

STUDIES

KAREL KOSÍK'S CRITIQUE OF HERBERT MARCUSE'S *REASON AND REVOLUTION*

and the Necessity and Freedom Dialectic
in Hegel and Marx

Russell Rockwell

Abstract: In Dialectics of the Concrete (1963), Karel Kosik entered into a virtual dialogue with Herbert Marcuse on philosophy and social theory. Central to this discussion is the necessity and freedom dialectic. Kosik referred to several of Marcuse's works, arguing that Marcuse aimed to abolish philosophy and replace it with social theory. I review two other of Marcuse's significant works, which were written within this period and are relevant to Kosik's argument. I conclude that there is great value in re-examining and going further into Marcuse's extensive investigations of the necessity and freedom dialectic. Kosik's assessments, based on Marx's concept of labor in Theories of Surplus Value, and in Capital, vol. 3, on the potential of freedom in the realm of necessity, were ultimately truer than were Marcuse's conclusions with respect to the development of the necessity and freedom dialectic from Hegel to Marx. But, unlike Marcuse's approach, Kosik's assessment of the philosophic dimension involved a conception of Schelling's instead of Hegel's ideas as the primary link to Marx's concept of the dialectic of the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom – the transition from a capitalist to a post-capitalist society. Kosik's approach

obscured Hegel's detailed examination and illumination of this issue, the brilliance of which involved a historical version of philosophy's integration of social theory. The latter enabled Marx's eventual consummation of his theory of the transition from a capitalist to a post-capitalist society, which remains, even to this day, the crucial issue underlying the on-going philosophy-social theory dialectic.

Key words: Karel Kosík, Herbert Marcuse, G.W.F. Hegel, Karl Marx, philosophy and social theory, necessity and freedom dialectic

In *Dialectics of the Concrete*,¹ first published in Czech in 1963, Karel Kosík attempts to distinguish his perspectives from those of Herbert Marcuse. A key theoretical and practical problem both theoreticians confronted was the relation between philosophy and critical social theory. As I shall discuss in some detail in this paper, this issue is rooted in the necessity and freedom dialectic in Hegel and Marx. I shall show that while Kosík ultimately underestimates Hegel's concept of freedom in this dialectic, Marcuse misinterprets Hegel's (and thus Marx's) concept of necessity. Kosík's work primarily focuses a critique on Marcuse's seminal text, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (1941).² Since Kosík began work on *Dialectics of the Concrete* in the early 1960s, his critique addresses Marcuse's important addition to that work, "A Note on Dialectic" (1960),³ which served as the new preface to *Reason and Revolution*. Hence, Marcuse's texts and Kosík's critique represent an exciting and perhaps unappreciated dialogue (to date) between two of the world's preeminent Marxist theoreticians at a pivotal point and intersection of Marxism, East and West. In his critique, Kosík also refers to Marcuse's "Philosophy and Critical Theory" (1937).⁴ As we shall see, interestingly enough, Kosík does not refer to Marcuse's 1932 "New Sources on the Foundation of Historical Materialism,"⁵ the importance of which should not be underestimated since it was among the first works to analyze Marx's *1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*⁶

¹ Karel Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete: A Study on Problems of Man and World*, trans. Karel Kovanda with James Schmidt (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1976).

² Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, 100th anniversary ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1941; repr., Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1999). Citations refer to the Humanity Books edition.

³ Herbert Marcuse, "A Note on Dialectic," in *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960).

⁴ Herbert Marcuse, "Philosophy and Critical Theory," trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro, in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory* (Boston: Beacon Press), 1968, pp. 134–158.

⁵ Herbert Marcuse, "New Sources on the Foundation of Historical Materialism," trans. John Abromeit, in Richard Wolin and John Abromeit (eds.) *Heideggerian Marxism* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2005; original work published in 1932), pp. 86–121.

⁶ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, 1843–1844, vol. 3 (New York: International Publishers, 1975), pp. 229–346.

– “humanist essays” – nor to Marcuse’s 1958 work *Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis*.⁷ As I will discuss in some detail in this paper, besides *Reason and Revolution*, a critical approach to grasping the interrelationship of Marcuse’s analyses in these two texts is pivotal for an understanding of the dialectical relationship of Hegel’s philosophy and Marx’s social theory, including the necessity and freedom dialectic, and furthermore, not only for Hegel’s turn to social theory, but as well for Marx’s veritable return to the *philosophy* of the necessity and freedom dialectic as late as in his greatest work, *Capital*.⁸

Kosík’s Critique of Marcuse on Philosophy and Society

In the key third chapter of *Dialectics of the Concrete*, “Philosophy and Economy,” Kosík criticizes Marcuse’s theory under the heading, “To Abolish Philosophy?” In doing so he refers to three of Marcuse’s works in the following order: “Philosophy and Critical Theory” (1968 [1937]); *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (1960, 1999 [1941]); and, “On the Philosophical Foundations of the Concept of Labor in Economics” (1933) (which I do not take up in this paper).

