn demanded a humanistic ethic that provides human beings with a sense of dignity.¹¹ As we will conclude, for Marx, the richness of needs depends upon gaining dignity.

3. Critical Theory

Marx's implicit concept of human nature informed the *critical theoretical* traditions of Lukacs, Reich, Fromm, Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse that rejected the economism of the Second Internationals. They then synthesized Hegelian-Marxist critiques of domination with culture, consciousness and character. More specifically Weber's understanding of purposive Reason, valorized by the Enlightenment, became a basis for reification of consciousness (Lukacs 1923) domination, dehumanization (Horkheimer and Adorno 1944). Similarly, Freud's theory of psychodynamics illuminated how desires became socialized, typically repressed by an internalized authority for the sake of civilization's demands resulting in guilt, anxiety for the person but enabled collective adaptation and indeed, art, beauty, cleanliness and order. But Reich showed how this was the specific result of *capitalist civilization* that repressed "natural" human goodness and denied people the pleasures of sexuality in order to dispose authoritarian compliance. While he was not often cited for political reasons, he had a major influence. However diverse these thinkers might be, they illustrated a basic polarity between "humanistic" articulations of "human nature" as basically good versus the "authoritarian" expressions of a distorted, truncated repressed subject, constricted, compliant, yet hateful. Yet for many thinkers this aberration has been considered "human nature" *But for us, the humanistic, the loving, caring, empathic "nature" is both historically and ontologically prior, yet, as a potential challenge to elite domination, it is also most typically suppressed by repressive social systems dominated by small classes of elites whose practices and ideologies thwart freedom and fulfillment and deny humanity of dignity.*

Authoritarianism typically emerged as a characterological adaptation disposing submission to class differentiation and elite class rule that then suppressed quests for freedom and autonomy. For Horkheimer (1972), the family was an "obedience factory" that instilled compliance and submission to prepare children for alienated labor and compliance to authoritarian leadership. Fromm (1961) argued that Marx's primary critique of the capitalist system was not simply its inability to smoothly operate over the long haul, but rather "the perversion of labor into forced, alienated, meaningless labor; hence, the transformation of man into a crippled monstrosity."¹² Humans are positively transformed through their labor and their self-conscious activity, and under the directing forces of capitalism these life-affirming moments are pushed to the side in favor of monotonous, inhumane practices. For Bonefield:

"Marx's critical understanding of the human subject as a subject that exists in the mode of being denied in the form of capital, characterizes, following Adorno (1975, p. 51), the critique of political economy as a negative on-

¹¹ Let us be clear at the outset that we do not see dignity as simply self-esteem based on recognition. As will be argued, we see it is both an affective state, a feeling of pride, but a condition in which the actions of each enhance the conditions of all.

¹² Fromm, Erich *Marx's Concept of Man* (Continuum, New York) 1963. pg. 42.

tology: although the social world subsists through and rests on human social practice, the human being obtains as a mere character-mask of social objectivity. The critique of political economy, then, amounts not only to a critique of capitalist forms on the basis of the constitutive essence of society that is the human being. It also contains the material basis for the demand that all relations have to be overthrown where humans exist as degraded, exploited, debased, forsaken and enslaved beings. Such a society is not worthy of Man. *It is a society without human dignity*. Paraphrasing Marcuse (1998), the human being is a thinking being and if thought is the site of truth, then the human being has to possess the freedom, to be led by thought in order to realize what is recognized as truth, namely that the human being itself is the constitutive basis of a world which enslaves it.¹³

But as we have noted, repressive social systems, *notwithstanding their being socially constructed*, are typically dominated by a small class of elites whose practices and ideologies most often thwart the freedom and self-fulfillment of the masses and deny recognition of their fundamental human dignity. Is the “good life” based on the repression and control of inherent aggression while hopefully defenses will neutralize that aggression and utilize it to motivate “desirable” action via sublimation (work, art, beauty, order, and cleanliness) lest we live in the state of Nature? And just in case defenses fail, as they often do, societies have a variety of repressive institutions exist to surveille, discipline and punish¹⁴.

But why do people accept their denigration. Social conditions and wage labor fragment the social and evoke loneliness, powerlessness and anxiety that lead many to embrace dominant authoritarian ideologies that “normalize” these arrangements; they accept submission to authority that undermine an ethic of freedom and self-fulfillment that enable the “good life” (Fromm, 1941; 1963). Moreover, such societies, by thwarting basic desires, especially tendencies for self-realization, foster further social fragmentation and dispose aggression and hostility. As Fromm (1973) argued, anger, hate and destructiveness are not basic drives motivating action, but rather, the consequences of thwarted self-fulfillment which is often the case for most folks living in authoritarian societies.¹⁵ Historically bas selfishness/aggression are then seen as “human nature”, the distorted, becomes the “normal” social character that is seen as inherent rather than a historical product. So notwithstanding Freud’s dismissal of the role of collective ownership, the aggression he described is not so much innate aggression, but a consequence of hierarchical class structures with repressive ideologies of which capitalism is just its latest incarnation.

