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Rarița MIHAIL^{1*}

Abstract

From a chronological point of view, the original discourse of Marx on money has been marked, first of all, by the ethical tradition that considers money as a source of corruption in human relations, and connects directly to individual vices such as the greed for money and selfishness. Thus, in the Manuscripts of 1844, Karl Marx adopted the principle of Moses Hess regarding the support to the critical issues of alienation over a certain conception of money (the distorted representation of human activity, an agent of corruption of social life and responsible for a reversal of the normal order of life). In this article, we argue that through Marx's philosophical criticism of money in his third manuscript, through his report on two literature references, he tries to prove the abstraction power specific to money. I have developed this thesis by studying in three times the way in which money generates a triple abstraction-alienation: the abstraction and alienation of the object, the alienation-abstraction of the subject, and the alienation-abstraction of the generic humankind in its entirety.

Keywords:

Karl Marx, capitalism, alienation, the power of money, derealization of mankind.

1. Introduction

Even though Marxist thinking isn't in fashion anymore [1], or seems to be out of fashion, the interest for Karl Marx can also be reactivated to the social domination of money in today's world, a phenomenon that becomes increasingly obvious with the fight against poverty. Rereading Marx can aid

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us in understanding a possible post-Marxist approach to Marx's philosophy [2], starting from the humanist details and the alienation philosophy [3], presented in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

Certainly, Marx's theory does not remain only theory because Marx aspires to change the world. He notes that the man has removed himself, has alienated himself, but motivates his devaluation only from an economic perspective: man is separated from the product of his labour, which becomes a commodity in capitalism and makes the man dependent on the system. Paid labour is just a means of survival, the workforce is commercialized and man becomes a commodity himself. As such, man loses his humanity, loses himself, loses his personality, becoming, with all of his powers and qualities, the prisoner of a "foreign force" that constantly constrains him [4]. On the other hand, human being is getting alienated from its essence, especially in the labour process, reaching, through life's dissatisfactions, lack of sense and value, to dehumanization. [5]. Money, the "universal whore", alienates man from himself, being the true universal spirit: "(...) this *divine* power of money resides in its character as the alienated and self-alienating species of man" [6]. Only the proletariat can change this condition once it becomes aware of its existence. To Marx, capitalism meant the impoverishment and oppression of workers who actually enrich the rich through their work.

Marx would not have fulfilled his program if he remained only on the social denunciation of labour alienation, keeping in mind that he sought to understand the consequences of alienated work on philosophy as a whole. Marx will extend his method and will show that social alienation is at the same time a philosophical alienation, an alienation of philosophy, a manifestation of philosophy as alienation.

This is the reason I have chosen to analyze Marx's text on money from the third manuscript. This choice is mainly explained by the specificity of the historical context, according to which we are today determined to read or re-read Marx. For money is not just one of the structures of labour alienation, but represents the supreme form, the universal and absolute form of alienation, as Marx said in the *Manuscripts*: "We must therefore seek to understand the essential connection between private property, the thirst for gain, the separation of labour, capital and land, between man's value and its depreciation, between exchange and competition, etc., between all this alienation and the money system (...) Directly proportional to the *appreciation* of the world of things the *depreciation* of the world of people increases" [6]. Money appears, therefore, as a hyperbolization of alienation, since it contains not only the power of alienation but, moreover, of man's derealisation.

2. Theoretical Background

Marx's discourse on money from *The Parisian Manuscripts* was influenced by the traditional position of ethics, which he will mention many times, showing that this has deep ancestral roots in the West, continuing to act in the modern age due to strong relationships such as Martin Luther or William Shakespeare. From the perspective of traditional ethics, money is a source of corruption in human relationships and is directly linked to individual vices, such as greed for money and selfishness. Under the influence of Hegel, this perspective is associated with more historical insights, as the German philosopher witnessed the passage of feudal society into the capitalist era, when the feudal conceptions and practices of authority and state, selfish interest and economy, money and their "spiritual" significance, as well as their practical effectiveness has undergone a radical mutation [7].

This inspiration from traditional ethics can be found in Moses Hess' text *Über das Geldwesen*, while the famous economic-philosophic sketches from 1844, elaborated a few months later, undoubtedly bear the marks of this influence. Indeed, Hess, completely independent of Feuerbach, took the initiative to raise the criticism of money on *Entfremdung* theme: "humans become strangers to one another", "man becomes generally alienated", he wrote for example before he spoke of money as being falsely *the production power specific to man* [8].