In regard to Marcuse’s “Philosophy and Critical Theory” from 1937, Kosík quotes two passages in which Marcuse attempts to explain the historical movement that turned philosophic interest toward critical social theory: “When reason has been established as the rational organization of mankind, philosophy is left without an object”⁹; and, “The philosophical construction of reason is replaced by the creation of a rational society.”¹⁰ Kosík’s conclusion follows: “Critical theory (Horkheimer, Marcuse) would abolish philosophy both ways: by realizing it as well as by transforming it into a social theory.”¹¹

However, to “abolish philosophy” doesn’t seem to be among Marcuse’s intentions in the work Kosík cites as the bases for his conclusion. In the article “Philosophy and Critical Theory,” here is what Marcuse actually writes *critically* about the notion of “abolishing philosophy” either “by transforming it into a social theory” or “by realizing it”:

Sociology that is interested only in the dependent and limited nature of consciousness has nothing to do with truth. Its research, useful in many ways, falsifies

⁷ Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism, a Critical Analysis* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961; original work published in 1958).

⁸ For a more extensive and in-depth examination of the necessity and freedom dialectic in Hegel, Marx, and theorists including Marcuse, Raya Dunayevskaya, Jürgen Habermas, and Moishe Postone, see Russell Rockwell, *Hegel, Marx, and the Necessity and Freedom Dialectic: Marxist-Humanism and Critical Theory in the United States* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

⁹ Marcuse, “Philosophy and Critical Theory,” p. 137, quoted in Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, p. 128, n. 10.

¹⁰ Marcuse, “Philosophy and Critical Theory,” p. 142, quoted in Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, p. 128, n. 10.

¹¹ Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, p. 128, n. 10.

the interest and the goal of critical theory. In any case, what was linked, in past knowledge, to specific social structures disappears with them. In contrast, critical theory concerns itself with *preventing* the loss of truths which past knowledge labored to attain [...]. This is not to assert the existence of eternal truths unfolding in changing historical forms of which they need only to be divested in order for their kernel of truth to be revealed. If reason, freedom, knowledge, and happiness [philosophy] really are transformed from abstract concepts into reality, they will have as much and as little in common with their previous forms as the association of free men with competitive, commodity-producing society.¹²

Hence philosophy and society have entered into a dialectical relationship – if the critical theory form of philosophy represents a “negation” of the established society, so too does that society in transition to a post-capitalist society represent a negation of existing philosophy: neither philosophy nor society retain their previous forms.

Despite Marcuse’s brilliant *critique* here of the very notion of post-capitalist society conceived as a “realization of philosophy,” Kosík continues right along with his argument that Marcuse’s philosophy was all about “abolishing” philosophy by turning to Marcuse’s principal philosophic work, *Reason and Revolution*. Kosík writes, “A different way of abolishing philosophy is to transform it into a ‘dialectical theory of society’ or to dissolve it in social science. This form of abolishing philosophy can be traced to two historical phases: the first time when Marx, compared with Hegel, is shown to be a ‘liquidator’ of philosophy and the founder of a dialectical theory of society [...].”¹³ Kosík then comments in a footnote:

“[...] *Reason and Revolution* is based on this conception. The transition from Hegel to Marx is poignantly labeled ‘From Philosophy to Social Theory,’ and Marx’s teaching is interpreted in a chapter called, ‘The Foundation of the Dialectical Theory of Society.’ [...] Judging from his later writings, the author became to a certain extent aware of the problematic character of his basic thesis, though he continued to maintain it.”¹⁴

Kosík then quotes these “later writings” of Marcuse, which, I noted above, are really part of the preface Marcuse prepared for the new 1960 edition of *Reason and Revolution* (and hence integral to the latter): “Marx’s materialist ‘subversion’ of Hegel [...] was not a shift from one philosophical position to another, but rather a recognition that the established forms of life were reaching the stage of their historical negation.”¹⁵ Kosík’s

¹² Marcuse, “Philosophy and Critical Theory,” p. 152.

¹³ Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, p. 104.

¹⁴ Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, p. 128, n. 10.