Conversely, an emancipatory ethic - the essence of Marxist humanism - envisions the good life in terms of freedom; creative self-realization within a democratic community where that fulfillment is available to all and all have dignity. For Gewith (1998) the good life, a satisfying and worthwhile life well lived is to seek self-fulfillment which is grounded in the idea of human dignity,

"According to this conception, self-fulfillment consists in carrying to fruition one’s deepest desires or one’s worthiest capacities. It is a bringing of oneself to flourishing completion, an unfolding of what is strongest or best in oneself, so that it represents the successful culmination of one’s aspirations or potentialities. In this way self-fulfillment betokens a life well lived, a life that is deeply satisfying, fruitful, and worthwhile. It is diametrically

¹³ Werner Bonefield *Social Form, Critique and Human Dignity* (2005) <https://libcom.org/library/social-form-critique-and-human-dignity> Accessed May 6, 2014.

¹⁴ It might be noted that empirical research has shown that repressive measures to thwart or punish deviance, often foster the very deviance they would thwart. The brutal public tortures of Medieval Europe attracted large crowds, including pick pockets. More recently, death penalty countries/state have higher rates of homicide.

¹⁵ Fromm, Erich, *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (McMillian, New York), 1973.

opposed not only to such other reflexive relations as self-defeat, self-frustration, self-alienation, and self-destruction, but also to invasions whereby such injuries are inflicted by forces external to the self. The struggle for self-fulfillment has figured centrally in our literary heritage as well as in much of the actual history of human beings."¹⁶

We would note Gewirth is not a Marxist and does not name these “external forces” that are typically aspects of capitalist societies. It is important to note that for Gewirth human rights are essential for self-fulfillment which benefits both the person and their society. Self-esteem or pride based on recognition alone, the fulfillment of “sinners” cannot provide dignity which is a normative standard of the society as well as emotional state for the person.

4. Alienation and Desire

As was argued, of Marx’s view of alienation presupposed an implicit view of human, people had needs and desires, from the most basic needs for food and shelter shared with other species to distinctively human needs for self-fulfillment and recognition of their dignity, but under the conditions of domination, such desires were thwarted distorted and/or truncated. Alienation from species-being means alienation from one’s self, one’s potentials and even the richness of one’s own emotional life. Similarly, people could create themselves in their work, but when labor became alienated, self-creation unlikely and selfhood became distorted, yet such subjectivities were “normalized” by ideologies that justified the repression of workers/subalterns that was required to sustain elite wealth, power and privilege. *Insofar as the socialization of basic affects into socially “appropriate” emotions, and often feelings is typically mediated through ideologies, affects can and do, like ideologies, act as material forces.* But, people are never fully socialized, repressed desires can turn against that repression. Psychoanalytic therapy often aims at freeing people from repressed desires, this understanding needs to inform the Marxist critique. If and when basic desires were gratified, under conditions of freedom and democracy, people could attain various joys and pleasures through self-fulfillment in their work, in and through communities of mutual respect and recognition from others and when that happens, they can find dignity.

4.1 From an Affect System to the Normative

The foundational study of emotion in animals and men was the work of Darwin (1859) that claimed humans, like most mammals were born with a hard-wired innate affect system that had long served communication functions within the group as well as motivated action. This perspective argues that we are born with certain fundamental affects such as joy, interest, surprise, anger, disgust, dissmell, fear, or shame. Moreover, affects and emotions are tied to particular areas of the brain and various neuro-humors; i.e., opiod-like serotonin and dopamine are tied to joys and pleasure or epinephrine associated with fear/fight. Somewhere between bipedal locomotion, an opposed thumb and a more developed cortex, humans developed capacities for the symbolic eg consciousness and self-awareness in turn, speech and thought. But humans, unlike other primates, go

¹⁶ Alan Gewirth, *Self-Fulfillment*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) pp. 3-5.
e-book <http://press.princeton.edu/chapters/s6413.pdf> Accessed April, 22, 2014

through a lengthy socialization process where basic affects are become socialized, turned into emotions, many of which may or may not be experienced as feelings. Thus, various cues arouse emotions and feelings, now subject to social rules, but these are to a great extent, cultural. *But most important, the symbolic, enables socialization and development, much as selfhood is socialized, affects too become socialized, subjected to symbolic cues, social rules and norms of expressions, they become emotions and feelings.* The ways the parents use affects and emotion, especially fears of punishment or providing joys of love and attention are the means by which affects are first transformed by society into socialized emotions. Thus what elicits emotions, how are they expressed, repressed and/or experienced, and how they regulate everyday life, is part and parcel of socialization into a culture. The particular ways desires are expressed, or even if they are salient, are thus shaped by the same historical factors that constitute the identities that mediate between desire and one's choices of social action. People anticipate and reflect, they act to achieve, avoid or deal with certain emotions and feelings as they enact the routines of everyday life as well as negotiate the "strategic events" of the life cycle.