In the *Manuscripts of 1844* we find the semantic chain linking the social process of alienation to the moral one, resulting in the fact that people become, from a moral point of view, alien to one another (selfishness), as well as to the philosophy of the production activity. We find that Marx adopts the Hessian principle of supporting the critical issue of alienation on a certain conception of money (distorted representation of human activity, a corrupting agent of social life and responsible for overthrowing the normal order of life). Of course, Marx's radical originality, apart from the systematization of the alienation problem, remains only incidental to Hess, consists in extending this subject by taking into account the condition of the worker to ensure the possibility to influence the experienced historic life. Man will no longer be the one who will be alienated due to money, but the real worker will become estranged from the product of his work [6] and will concretely live the effects of this dispossession of principle. However, the Hessian money model continues to work in the *Manuscripts*. The Marxian discourse is directed to a moral condemnation of money, considered the cause of a distorted relationship with the other: the source of an ethical inauthenticity, money rather allow the exclusive appropriation of a good, and

this action is done to the detriment of the other; money thus necessarily imply pathological behaviours towards peers.

Despite this radical position expressed by Marx, *The Manuscripts of 1844* are not a text about money, a philosophical analysis of money or a conceptualization of money starting from the unity of speculative thinking, but a text in which money, as material structure of the real economy, modify man's relationship with his conscience. It is not the spirit that reflects on money, but money becomes the means of understanding the figures of the spirit. Thus, we observe that Marx, in a speculative analysis of the abstraction power of money, uses even Hegel's method, despite the fact that he seeks to overthrow his system [9].

3. Argument of the paper

The starting point of our analysis is an excerpt from the third manuscript in which Marx treats the power of money in bourgeois society and presents money as an ambivalent power, both divine and perverse, urging a reflection on the human consequences of commercial trade.

In this article, we argue that through the philosophic-economic criticism of money, by reference to two literary references, Marx tries to prove the abstraction power of money. We have developed this thesis by studying in three directions the way money generates a triple abstraction-alienation: the abstraction and alienation of the object, the alienation-abstraction of the subject and the alienation-abstraction of generic mankind in its entirety.

4. Arguments to support the thesis

Due to the confusing and incomplete nature of the third manuscript [2], we were forced to practice more tears to finally offer a sense of unity to the Marxian discourse. However, rigorousness forces us to demonstrate the necessity of this strategy.

The first rupture, between the first and the second paragraph, contains two literary hints, of which the rest of the text is partly inspired, one in relation to Goethe's *Faust*, more precisely with a replica of Mephisto. This rupture expresses, metaphorically, that money is like a diabolical power, pleasure replacing identity. The second refers to a line from Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, Act 4, scene 3, in which Timon holds his famous discourse about the absolute power of gold and makes it possible to fraternize the

impossibilities. The last rupture is a return to Shakespeare's text, which resumes the metaphor of divine power and universal prostitution.

By reference to these literary quotations, one must observe that money generates – a rare fact in the texts of Marx - a metaphorical power, a poetical power of its own, as if our author would wish, by choosing these references, to insist on the abstraction power of money. Money is a discourse about nothing, a vague and dangerous rhetoric, a rhetoric of alienation, the abstraction that has become a thing. In the light of these references, Marx's argument appears however as a speculative analysis - in the sense that it takes over the method of Hegelian dialectics - of the power of money.

4.1. Alienation-abstraction of the object

4.1.1. Money is the universal value

“Possessing the *quality* to buy everything, possessing the quality of owning all objects, *money* is the *object* of eminent possession” [6]. This passage is a very complex one because, behind a common sense remark (with money you can buy anything), we can sense a preliminary logical analysis, suggested by the use of the term “quality”. The complexity we were talking is given by the fact that money is a value, a quality that suppresses all other qualities.

The text of the first manuscript helps us to understand this “specific logic” of money: first of all, they are not conceived as a means of exchange, but as the ultimate goal of exchange, that is why capitalism is considered the system in which money becomes the purpose of human activity. At first glance, it would seem that his point of view is close to that of classical economists, which is suggested by the fact that Marx brings into question the “money system” [6] and the fact that he seems to accept Adam Smith's idea, according to whom money is just a practical mediation: “(...) money became, in all civilized nations, the universal trading instrument through which goods of all kinds were bought and sold - or exchanged for other goods” [10].