¹⁵ Marcuse, “A Note on Dialectic,” p. xiii, quoted in Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, p. 128, n.10.

argument reflects a common misperception persisting over many decades: that the thesis of Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* was that Hegel produced a philosophic system which reached the height of abstraction, and that the characteristic turn in Marx was toward concrete social theory. However, "From Philosophy to Social Theory," Marcuse's introduction to the original text of part 2 of *Reason and Revolution*, "The Rise of Social Theory," explains things differently. Marcuse writes:

The transition from philosophy to the domain of state and society had been an intrinsic part of *Hegel's* system. His basic philosophic ideas had fulfilled themselves in the specific historical form that state and society had assumed, and the latter became central to a new theoretical interest. Philosophy in this way *devolved* upon social theory [...]. [Hegel's] system brought philosophy to the *threshold* of its negation and thus constituted the sole link between the old and the new form of critical theory, between philosophy and social theory.¹⁶

I don't think that Hegel's bringing philosophy to the threshold of its negation in the sense Marcuse describes it here has in any way the same meaning as that which Kosík imputes to Marcuse: the quest to "abolish philosophy." Accordingly, we should not accept Kosík's conclusion, which I quoted above, that Marcuse had become aware (in 1960 compared to 1941) of the "problematic character of his basic thesis, though he continued to maintain it" when (as quoted by Kosík) Marcuse wrote that Marx's materialist subversion of Hegel was a "recognition that established forms of life were reaching the stage of their historical negation." As I indicated above, this was Marcuse's argument all along.

Interestingly, along with what appears to be a misguided critique of Marcuse concerning "the abolition of philosophy," Kosík concludes his chapter on "Philosophy and Economy" with important perspectives on the dialectic of necessity and freedom. This was a philosophic theme and concept of post-capitalism that Marcuse had long pursued, uncovering and developing the concept in both Marx's and Hegel's works in not only the years around the publication of *Reason and Revolution*, but also stretching into the 1960s and beyond. Nevertheless, we shall see that, surprisingly enough, Kosík's *conclusions* on the social implications of the necessity and freedom dialectic compared with Marcuse's were more astute, despite Marcuse's extensive and valuable ground breaking interpretations of this all-important dialectic in Marx and Hegel.

Critical of Schelling though it was, Kosík's work traces a pathway primarily from the former to Marx, only mentioning Hegel in regard to Schelling's idea as having substituted "genuine labor" for art, thereby "democratizing" Schelling's concept of art as free activity.¹⁷ For Schelling art was "free praxis," and Kosík writes that (for Schelling),

¹⁶ Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, pp. 251, 252–253 (my emphasis, RR).

¹⁷ Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, p. 124.

“human doing is divided into two areas: in one it is performed under the pressure of necessity and is called labor, in the other it is realized as free creation and is called art.”¹⁸ Kosík points out that Schelling’s distinction is based on a specific, historically generated form of labor, divided into “that which is material-physical and that which is spiritual.”¹⁹ Kosík’s critical response turns to a quote from Marx in *Theories of Surplus Value*, where Marx writes that, “[F]ree time, disposable time, is wealth itself, partly for the enjoyment of the product, partly for the free activity which – unlike labor – is not dominated by the pressure of an extraneous purpose which must be fulfilled, and the fulfillment of which is regarded as a *natural* necessity or a *social* duty, according to one’s inclination.”²⁰ Decisively, Kosík argues further that Schelling’s distinction, though important, “conceals another essential feature of the specificity of labor, namely that labor is a human doing which transcends the realm of necessity and forms within it real prerequisites of human freedom, even without leaving it,”²¹ quoting Marx’s *Capital*, vol. 3, which we will discuss in more detail below.²²

Marcuse on the Necessity and Freedom Dialectic

In the following, I shall trace some of Marcuse’s work that was contemporaneous with Kosík’s study of *Dialectics of the Concrete*. This includes *Reason and Revolution*, because Kosik himself regarded it as a “contemporary” text, as well as the two works by Marcuse I mentioned above that are crucial for Kosik’s arguments concerning Marcuse, philosophy, and social theory, yet Kosik did not refer to them, that is, *Soviet Marxism* and *New Sources on the Foundation of Marx’s Historical Materialism*. I shall demonstrate both the historical and contemporary importance as well as the limitations of the latter text, Marcuse’s long essay on Marx’s *1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*, especially his

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Karl Marx, *The Theories of Surplus Value*. Volume 3 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971), p. 257, quoted in Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, p. 131, n. 52.

²¹ Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, pp. 124–125.

²² Though it might require an entire volume to detail Marcuse’s range of analyses of labour in its various historical forms, just previous to Marcuse’s (1960) “Note on Dialectic,” the text that Kosik focused on in his early 1960s critique of Marcuse’s *Reason and Revolution*, Marcuse wrote in *Soviet Marxism* (1958) that, “Man comes into his own only outside and ‘beyond’ the entire realm of material production for the mere necessities of life.” Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, p. 219. In the very year of publication of “A Note on Dialectic,” Marcuse, pressing a debate on automation, wrote in a letter to Raya Dunayevskaya: “[H]umanization of labor [...] is possible only *through* complete automation, because such humanization is correctly relegated by Marx to the realm of freedom beyond the realm of necessity, i.e., beyond the entire realm of socially necessary labour in the material production. Total *de*-humanization of the latter is the prerequisite.” Kevin B. Anderson and Russell Rockwell, eds., *The Dunayevskaya-Marcuse-Fromm Correspondence, 1954–1978: Dialogues on Hegel, Marx, and Critical Theory* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), p. 66.