The important point, long understood by many philosophers, surely for Kierkegaard or Nietzsche, *is that emotions are essential aspects of morality.* Think only of various foods, most Americans find eating insects disgusting, others a delicacy. More important are the emotional aspects of morals. Many people find gays disgusting-at a visceral level. Folks like us call them friends, relatives, colleagues, students or neighbors. Consider only the Christian *ressentiment* toward Roman hedonism sexuality that was, and in some quarters, is still an essential aspect of Christianity. Thus emotions as such are part of the human condition, but the ways they are expressed and/or experienced became essential for understanding human nature. Rather, insofar as people are predisposed to seek positive emotions like love and joy and avoid negative emotions like fear, anxiety or dissmell and disgust, every society utilizes these affects in the socialization of its young to foster particular patterns of selfhood and identity that impel certain behaviors and constrain others.

These affective and cognitive qualities enable, but do not constitute, human nature as such, nor do they directly *provide a basis* for an ethical system.¹⁷ But neither can ethics can ignore desires emotions. Ethical systems, while based rooted in the political economy, arise through social interaction and negotiation-though not all the constructors and negotiators of the ethical have equal power to define the normative, transgressive and its sanctions. Yet to be effective, norm regulating behavior and/or ethical goals depends on emotional anchoring that renders most everyday life typical. We would like to propose an analytic model for theorizing the socio-emotional bases of desire as it shapes selfhood and identity, guides consciousness and action and becomes the foundation for dignity as an ethical goal. Surveying the traditions of psychology, sociology, and anthropology suggests that affects, as basic inborn systems, become socially transformed into emotions that form the basis of affects transformed into four *universal desires* that motivate social life, (people seek that

¹⁷ An ethical system cannot be reduced to individual feelings and emotions other than a tautological, individualistic hedonism that doing good, being good feels good, doing bad, feels bad). Hurting others cannot be justified by its "feeling good." Nor is this a simple hedonism- especially when some people find pleasure at the cost of human suffering, i.e., sadists who directly inflict pain and/or elites often unaware of the pains they cause. This is psychopathy, not ethics

which brings positive feelings of love and joy, and avoid what is unpleasant aversive.) *These desires are ontological aspects of our bodies, inborn responses that are fundamental to all humans, yet their forms, expressions and gratifications vary.*

We have argued that Marx had an intuitive/empathic sense of emotions and desires since, as we have shown, his conception of alienation presupposed certain “inherent” desires, instinct or needs that were frustrated by wage labor, while his views of overcoming domination/alienation promised a satisfaction of those frustrated desires. Firstly, *people seek attachments to others*, friends, lovers, spouses, and memberships in communities, Secondly, they pursue recognition that provides positive feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. Thirdly, *they seek agency*, empowerment, self-determination and pleasurable aspects of self-realization. Finally, people would avoid/overcome fear, anxiety and meaninglessness—and *thus they embrace meaning systems*.

Thus, whether attachments are based on church membership, shared adolescent initiation ceremonies, marital choices or joining a work, play or sports team, or even a political movement, people seek attachments. However, it may well be that aspects of social life make social bonds oppressive or conversely, quite attenuated for example, punishment by isolation in prisons or shunning. Similarly, while people may seek recognition and esteem, this may accrue from religious piety, business acumen or prowess in combat. The miracle of capitalism was to make honorific status contingent on economic gain (perhaps assuaging “salvation anxiety” for Protestants). But these expressions of and forms of gratification of these desires is not invariant, particular political-economic, socio-historical conditions can deny or frustrate community, thwart self-esteem, limit agency and/or render life meaningless. This was essentially what Marx said in the 1844 *Manuscripts* using the language of Hegel since a systematic theory of emotion, desire character was still wanting.

While desires can be analytically differentiated for theoretical purposes, in everyday life they are often closely intertwined. This model of socialize affects suggests that the positive emotions, love, joy, and pride, can only be achieved through relationships/social actions, while the negative affect states, fear, anxiety, sadness, and disgust can be *assuaged* through social relationships, “comforting ideologies” or in some cases, scapegoating if not sadism. The very emotional foundations of selfhood begin with attachments to caretakers.¹⁸ Subsequent group memberships provide identity(ies) or options where choices exist. It is in relationships that one finds direct recognition of his/ her identity and often for what is outside of commodified labor. It is through groups that individuals assert agency or are constrained. Finally, interpersonal relationships and memberships group or community can assuage if not overcome fear and anxiety—or teach what to fear or what may be dangerous. Attachments to the group may be so strong, one gives his/her very life for the sake of the community—altruistic suicide.

4.2 Attachments and Community

¹⁸ Many important personages in history nevertheless grew up in cold distant families, broken families or even no stable family or community life. But a dominant theme among such people is a quest for community and attachments.