However, distancing himself from the classical economists' approach, Marx suggests, in the first manuscript, that if there is an alienation in capitalism, it is only due to money themselves. Thus, money overthrows and destroys the human dimension of generic activity: as man ceases to be the goal of human labour, through the same movement, a “valorisation of the world of things” appears. Money generates the supreme alienation, because it is a value and as such is opposed to any production, any human objectification. For a value is an intercession that is not determined by the

reality with which it is in relation, but, on the contrary, the only possible form of trade. By becoming commodities, goods-objects become alien to social labour and estranged from their generic origin. Actual labour that concretely lingers in the object, becoming the determined product of a socially determined man, disappears in the spirit of the one who bought it. Therefore, to buy means to detach - that is, to extract – the driven labour from the product. Thus, in and through money, the dominance of value is set up to the detriment of determination, that is, the inclusion of the determined individuals in the generic activity.

Paradoxically, this domination of value, suppressing any determination, is and becomes the domination of abstraction, a term by which we must understand the disappearance of quality. For by the expression “the quality to buy everything”, we also need to understand the universal power of money: because money does not involve anything, that is, no labour, they can do everything, they represent everything. But we must not be deceived: money does not have the power to act in the sense that they would give us a practical power to transform nature and man. They only have an alienated power, which is the power to possess; so that only work makes the one who works to exist and manifest himself objectively, it gives him a concrete existence and a natural manifestation, while money reduces the one who possesses it to property, that is to say to wealth. If someone has something that they bought, thus becoming an owner, it does not only mean they deny the worker who made it, but they also denying themselves as a generic man, devaluing the man in it: “The place of *all* physical and intellectual senses was taken by the simple alienation of *all* these senses, the sense of *possession*. The human being had to be reduced to this absolute poverty” [6]. To have means to deny the acquired qualities of the product, but also to deny our own quality as generic men. “To have” is the quality that alienates all qualities, for a thing owned or used is denied in terms of worker’s labour. An owned object means dehumanization because it is possessed in order to have (wealth) and not to be (existence). Money is the denial of identity in the object.

4.1.2. Money is the object of eminent possession

This expression may seem surprising: money is the absolute object, the universal object. But to understand it as such, we must return for a moment to the concept of object, as it comes from Hegelian logic. For, although we haven’t forgotten that after the passage on the power of money in bourgeois society, a critical analysis of Hegelian logic and phenomenology

follows, we must assume that understanding money as an eminent object is a perfect manifestation of the status of objectuality in Hegelian dialectics.

When Marx studies and criticizes Hegel's dialectics [11] he begins by paying tribute to his contribution, which he considers fundamental to philosophy, namely that he "conceives the creation of man by himself as a process (...) and conceives man objectually, the true man - true because he is real - as a result of his own work" [6]. Hegel understood and realized that man's realization as self-consciousness is a process, a work in which the object is first postulated as a denial of conscience (i.e., as alienation) and then by an act of denying this negation, through work, the object is denied for the subject to recognize its power to establish denials. It is a movement through which the subject is split, comes out of itself to be launched into the object and oppose itself. It is the moment of *Labour*, a unifying concept embodying the symbolic and material activity of man, an activity of denying the immediate custom (natural objectivity). Summarizing, we can say that, from Hegel's perspective, "it is all about understanding and expressing the truth not as a substance, but as a subject" [12].

Although Hegel noticed that human consciousness is the result of work, Marx considers it to be abstract work, and this level of abstraction does not allow Hegel to understand the concrete reality. The work of Hegelian consciousness is a work of self on the self, which does not come out of the subject's circle. The Hegelian object is the isolation of consciousness in the closed circle of its representation: "It is pure spinning, *unceasing* in oneself" [6]. On the contrary, the object that Marx conceives is an object that exists as a pure denial of the subject, a suffering, in other words the intersection with an object that really denies consciousness, an object that is actually outside of the consciousness. Here comes the objecthood of suffering: "*hunger* is a natural *need*; that is why to satisfy it, to ease it, it needs a *nature* outside it, an *object* outside it" [6].

Labour, in the material sense, is an alienation of humanity, starting from nature, as it is given to man as pure exteriority. For man to be realistically and historically objectual, it is not only necessary for him to be objectified, but first he needs to be objectualized, that is, to encounter an exteriority that denies him as subject, which puts his subjectivity in suffering [6].