reading precisely at the point at which Marx's analysis in "Critique of Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole" (the last manuscript in the *1844 Manuscripts*) ended just before Hegel's great elaboration of the necessity and freedom dialectic. I shall show that Marcuse, after penetrating deep into Marx's *1844 Manuscripts'* reading of Hegel's philosophy, stopped, never to return, just where Hegel elaborated the philosophically key necessity and freedom dialectic. I shall contrast this with 1) the significance of Marx's own late return (in his description of the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom in *Capital*, vol. 3) to finally complete his own original 1844 reading of Hegel's philosophy, by extending it to, and incorporating, the latter's necessity and freedom dialectic; and 2) Kosík's approach, which primarily linked Schelling's philosophy to the mature Marx's concept of necessity and freedom, in effect limiting Hegel's influence to "democratizing" Schelling's concept.

In *Reason and Revolution*, Marcuse analyzed Hegel's *Science of Logic*,²³ especially the chapter on "Actuality," which precedes Hegel's discussion of "Reciprocity," the latter (it is important to note) a concept Marcuse neglects to discuss at the time and to which he returns nearly two decades later in *Soviet Marxism*.²⁴ Marcuse's aim is to show how reality becomes actuality through the dialectic of necessity and contingency to freedom.²⁵ Marcuse explains Hegel's concept of the actual as a dialectical process of reality and possibility, contingency, and necessity. Marcuse writes: "A reality is actual if it is preserved and perpetuated through the absolute negation of all contingencies [...] [I]n such a reality, the opposition between contingency and necessity has been overcome."²⁶

In this technical, abstract discussion of logic, Marcuse discovers (surprising even himself, it seems) a historical element intrinsic to Hegel's logic. Marcuse prefaces this analysis with the general observation that, in his examination of Hegelian logic thus far, dialectic appeared as a "universal ontological law, which asserts that every existence runs its course by turning into the opposite of itself and producing the identity of its being by working through the opposition."²⁷ Marcuse continues:

But a closer study of the law reveals historical implications that bring forth its fundamentally critical motivations. If the essence of things is the result of such a process, the essence itself is the product of a concrete development, "something which has become."²⁸

²³ G. W. F. Hegel. *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1976; original work published in 1812), pp. 541–553.

²⁴ See Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, pp. 135–136.

²⁵ Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, pp. 153–155.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

Marcuse remarks that the impact of Hegel's historical interpretation, "shakes the foundation of idealism" in that the developed contradictions of modern society themselves actually preceded Hegel's elaboration of his "general theory of the dialectic."²⁹

Subsequently, in his 1958 work *Soviet Marxism*, Marcuse (apparently expanding on the historical element in and social relevance of Hegel's approach) wrote, "The relation between necessity and freedom [...] is the key problem in the Hegelian as well as the Marxian dialectic."³⁰ Marcuse cites Hegel's *Smaller Logic* of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* ("Reciprocity," the last part in the Doctrine of Essence), where Hegel terms the passage from necessity to freedom the "hardest of all dialectical transitions."³¹ Marcuse argues against none less a figure than Friedrich Engels by quoting from "Reciprocity," which happens to be the final part of the section on actuality and, as such, concludes the Objective Logic. Reciprocity thus serves as the transition to the Subjective Logic. Marcuse emphasized what Hegel here termed "freedom concrete and positive"³² instead of freedom as recognized necessity (as Engels emphasized), which is, according to Hegel's *Logic*, mere "abstract negation."³³ Still, even here, Marcuse does *not* note Hegel's equally important statement: "[Y]et what a mistake it is to regard freedom and necessity as mutually exclusive."³⁴

Marcuse does make clear that Engels's error of interpretation surely produced negative influences on Soviet Marxism and all of post-Marx Marxism, particularly in not following through on Hegel's elaboration that mere insight into necessity is but "abstract negation," while only concrete and positive freedom is the "truth" of necessity. Marcuse nonetheless continues by noting that in Hegel's system, "the private sphere of freedom is dissolved into the public sphere of state and law, and subjective rights are dissolved into objective truths."³⁵ Similarly with Marx, though class instead of the state is the moving principle, "the historical process, governed by objective laws, generates socialism as the rational organization of the conditions for freedom through the political activity of the proletariat."³⁶ Most remarkable is Marcuse's conclusion which, after describing the similarities of Hegel and Marx's theories in which both appear to dissolve subjectivity into objectivity (Hegel in terms of state and law, Marx in terms

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, pp. 135–136.

³¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic: Being Part One of the "Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences" (1830)*, trans. W. Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 221–2, quoted in Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, p. 136.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 220, quoted in Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, p. 136.

³³ *Ibid.*, quoted in Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, p. 136.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, p. 207.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

of social class), also holds that both Hegel and Marx's theories "agree that the realm of true freedom is beyond the realm of necessity."³⁷ As I have already demonstrated, rather than Hegel and Marx agreeing on that general conclusion, quite the opposite is the case: Hegel warned about making necessity and freedom "mutually exclusive," and Marx (as Kosik clearly recognized) elaborated the unique form of freedom that may be found within the realm of necessity.

To proceed, it is first necessary to understand the background to Marcuse's claims (in *Soviet Marxism*) concerning the apparent near identity of Hegel and Marx's theories. In *Reason and Revolution*, Marcuse covered in some detail Hegel's concepts that brought philosophy near to the threshold of the transition from the objective to the subjective logic, for example, necessity, possibility, contingency, and actuality. (Hegel considers objective logic in terms of relations of necessity, and in the last sentence of "Reciprocity" – and thus of the Objective Logic – he terms subjective logic, to which he will turn to next, "the realm of freedom.")³⁸ Yet, in *Reason and Revolution*, Marcuse does not treat at all the final section of the Objective Logic ("Reciprocity"),³⁹ on the necessity and freedom dialectic, which Hegel also later elaborated in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*.⁴⁰ Remarkably, when he finally does treat that final section of the Objective Logic (in *Soviet Marxism*), Marcuse (as I just explained above) fails to follow Hegel's consummation of his argument – "what a mistake it is to regard freedom and necessity as mutually exclusive."⁴¹

In *Reason and Revolution*, Marcuse, after carefully detailing Hegel's unique dialectic of philosophy and actuality, wrote: "Hegel tends to dissolve the element of historical practice and replace it with the independent reality of thought."⁴² Nonetheless, Marcuse still maintained the revolutionary element in Hegel's philosophy. Marcuse wrote that "the truth of philosophy [...] became a function of its remoteness from material practice [...]. Hegel protested this trend [...], considering it the complete abdication of reason, [and] spoke for the actual power of reason and for the concrete materialization of freedom."⁴³ Yet, according to Marcuse, Hegel was "frightened by the social forces that had undertaken this task."⁴⁴ Hegel even specified the "particular mode of labour" under-

³⁷ *Ibid.* Marcuse's rendering – Marx's statement actually posits the "true realm of freedom," not the "realm of true freedom" – may significantly shift Marx's intent by implying that, even in a post-capitalist society, "true" freedom is absent from the realm of necessity.

³⁸ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 571.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 569–571.

⁴⁰ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, pp. 218–222.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁴² Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, p. 161.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

pinning the relations of civil society, which Hegel recognized as the barrier to “perfect freedom and perfect reason.”⁴⁵ Marcuse remarks that “the final truth had therefore to be sought in another sphere of reality [...]. [T]he *Logic* bears the mark of resignation.”⁴⁶ For Marcuse, this meant Hegel’s realm of spirit, or art, religion, and philosophy, which the latter detailed in *Philosophy of Mind*,⁴⁷ the last of the three volumes of his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*.

Nearly two decades later, in *Soviet Marxism*,⁴⁸ Marcuse returned to that point in Hegel’s *Logic* (both the *Science of Logic* and the *Encyclopaedia Logic*) on the necessity and freedom dialectic, which he had passed over many years earlier in his analyses in *Reason and Revolution*. Yet, he goes only far enough into Hegel’s texts to fully disclose Marx’s roots in Hegel’s necessity and freedom dialectic, that is, in Marx’s elaboration of his own concept of the dialectic of the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom, but he disregards Hegel’s warning about making necessity and freedom mutually exclusive.

Now to return to Marcuse’s conclusion cited above – that for both Hegel and Marx the realm of “true freedom” is beyond the realm of necessity – for Marx’s socialism, and for Hegel, as Marcuse remarks without further comment, ultimate freedom resides in “the realm of Absolute Spirit.”⁴⁹ In *Reason and Revolution*, Marcuse had already presented this perspective on Hegel, though with a *revolutionary* instead of conservative twist, and followed his account of Hegel’s *Logic* with an examination of the *Philosophy of Right*⁵⁰ (Hegel’s “turn” to social theory). The *Philosophy of Right* develops the categories of objective mind, or state and society, which followed Hegel’s transitions from the *Logic* to the *Philosophy of Nature*⁵¹ and from the latter to the section mediating “Mind Subjective” and “Absolute Mind” in the *Philosophy of Mind*.⁵² Not far into his analysis of the *Philosophy of Right*, Marcuse notes,

some of the gravest misunderstandings that obscure the *Philosophy of Right* can be removed simply by considering the place of the work in Hegel’s system. It does not treat with the whole cultural world, for the realm of right is just part of the realm of mind, namely, that part which Hegel denotes as objective mind. It

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind: Being Part Three of the “Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences”* (1830), trans. W. Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973; original work published in 1817).