Human beings tend to be social, *zoon politicon* (Aristotle). As Fromm (1963) once noted, while there is no essential human nature outside of history, human beings do not exist outside of society. Membership in a community is an intrinsic aspect of human life. Social personhood requires the use of the language and symbols of a community to enable the assumption of a social constituted identity, normatively regulated behavior and the enactment of social rituals. The tendency for humans to seek out relationships with each other and form groups is so profound that a great deal of evidence suggests it is inherent. Recent developments in psychoanalysis (object relations theory) has argued that people form powerful bonds to caretakers, people seek attachments rather than drive gratifications, and people form strong attachments to each other and their group (Bowlby 1969).¹⁹ This has been conceptualized as “solidarity,” “aim-inhibited cathexes” or “primary ties,” and so forth. Family ties, friendship, collegiality, love, romantic or otherwise, filial devotion, *esprit de corps*, loyalty, and so forth, are some of the ways people show attachments to each other and their society. In every culture, children show positive emotions in the contexts of secure attachments to nurturing caretakers. (And often to punitive, rejecting ones as well.) Society uses these attachments and emotions to socialize its young and maintain group ties. But the conditions of work often give people little time to maintain relationships.

4.3 Recognition and Self-Esteem

Hegel claimed that through the active engagement in transforming nature through work, humans became self-conscious. Work, as the transformation of nature initially enabled the slave to become self-conscious, the Master needed his recognition for his being as master, the self-consciousness of each rests upon recognition of the other and there ensued a life or death struggle between the Master/Slave for recognition. But Hegel’s concern was epistemology, for Marx’s ethical concern, this conflict was materially understood as based class the worker came up short on recognition. Like Hegel, Marx saw work as the fundamental basis for humanity producing itself.

“Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence--their food, shelter and clothing a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life.”²⁰

In the creative production of work people also produced themselves and thereby would gain recognition, fulfillment and dignity. But given that the social relations of capital rested upon alienated labor, workers were bereft of creative work, shorn of self-fulfillment and denied recognition of their selfhood, dignity, and humanity. For Marx, the result of selling one’s labor power as a commodity was the warping of character and inner impoverishment of the worker now simply reduced to an abstraction, a cost of producing commodities. Marx:

"The more the worker spends himself, the more powerful the alien objective world becomes which he creates over and against himself, the poorer he himself—his inner world—becomes, the less belongs

¹⁹ Bowlby, John, *Attachment and Loss* (Basic, New York), 1969.

²⁰ Marx, Karl, *The German Ideology* (Lawrence & Wishart, London), 1970, pg. 42.

to him as his own...The worker puts his life into the object; but now his life no longer belongs to him but to the object. Hence, the greater his activity, the greater is the worker's lack of objects. Whatever the product of his labor is, he is not. Therefore the greater is this product, the less is he himself."²¹

In a system of wage labor, the worker gets a paycheck for selling his/her time, his/her labor power, not recognition of his/her unique selfhood and its embeddedness in production. This reification of the worker was reiterated in Weber's understanding of the role of rationality *which dehumanized all workers, not just those in factories, but in the factory offices, the sales rooms, the shipping centers etc.*

Moving from the epistemological and normative to the underlying social psychological, some anecdotal evidence as well as theoretical arguments suggest that the desire for recognition, the pursuit of pride and dignity, (avoidance of shame/humiliation) may be *the most powerful of distinctly human desires*. Taylor (1992) has argued that the pursuit of recognition is the basis of various expressions of identity politics and multi-cultural agendas. Some recent psychoanalytic theory from both self-psychology and object relations perspective suggests the attainment of healthy selfhood in early development is dependent on empathic. Various fragments of experience, distress and comfort, anger and joy occur along with a number of discreet perceptions and sensations that are without connection to each other. Caretakers are there to care for his/her needs, his/her comfort and to provide empathic treatment and recognition of his/her emergent selfhood. They must attend to the needs and tensions which s/he cannot assuage. Moreover, this empathic recognition enables the various fragments of perception and experience to cohere. But without empathy and recognition we see various narcissistic pathologies and character disorders which are indeed quite functional for capitalist elites. The early experiences of self-formation then establish the ends of desire as ambition and the ideals of self-esteem as honor which impels the acts and qualities the society or subculture deems virtuous and worthy. The pursuit of self-esteem thus becomes intertwined with the larger social community and its fate.

The pursuit of recognition, the confirmation of one's self as a valuable human being provides various joys, pleasures and relief from anxiety. The pursuit of abusive, degrading relationships that nevertheless provide recognition by the Other, can be seen as paradigmatic of a far more general process of subalterns actively reproducing their subordination if it provides recognition of self.²² Thus people will accept religiously based deprivations and degradations that bring recognitions of one's virtue and honorific rewards and even promises of another life.²³ In one of the more relevant sociological studies of work and dignity, Sennett (1973), argued that over and above exploitation, workers were not even recognized as people, as just there. He noted how one of the folks he interviewed had been an esteemed teacher in Greece, but was now a janitor. As he was cleaning

²¹ Marx, Karl, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844' in The Marx -Engels Reader, pg. 72.

²² It is important to emphasize that this formulation is quite different from Freud's notion of submission to civilization through repression. In this case masochism is *not* based on sexual or aggressive instincts, rather, as Fromm put it, better to be in a relationship than to alone and better to be recognized as a victim/ victimizer than not to be recognized at all.