Here, in Marx's analysis, the link between the money issue and the logic of the spirit can be seen. Quality is the other meaning of being: everything that exists is determined, that is, qualified, in a certain way. To establish the irreducible existence of the outer nature of thought, as Marx asks us, we must say that objects are not all equal, but that they have irreducible qualities between them. Quality is the sign of the irreducible

character of the exteriority of beings, insofar as they have an exterior existence in relation to one another.

Instead, money causes man to behave as a consciousness that is considered as separate from the object. Due to the fact that I can buy anything with money, all objects are equal, no more objects in themselves, exterior to my consciousness, objects only for myself; they are “object” by excellence, in other words the subject contemplates himself in all his power. They are object void of object. The universality of money is therefore a thought universality, a universality resulting from the fact that money has transformed all objects into objects of thought or speech. Being able to buy everything means being everything, in other words, being able to remain in oneself despite the exteriority. Money as a value is therefore a universal power, but this is an alienated power, that is, abstract, a power that is only power in representation [6]. All the power of money is the power of abstraction, and in this sense, just as logic is the money of the spirit, so is money the spirit reduced to a logic, to a discourse of abstraction.

4.1.3. Money as pander and intermediary

At the end of this first moment, Marx exposes what we could call the second paradox of money: since money is the universal means of exchange, thus allowing it to buy everything, it should appear as a means of society in excellence; it should be the intermediary of social humanity. Or, as we see in the terms used by Marx, money’s intermediary dimension has finally been reversed to its opposite: what serves as the intermediary of my life is also what separates me from the other man. A word must be clarified from the terms used. The intermediary, as money is considered, is first called “pander” [6]. But the pander is just an exploiter, a pimp: he uses my need not to achieve my humanity, but to subdue it to his advantage. Because it is the pander between need and object, money transforms the need for an object into the need for money. Therefore, I no longer need the object that, as a result of generic humanity, the other man could give it to me to secure my health and subsistence, but only the money. So, I no longer need the other man, but only the things that he can sell to me.

One of the consequences is the de-realization of man’s social nature, since the object created by him no longer satisfies the need of the other. Michel Henry explains in *Marx, une philosophie de la réalité*: “The object, Marx says, is social. Which first means that the object is created by myself for the other, that the object of my work is the object of his need. And the object of my need is the object of his work. That the object is social means that he has

this origin, that it comes from another for me and from me for another” [13].

The intercession specific to money profoundly changes my relationships with other people, a fact strongly emphasized by Marx, saying: “for me, money is the *other* man” [6]. In our opinion, this formula can be understood as follows: for me, the other man is nothing more than a relationship of money. And, in fact, the reign of money is, paradoxically, not an enrichment but an impoverishment of man. Of course, some people get rich through money, to the money constitutes capital. But they do not become rich as human, but as inhuman, in other words, their relationship with other people is entirely mediated by money. In fact, as soon as money is established in human relations, relationships between people become relationships between things, human relationships function as relationships between things. Through the exchange value, he says in *Grundrisse*, “the social relationship of people is transforming into a social relationship between things, the only intelligible language we use with each other” [14].

Otherwise, this presentation is not specific to Marx. We can easily perceive the influence of Moses Hess in this text. In *Über das Geldwesen*, Hess sees money as the standard of any value, representing what impoverishes man of his most humane things. Money is therefore an intercession for the purpose of exchange, but ends up separating people from themselves and others. M. Hess concludes his text in the following manner: “In the present stage of our development, if we do not unite ourselves in love, we only exploit and devour one another” [8].

To Hess, money is considered as an intercession that separates, conception that contrasts perfectly with the thinking of classical economists. We see that Marx is mainly inspired by topics such as abstraction, impoverishment, taking over the idea of a means of exchange that eventually separates man from himself and from others. Similarly, Marx draws inspiration from the idea of money’s seduction power, taking on the idea of fetishism as well.

Although Marx remains close to Hess, resuming the essential argument of separating and reversing money relations [15], he distances himself from Hess in describing the links between money and needs, as well as by a more radical definition of abstraction. Reformulating in his own way Hess’s suggestions, Marx points out that: “directly proportional to the *appreciation* of the world of things increases the *depreciation* of the world of people” [6].