⁴⁸ Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, pp. 135–136, 219.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁵⁰ G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. A. W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; original work published in 1820).

⁵¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature: Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830), trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007; original work published in 1817).

⁵² Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 241–291.

does not, in short, expound or deal with the cultural realities of art, religion and philosophy, which embody the ultimate truth for Hegel. [...] Even Hegel's most emphatic deification of the state *cannot cancel his definite subordination of the objective to the absolute mind, of the political to the philosophical truth.*⁵³

With this, Marcuse suggests – in line with his analysis of the *Science of Logic* in *Reason and Revolution* that I described above – that it was Hegel's recognition of the *limitations* of the historically realized form of freedom, here the “deification of the state,” that motivated his situation of the “final truth” in another “sphere of reality.” Thus, in contrast with my analyses of *Soviet Marxism* above, in which Marcuse ignored Hegel's warning about making necessity and freedom “mutually exclusive,” and he consigned freedom eternally to “Absolute Spirit,” in *Reason and Revolution* Marcuse had opened Hegel's dialectic to future, new forms of freedom, that is, new relations of philosophy and society.

To move on from *Soviet Marxism*, we can have confidence that Marcuse was acquainted with this terrain of absolute mind, if for no other reason than that the turning point for setting the *trajectory* of his theory was clearly his 1932 reading⁵⁴ of Marx's *1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*. In the final essay of these *1844 Manuscripts*, “Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole,” Marx ended his reading of the introduction to Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* abruptly at the key transition point of Hegel's Absolute Mind, and Marcuse's own analysis of Marx's reading of Hegel ventured no further.⁵⁵

Here is the story: in highlighting the point that Marx's own trajectory was not a “straight rejection of Hegel,”⁵⁶ Marcuse carefully traced Marx's critique of Hegel, Marx's praise of Ludwig Feuerbach and, finally, Marx's elevation of Hegel above Feuerbach. In fact, to show where he is headed, Marcuse concludes his essay on Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* with this signpost for *future* theoretical development: “[A]bove all we cannot go into the question if and how the ‘mistakes’ with which Marx charges Hegel can really be attributed to him. It has perhaps become clear through this paper that the discussion really starts at the centre of Hegel's problematic.”⁵⁷ While analyzing “Critique of Hegel's Dialectic,” Marcuse had closely followed the young Marx's interpretations of Hegel's works with which Marx concluded his *1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*.

⁵³ Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, p. 178 (my emphasis, RR).

⁵⁴ Marcuse, “New Sources.”

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 117. For his justification for not preceding further in his examination of Marx's reading of Hegel's introduction to the *Philosophy of Mind* (and thus of Hegel's text itself), Marcuse remarks, “other features of Marx's negative critique [...] are already familiar from [Marx's earlier work] the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*.”

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

Marcuse stopped analyzing Hegel's text⁵⁸ where Marx stopped in 1844⁵⁹ – the latter, with paragraph 384 of Hegel's introduction to the concluding volume of his system, the *Philosophy of Mind*.⁶⁰ With this there were then two paragraphs left unexamined, 385 and 386, which Hegel had actually given their own heading – “Subdivision.”⁶¹ Had Marcuse moved ahead and confronted this subdivision of “What Mind Is,” he would hardly have had to go much further for his examination of the question he poses, “if and how the ‘mistakes’ with which Marx charged Hegel could really be attributed to him.” The likely answer would have been “no,” since we shall see in the following the *social* relevance of the necessity and freedom dialectic Hegel analyzes in the subdivision. It finally appeared so socially relevant to Marx that he returned to *critically* appropriate it – that is, this dialectic Hegel first detailed in the final paragraphs of the introduction to *Philosophy of Mind* – as a crucial element in his notion of a post-capitalist society in *Capital*, vol. 3.

Marx's Critique of the Introduction to Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*

Let us follow in some detail Marx's critique of Hegel's introduction to the *Philosophy of Mind*.⁶² The introduction altogether consists of 10 paragraphs, numbered 377–386, divided into three parts. Hegel places no heading over the first part, the four paragraphs numbered 377–380, which survey various historical approaches to the “knowledge of Mind [...] the highest and hardest, just because it is the most ‘concrete’ of sciences.”⁶³

The part Marx commented⁶⁴ on, numbered 381–384, Hegel had titled, “What Mind Is.” In these paragraphs, Hegel characterizes the dialectical relationship between mind and nature, arguing that mind is the “absolute prius” though it has nature for its “pre-supposition.”⁶⁵

The third and last part (which Marx did *not* comment on) falls under Hegel's heading, “Subdivision”; it consists of the final two paragraphs of the introduction, 385–386, where

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117. Marcuse's commentary on Hegel's system (*Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*) ended with Hegel's transition from the *Logic* to the *Philosophy of Nature* (the latter the second volume of the *Encyclopaedia*), while Marx's original commentary continued on to quote two paragraphs from the introduction to *Philosophy of Mind*, the third and final volume of the *Encyclopaedia*.