²³ Consider how many folks have "willingly" endured the misery of subalterity of the caste system or the sexual frustrations brought by Puritanism in hopes that would bring about a better life next time around. People will volunteer their lives in combat for the "glorious causes" of their Church, Nation, or State and like academic scholars, be satisfied with posthumous recognition.

an office during an executive meeting, he was ignored, not even misrecognized. This is a microcosm of the loss of self and loss of dignity for workers in a capitalist society.

We might note that contemporary capitalism reproduces itself by providing commodified identities mediated via mass culture and its idealized celebs that are closely intertwined with mass consumption that provide momentary, and typically ersatz forms of recognition. Many people, without even using the academic jargon, clearly see that their work is alienated, but it affords the purchase of alternative identities and sources of recognition through consumption of fashions and/or leisure based identities (e.g. fandoms or lifestyles.)²⁴ While these may well assuage the lack of recognition/gratification in work, mass produced forms of commodity based identities prevent people from grasping the nature of capitalism and their own deprivations.

4.4 Agency and Empowerment

Marx was quite clear how the production of commodities created an alien force that refluxed back upon the workers that disempowered them, frustrating a basic need for agency. Theorists of the modern forms of assertive subjectivity from Machiavelli to Nietzsche, and those so influenced such as Weber, see the "will" to power or striving for superiority as intrinsic to human nature. Rather than pose a drive, an instinct or even "will" to power, a more heuristic approach would see expressions of individual agency as social-historical derivatives of basic affective responses to overcome powerlessness and helplessness to enable survival. But these archaic motives now lead us to assert selfhood through mastery of ones environment. Acting to transform the world or influence other people—or even creating abstract symbols such as art, music, literature or political philosophy – leads to positive feelings rooted in archaic experiences of pride and joy. In more modern parlance, people are proactive; they do not passively respond to the world but actively engage the world, construct its meanings, much as Kant argued. They tend to actively explore, engage, and attempt to control of their surroundings as a way of gaining empowerment over the world that alleviated the anxiety of powerlessness and helplessness. Particular social conditions may foster expressions of creative agency and the forms they take, or conversely, authoritarian social conditions that limit freedom deny for agency. Agency, as a desire requires freedom that is as much an ontological category as a normative goal (Gould, 1980).

4.5 Fear, Anxiety and Death

In his early theorizing, Freud saw anxiety as a derivative of drives. When in 1926, following WWI he revised his theory of anxiety, he then saw it as a signal, a warning of impending danger to initiate self-preservation and the avoidance of harm. The avoidance of anxiety now had motivational powers that he had earlier given to the sexual and aggressive drives. Little did he notice that he thereby revised his entire theory of motivation by disregarding drive theory and moving toward a theory of emotions as motives. Anxiety could foster symptoms,

²⁴ Recent research by Gallup suggest that 70% of American workers are not engaged with their work, in our language it is seen as alienating and not providing recognition. <http://www.gallup.com/strategicconsulting/163007/state-american-workplace.aspx>

defenses and/or a variety of actions to alleviate the experience. Neonates are without cognitive abilities. With symbolic capacities, people recognize their vulnerability, mortality, and finitude that are the ultimate bases of anxiety. Becker (1973) suggested that the fear of death lies behind various anxieties—loss of love (depression and mourning), fears of harm, powerlessness, or meaninglessness. With the awareness of the end of the unfolding of selfhood and realization of one's possibilities, and ending of ties to other people, anxiety over death can become overwhelming. To alleviate this primordial fear, to deny the reality of death, humans choose two courses. On the personal level, selfhood can be seen as a defense against death, indeed a “lie” through which various actions and “heroic” identities might cheat death of its finality (Becker 1973). Depending on the culture this may take such forms as the pursuit of wealth, fame, or power. Fromm suggested that destructiveness or hatred of others might also alleviate such anxieties.

On the collective level, societies construct meaning systems with beliefs that promise some form of immortality that might assuage anxiety. The religions of antiquity devoted much concern with the passage to the underworld, crossing the Hades, and so forth. Perhaps the Pyramids remain the most stellar testimony to the next life. This belief takes almost as many forms as there are societies but one pattern becomes clear: In the complex societies that are most likely to have extremes of wealth and power, the acts of virtue that promise salvation in the next life tend to be those that sustain secular power relationships. But it should be noted that not all meaning systems are based on beliefs in an afterlife. This is especially true in societies that have been influenced by the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, meaning systems that tend to be articulated by elite intellectuals gain a certain allure if they provide emotional gratifications and/or alleviate anxiety. Meaning systems generally begin with a world view that explains reality by organizing chaos. Humans create systems of understanding that attempt to simplify complexity.²⁵ From the earliest of myths to the latest forms of mythology called social theory with, just a few explanatory principles. While the explanatory frameworks of elite intellectuals, for example, philosophy may indeed be quite abstract, these same elites produce meaning systems that are widely distributed through schools, media, and so forth. It is thus not coincidental that the widely shared understandings that make elite interests appear as the common good and hierarchies of power seem “normal”, make life easier and less prone to anxiety.

Meaning systems are more than cognitive frameworks, they include ethical systems with norms of behavior that simplify choices and goals of conduct. The routines of everyday life, the various self-presentations and interactional rituals are not regulated by formal laws. But these realms of moral action sustain hegemony in three ways. In the first place, while such routines may involve negotiations and constructions of social reality, the frameworks of understanding and ranges of toleration have generally already been disseminated by moral arbiters such as priests, teachers, and more recently journalists and “experts.” Further, many of the realms of everyday life, commerce, family, friendship, leisure, and so forth, have been structured if not colo-

²⁵ The need to reduce complexity is intrinsic to all complex adaptive systems. Luhmann made this observation central to his theory of society as a self-reproducing system. In fact to insure the reduction of complexity, he removed people from his system and left only communications.

nized in ways that certain outcomes are inevitable. But for Gramsci, everyday life was the site in which the ongoing social rituals reproduced social life and hierarchies of class based power.

5. Current Research on Morality

Just as the Critical Theorists drew upon their recent development, we might note that some current academic research and theory buttresses our argument. Darwin's theory of emotions has recently been developed by various psychologists such as Sylvan Tomkins (1962), Paul Ekman (1999), George Lakoff (2012) or Drew Westen (2008). We have been influenced by this research that supports the efforts of early Critical Theory, noting affective aspects of social life that had little impact upon Marxist critique. Westen for example has stressed how political positions and stances, especially those that are moral, are based primarily on affective considerations of the paleo cortex and limbic regions, little impacted by the logic and Reason located in the neo cortex. A similar view can be seen in Lakoff's (2010) notion of two family based moral positions in which the morality of one's own family can be seen as a model with moral standards for the society. First, the "nurturing parent" orientation emphasizes caring, connection and creative self-fulfillment, and sees the role of the State there to supporting people, enabling them to flourish. Secondly, the "strict-father" moral orientation values authority, obedience, hierarchy, and "toughness" to survive in a dangerous world where one is on one's own. Here the role of the State is to enable competition, maintain a military, pass laws and punish the guilty-not support the lazy poor. In many ways Lakoff updates and revises the classical studies of authoritarianism that informed our earlier discussion, he also brings current neuroscience in.

Finally, some recent cognitive science and neuroscience have shown the development of the complex connections between the various perceptual, emotive and cognitive regions of the brain – especially highlighting the role of ganglionic "mirror neurons" that are brain cells that fire when a person sees someone else acting or doing something, most typically feeling empathy for the joys and sorrows of other people. Given how our brains work, by reference to our own emotions, we are thus "naturally" endowed with the capacity for empathy. But at the same time, we have shown that certain kinds of political economy erode that quality. This recent research helped us argue, much like Rousseau or Reich, that empathy, caring and sharing were both historically and developmentally prior to authoritarianism, greed and aggression. Not only does a capitalist system attenuate empathy, but encourages disdain and indifference toward the very workers who have provided its wage labor. .

Conclusion: Toward Freedom and Dignity for All.

Domination and exploitation have been part of the human condition since classes first emerged. The priests, literati and intellectuals of the ruling/owning classes' crafted religions (ideologies) that justified the social and property relations and created ethical and legal systems that sustained if not sacralized and celebrated the ruling elites and existing social. More recently, capitalist societies, have provided new ideologies that limit the understanding of the totality and class consciousness. They have fostered nationalism and by the late 19th C, consumerism/mass culture that brings "one dimensional thought" and insinuates "artificial needs" and "re-

pressive de-sublimations” to deflect consciousness away from the various contradictions of the political economy and mask the emotional frustrations of such systems that frustrate desires, and thwarting of self-realization (Marcuse, 1964).

Thus, capitalism systematically denies people freedom and recognition that is the prelude to self-realization and attaining dignity. A fundamental contradiction of late capital has been its enormous productivity and unprecedented capacity to free people from alienated labor, while its ideologies and practices have fostered degradation, inequality and alienation for the bulk of humanity, most of whom accept, often begrudgingly, the status quo. The fundamental goal of a Marxian ethic is to organize economic relations in ways to satisfy fundamental human desires for many in ways that enable, community, agency, recognition and meaning that, in the context of freedom and democratically based self-determination, then enable self-fulfillment so that all may walk with dignity, integrity and human autonomy. (Cf Bonefield and Psychopedis, 2005) .

Fundamental to the ethical critique of capitalism based on Marx’s concept of human nature and desire, the ethical goal of this essay, the realization of dignity, requires understanding the two fold nature of capital. Firstly, Capital is an objective system, a political economy based on class domination, private property, wage labor and the extraction of surplus value. It cloaked by ideologies and reified forms of consciousness that masks its social relationships resting upon domination, exploitation and immiseration. But exclusive focus on that side of capital can lead to economic reductionism. Secondly, the other side of capitalism is its cultural/subjective moment that starts with alienation. As Marx made clear in the production of value, the workers lose their very humanity, their autonomy, self-determination, their potentiality and most of all, *they were bereft of freedom and dignity*. Moreover, as argued, Marx’s critique of alienation was based on a tacit theory of human nature and desires that grounds an ethic of dignity that was systematically thwarted by political economy and masked by ideology. The worker became a “thing” whose own labor created that which objectified and disempowered him/her. S/he was estranged from Nature, from others, and from even his/her own self-potentials. Fundamental human desires for community, agency, and recognition, meaning and self-creation, self-realization (as a species being) through his/her work were thwarted. Under such conditions, selfhood became impoverished, truncated without the possibility of self-fulfillment or attaining dignity. And these conditions lead to the real suffering of real people.