⁵⁹ Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 346. More precisely, Marx's manuscript proceeded slightly further into Hegel's text, quoting from paragraphs 381 and 384 of the introduction to *Philosophy of Mind*.

⁶⁰ Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 18–20.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 20–4.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 1–24.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶⁴ Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 346.

⁶⁵ Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 8.

Hegel describes Absolute Mind as the dialectic of subjective (*freedom*) and objective (*necessity*) Mind.⁶⁶

Marx issues critical comments on Hegel's interpretations of nature and mind prior to the subdivision. He comments on and then quotes in full Hegel's paragraph 381, and subsequently about half of Hegel's paragraph 384.⁶⁷ The main thrust of Marx's critique here revolves around Hegel's notion of nature as externalization (of mind). Marx writes:

It [nature] is to be taken here [in the *Philosophy of Mind*] in the sense of alienation, a mistake, a defect, which ought not to be [...]. Nature has therefore to supersede itself for the abstract thinker, for it is already posited by him as a potentially *superseded* being.⁶⁸

Marx's argument, based on the text prior to the subdivision, is therefore that Hegel's dialectic is itself limited in that it does not point the way to overcoming alienation in actuality. In respect to the "abstract thinker" [Hegel], nature as externality "has something outside itself which it lacks [...] its essence is different from it itself."⁶⁹ According to Marx, Hegel holds that nature, as such, lacks freedom, and freedom consists in overcoming nature, not in the mind's living, dialectical relationship with nature. In any case, Marx's 1844 text, which ended by quoting Hegel's statement, "The *absolute is mind*, this is the highest definition of the absolute,"⁷⁰ stopped at the threshold of the subdivision and left Hegel's analysis at a definition ("What Mind Is") – where Hegel *appeared* most idealistic and *least* socially relevant.

Where Marx Stopped: Subdivision in Hegel's Introduction to the *Philosophy of Mind*

However, Hegel's paragraph numbered 385⁷¹ (the first of the two comprising the subdivision) is about movement and development, that is *potential*, and, as such, it goes beyond "what mind *is*." It introduces dialectics of liberation, beginning with the statement: "The *development* of Mind (Spirit) is in three stages [...]."⁷² The first stage is in the form of "self-relation," the "ideal totality of the idea," "self-contained and *free*," that is, "Mind Subjective."⁷³ The second stage is in the form of "reality," mind "realized, which is to say, in a *world* produced and to be produced by it: in this world freedom presents

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁶⁷ Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 346

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 20–22.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

itself under the shape of *necessity*,” that is, “*Mind Objective*.”⁷⁴ The third stage is “unity of mind as objectivity and of mind as ideality and concept, which essentially and actually is and forever produces itself,” that is, “*Mind Absolute*.”⁷⁵

Then, in the *final* paragraph (386) of the introduction, Hegel characterizes the very *identification* of *all three* of these stages (freedom, necessity, and the unity of the two) as a veritable process of, to use Hegel’s own word, “liberation,” that is, “finding a world presupposed before us, generating a world as our *own* creation, and gaining *freedom* from it and in it.”⁷⁶

Hegel intimates that Subjective and Objective Mind, which he takes up in the penultimate paragraph 385, are both merely “*finite*” and only Absolute Mind is “*infinite*.”⁷⁷ No stronger case can be made than Hegel himself makes here that he did not ultimately confine “liberation” to thought alone. Rather, he demonstrated that any theory (and practice) short of freedom’s *social realization* merely reflects that

a rigid application of finitude by the abstract logician is chiefly seen in dealing with Mind and reason: it is held not a mere matter of logic, but treated also as a moral and religious concern, to adhere to the point of finitude [the subject/object dialectic], and the wish to go further [that is, gaining freedom from the world and in the world – RR] is reckoned a mark of audacity, if not of insanity, of thought [...]. [P]hilosophy for the *concrete* [my emphasis, RR] forms, has merely to show that the finite *is not*, i.e. is not the truth, but merely a transition and an emergence to something higher.⁷⁸

The main point here is that Hegel conceptualizes the “finite” not in some abstract general formula but specifically as subjective mind and objective mind and, in doing so, negates the subject-object relationship endemic to philosophy, including the necessity and freedom dialectic; actually, Hegel attempts to “abolish” this dialectic, or “suspend” it, in Absolute Mind.