But at the same time, the goal of Marxist critique of the indignities of selfhood aims for the emancipation of all and freedom to find their dignity. While Marx did not often use the term dignity as such, dignity (can be understood as the consequence of overcoming alienation and reification and as such), the basis for a Marxian critique and normative goal. It is a state of being that depends of the satisfactions (emotional gratifications) of other desires, eg community, agency (self-fulfillment), recognition and meaning, when freedom and democracy enable the realization of self in one’s accomplishments as well as goals of their lives.²⁶ But this al-

²⁶ The fundamental flaw of LeClau and Mouffe (1986) was to focus on identities, to be celebrated and valorized, but their attempt to fuse Gramsci with identity politics separated subjectivity (identity) from the very political economy that fostered particular identity formations.

so depends on a post capitalist, democratic community that provides freedom for all to realize themselves and find human dignity. Furthermore, as we have tried to argue, insofar as dignity is a normative stance and emotional state that rests on certain emotions and feeling, it presupposes a concept of human nature.

Marx's ethical stance, based on his view of human nature was expressed in all of his writings, but at the same time, never developed in in single place. Human dignity demands social relations in which people recognize themselves as a purpose and therefore as the subjects of their own social worlds.²⁷ The demand for social relations based on realizing human dignity demands a Critical Theory that disdains all relations where people exist as a mere resource or means (Cf. Bonefield and Psychopedis, 2005).

Under conditions of freedom, when people find their needs for community, agency, recognition and meaning gratified, and possible, they then experience dignity-which is tied to "the self-realization of all. As Fromm (1947) stated, "all organisms have a tendency to actualize their specific potentialities. The aim of man's life is to be understood and the unfolding of his powers according to the laws of his nature."²⁸ The fundamental premise and goal of a Marxian ethic is to organize economic and social relations in ways to satisfy the human desires of all and allow people democratically based self-determination and pleasurable self-fulfillment so that all may to walk in dignity, integrity and human autonomy. For Fromm (1963) the Marxist humanist man's freedom, not is only *from*, but his freedom to -- to develop his own human potentialities, the tradition of human dignity and brotherhood (viii). (Cf Bonefield and Psychopedis, 2005).

Dignity is an ethical goal and standard for the evaluation of one's worth *and* the emotion that goes along with attaining that standard. Dignity, as we use the term, depends not simply on one's self love and his/her own self-realization, but on the self-realization of all. The 'categorical imperative' is not simply to act as a model for all to emulate, but to encourage and enable the fulfillment of all-and that ultimately means to critique, confront and transform capitalist domination, its political economy and ideologies that limit the self-realization and dignified humanity of others. Similarly, as Eagleton (2011) has phrased it,

"to achieve true self-fulfillment, human beings for Marx must find it in and through one another. It is not just a question of each doing his or her own thing in grand isolation from others. That would not even be possible. The other must become the ground of one's own self-realization, at the same time as he or she provides the condition for one's own. At the interpersonal level, this is known as love. At the political level, it is known as socialism."²⁹

And for our notion of the normative/affective, *this becomes dignity*.

²⁷ Friedman (2003), in his study of workers, notes "Dignity seems to have several interrelated characteristics. Perhaps central are the ideas of self-autonomy, of being a subject (rather than an object), of being able to make one's own decisions. In addition, dignity includes not having a burden of shame due to what one does for a living, to one's sex, race, nationality, or sexual orientation. The quality of dignity, then, can be contrasted with the common image of the child; and, indeed, workers often complain that they are treated like children.

²⁸Fromm, Erich, *Man For Himself* (New York, Holt) 1947, pg. 20

²⁹ Terry Eagleton, In Praise of Marx, The Chronicle Review, April 10, 2011. <http://chronicle.com/article/In-Praise-of-Marx/127027/> Accessed March 16, 2014

As we have noted, the need for dignity is an essential aspect of the richness of needs rather than the need for riches. O'Meara (1999) put it quite clearly.

"To treat things, money, or capital as the real wealth that human beings should seek is to make a fetish of these commodities; it is to endow these things with a quality of being worthwhile for their own sake whereas they are or should be only means useful for the development of human rationality and freedom... Marx's evaluation of the fetishism of commodities comes from Kant's understanding of the different kinds of ends of human action. He quotes Kant: In the realm of ends, everything has either a price or a dignity. Whatever has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; on the other hand, whatever is above all price, and therefore admits of no equivalent, has dignity. That which is related to general human inclinations and needs has a market price. . . . But that which constitutes the condition under which alone something can be an end in itself does not have mere relative worth, i.e., a price, but an intrinsic worth, i.e., dignity. Now morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in itself, because only through it is it possible to be a legislative member in the realm of ends...The wealthy person is one whose deepest need has become the need for the enhancement of the rationality and creativity of others. The only way in which a person can have this true inner dignity of being a rational and creative being is that the person treat all other persons as having the same dignity in their rationality and freedom. Unless an individual adopts the Kantian universal community of all persons as intrinsically worthwhile for their own sakes, the individual's own worth and the worth of other selves become mere commodities, to be bought and sold in the marketplace. Capitalism has harmed human dignity and reduced the human person to a commodity, and by his ideal of self-realization, Marx affirms that the inherent dignity of the human person needs to be fully activated through the comprehensive development of the person's rational understanding and creativity in productive labor and social relationships."³⁰

Similarly, for Bonefield

"True wealth, true dignity that which is beyond any price and for which the market has no equivalent is that which is worth seeking for its own sake. What is worth seeking for its own sake is not the value of the self for its own sake, nor the value of the social other or community for its own sake, but the universal value of the human self in every rational and free being. The universal valuation of every human self in moral consciousness is the only condition under which a human individual can be truly valuable for the self's own sake.....Similarly, the emphasis on human social practice disavows not only the bourgeois concept of humanity and rationality but it also reveals that the objective character of the forms of capital subsists through the denial of its essence. Yet, however denied, the world of things is a world made by humans and dependent upon human transformative power. The denial of human dignity and the possibility of human dignity - better: the category of possibility (*gleichheitskategorie*; cf. Bloch, 1973) that the notion of essence in the mode of being denied, or Adorno's characterization of Marx's critique as a negative ontology, summons - is intrinsic to Marx's work. The critique of fetishism reveals that the constituted forms of capital are, in fact, forms in and through which human practice 'exists': 'in-itself' as relations between things whose constituted form is the separation of social practice from its conditions and 'for-itself' because human social relations subsist in and through the relations between things - better: these relations acquire a livelihood as perverted forms of existence of capitalistically constituted human social relations - a world of things that is reproduced by 'active humanity' in and through her class-divided social practice....Instead of deriving human social relations from presupposed economic forms, Marx's critique political economy engages in a 'reductio ad hominem' (Adorno, 1993, p. 143). As Marx put it, critique has to demonstrate 'ad hominem, and it demonstrates ad hominem as soon as it becomes radical. To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But for Man the root is Man himself' (Marx, 1975b, p. 182) and 'Man is the highest being for Man' (ibid.). *Marx's critique focuses on human dignity as dignity denied, and this entails the critique of the*

³⁰ William O'Meara. "Marx's Atheism and the Ideal of Self-Realization" *Cultural Logic*, Volume 3, Number 1, Fall 1999 <http://clogic.eserver.org/3-1&2/3-1%262.html> Accessed April 24, 2014

forms of capital as perverted (verrickte) forms of human social relations. [Emphasis ours.] His critique then has to show that the denial of human dignity in capitalist society is a necessary denial and that is, a mode of existence of human purposeful practice alienated from its conditions in the form of capital. The standard of critique is the human being whose dignity which obtains in the mode of being denied, has to be realized through the overthrow of all relations 'in which man is a debased, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being' (ibid.). Critique, then, has to return (*zurckfhren*) the world of things to its human basis to show its social constitution. This 'return' of social forms - their conceptualization as forms of human social practice - does not entail the human being as an 'abstract individual' but as a member of a definite form of society (Marx, 1975, p. 5)...The significance of Marx's critique of political economy is that it shows the conditions which render necessary the existence of capitalist forms. The critique of the predominant form of labor, that is abstract labor, entails, as Marcuse (1979, p. 260) argued, the prerequisite for its abolition. According to Marcuse, Marx's critique is both negative and positive: it shows the negative human condition in the light of its positive suspension [*Aufhebung*]. In other words, Marx's critique deciphers the appearance [*Schein*] of independence that the capitalist forms posit, leaving the respectful forms of bourgeois purposeful activity naked by showing what it really is: a pumping machine of surplus value. Yet, as such a pumping machine, it remains a form of human relations (cf. Marx, 1966, ch. 48). For humans to enter into relationships with one another, not as personifications ruled by their self-imposed abstractions which they reproduce through their own labor, but as social individuals, as human dignities who are in control of their social conditions, the economic 'mastery of capital over man' has to be abolished so that Man's social reproduction is 'controlled by him' (cf. Marx, 1983, p. 85). Full-employment, in sum, makes sense in a society where labor is no longer the measure of all things. In other words, full employment makes sense in a society where humanity exists not as an exploitable resource but as a purpose (cf. Adorno, 1975, p. 44)".³¹

As Marx and Engels said in the Communist Manifesto, "In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." *And, within such a society, all can find community, recognition, agency and meaning that in turn enable self-fulfillment and dignity.*

³¹ Bonefield, Werner. 'Social Form, Critique, and Human Dignity' (2005). <https://libcom.org/library/social-form-critique-and-human-dignity>