In the conclusion to his 1932 essay⁷⁹ on Marx’s *1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*, Marcuse made clear that the dialectical relationship between between Hegel’s

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22 (my emphasis, RR).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23. Hegel elaborates: “This finitude of the spheres thus examined [Subjective and Objective Mind] is the dialectic that makes a thing have its cessation by another and in another; but Spirit, the intelligent unity and the *implicit* Eternal, is just the consummation of that internal act by which nullity is nullified [...].”

⁷⁹ Marcuse, “New Sources.”

philosophy and Marx's theory had yet to be determined. As I mentioned above, Marcuse even questioned whether the "mistakes" Marx had identified were really attributable to Hegel. Most remarkably, however, Marcuse might have found an answer to that question very early on in his theoretical development had he read past the point in Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* where Marx's 1844 text had stopped dead – the subdivision in the introduction where Hegel discussed the dialectic of freedom and necessity as a veritable historical process of "liberation" (Hegel's own word). New forms of all of Hegel's concepts described above can be found in Marx's concretizations of post-capitalist society as the dialectic of the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom. Hence, a certain priority must be assigned to recognizing the powerful moment of world-historical critique involved, certainly Marx's critique of Hegel, but also including Marx's own implicit self-critique, to get from Hegel's general dialectic to Marx's concept of capitalist and post-capitalist society.

Two decades after Marx had stopped dead at the dialectic of freedom and necessity in the subdivision of the introduction to Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*, he returned to develop these concepts as the dialectic of post-capitalist society in *Capital*, vol. 3.⁸⁰ In doing so, Marx returned to take up the subdivision in Hegel's introduction to the *Philosophy of Mind* – precisely the dialectic of necessity and freedom as a veritable process of liberation – at the point in Hegel's text where he had left off in 1844.

As for Marcuse, he went on to consistently argue that there was *no* freedom to be found in the realm of necessity.⁸¹ Rather, he repeatedly argued, under the impact of scientific advances and technological developments in material production, that the realm of necessity itself could potentially be *abolished*.⁸² To the contrary, such technological developments bring closer to real life than ever before Marx's "materialist" appropriation of Hegel's dialectic of necessity and freedom in which a transformation, not the abolition, of labor in the realm of necessity is possible and necessary. In *Capital*, vol. 3, Marx writes:

The freedom in this field [social production] cannot consist of anything else but of the fact that socialized man, the associated producers, regulate their interchange with nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power; that they accomplish their task with the least expenditure of energy under conditions most adequate to their human

⁸⁰ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy. The Process of Production as a Whole*, vol. 3, ed. F. Engels, trans. D. Fernbach (New York: Vintage Books, 1981; original work published in 1894), pp. 958–959.

⁸¹ Russell Rockwell, "Marcuse's Hegelian Marxism, Marx's *Grundrisse*, Hegel's Dialectic," *Radical Philosophy Review*, 2013, 16, no.1, pp. 298–299.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 301.

nature and most worthy of it. But it always remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human power which is its own end, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can flourish only upon the realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is the fundamental premise.⁸³

Kosík's grasp of *this* idea of freedom – freedom in the realm of necessity – was firmer than was Marcuse's, and this is reflective of the fact that even under Marcuse's close reading of Hegel's description of the "hardest transition,"⁸⁴ the necessity and freedom dialectic, Marcuse did not bring to the fore Hegel's lament: "[Y]et what a mistake it is to regard freedom and necessity as mutually exclusive."⁸⁵

In regard to Kosík and Hegel, it would be a mistake to overlook the historical context in which the former recognized the latter's democratizing the concept of praxis or "free activity" as not only art but labor, and placed this insight at the center of his analysis of the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic. After all, Kosík's work was published in dangerous circumstances just five years prior to the Prague Spring, a period in which the idea of labour entailing a concept of democratization and, moreover, "free activity," carried profoundly revolutionary connotations. Nonetheless, in not recognizing the principal starting point of Marcuse's Hegelian Marxism – that the transition to social theory was *within* Hegel's philosophy – Kosík's work, though it may have pointed in the right direction, was insufficient to fully close a historically rooted philosophic void. A barrier remained to new investigations of Marx's subsequent *returns* to Hegel's philosophy, particularly the dialectic of necessity and freedom, with which Hegel concluded the introduction to the *Philosophy of Mind*, the final volume of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. It was therefore improbable that Kosík's critique of Marcuse's theory could provide the basis for a revival of the Hegelian Marxian dialectic, that is, for theoretical and practical movements to overcome capitalism in both its statist and private property forms.

⁸³ Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, pp. 958–959.

⁸⁴ Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, pp. 135–136.

⁸⁵ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, p. 220.