Since the relationship with the other person is a relationship of money, a relationship of things, there are several consequences: the relationship of money makes my need for money no longer related to my

needs as natural man. My needs as a human are defined by my generic nature, a nature that is not recognized in the context of trade. From now on, profit defines real needs, and needs do not govern trade. Therefore, we will change things unnecessary to man, but useful to profit, things that are contrary to the interest of man, his moral or his needs, but useful to profitability, which has become the objective of trade. Any need that is not accompanied by money to satisfy it is no longer a real need. Money devalues the real need for the benefit of the unreal need of money [6].

Because money is the pander between need and object, because there is no immediate relationship between man and his needs, then, without money, there is nothing else, I am only a representation of man, a man in representation.

By this surprising reversal it is desired that, through the universal intercession of money, what was representation, that is, money, becomes reality, and what is reality, that is, the natural need in me, becomes representation and illusion.

The main reversal of the generic reality of man is this: the real and determined man becomes illusion, desire, thought without effect; instead, thinking, discourse, purely spiritual intercession of money become the only effective reality. The intermediary becomes a being. The real being becomes thinking.

4.2. Alienation-abstraction of subject

4.2.1. Reversal of subject and predicate

We note that in the second paragraph the terms used by Marx are changing, going from the analysis of the qualities of the alienated man to his being: “What is accessible to me through *money*, what I can pay for, that is what money can buy, these *are myself*, the owner of the money” [6]. The acquisition, the possession that meant to have becomes to be; being able – having the ability to buy - becomes the essence: “I am myself, the owner of money”. If we analyze logically this overthrow (first of all, it is a logical reversal), we see that money causes a reversal between the subject and the predicate: the subject is no longer the subject, that is, it no longer has its essential qualities, no longer has an identity, since everything it can be because of money becomes its essence; it is about the universal rule of the predicate. But a predicate is always general, since it can be attributed to a multitude of subjects. The predicate - or the quality - always has a wider extension than the subject. The predicate is indeterminate, but it is also abstract, because it never exists in itself, but only near a subject, which

determines it to exist in a singular way. Aristotle himself reminds, in *Organon*, that the predicate does not exist, it is not an existence, because only a singular being exists. Man does not exist; what exists is the singular man, the particular man [16]. For Marx, with money, the singularity and identity of the subject disappear for the benefit of universality and the abstraction of predicates. The domination of money involves the death of the concrete subject, of man as a concrete subject.

From this point of view, we must analyze the progression of the examples that Marx brings (which, in fact, resumes those of Goethe and Shakespeare). All qualities become indifferent to each other, but above all the physical and spiritual qualities: ugliness turns into beauty, old age turns into youth (physical qualities), moral evil turns into moral good, and finally, the lack of spirit becomes spirituality. This formula confirms once again our hypothesis: “money is the true spirit of all things” [6]. The disappearance of the subject is also the disappearance of the distinction between spirit and matter. In fact, money involves the general dominance of the spirit, conceived this time as the power to transcend all effective realities.

If we resume the example of the man lacking in spirit, we will see how the new identification of money works: “Does not the one who has power over the men of spirit have more spirit than all men of spirit?” [6]. In other words, it is not the action of a man lacking in spirit or his identity that determines his spirituality, but the haphazard occurrence of his possession, of his property relationship with the man of spirit.

Man without spirit is therefore himself spiritual only because a relationship, or even a way of social existence, have become a concrete reality due to money. Destruction of identity becomes possible by destroying the substance for the benefit of the relationship. The power of money is the power of intercession, becoming absolute, without substance. Any relationship is abstract as long as it is not defined by work. I am everything, since I am not doing anything. I am everything, but in myself I am nothing. I am nothing, but I have everything and therefore I am everything I have.

4.2.2. Fraternization of impossibility

At the end of the second part, Marx evokes the notion of universal power: “I, whom, because of money, am able to do all that a human heart may desire” [6]. Apparently, it seems to be the resumption of Mefisto’s thesis, according to which everything I like belongs to me. Joy means consumption, and consumption means denying the identity of what is being consumed. The power of money is at the same time the power of desire. With money, infinite desire becomes infinite efficiency, the infinite

realization of desire. Just like with Faust, money makes me believe in absolute power, suppressing the distinction between God and man. They give man a divine power.

From a spiritual power, money turns into a religious power, becoming at the same time the religion of the alienated world. In other words, with the money, like Faust, man loses his materiality, his historicity, his immanence: he forgets himself as a man to think of himself as a god. Money becomes the metaphor of religion itself, as a universal power of alienation, as the withdrawal of man from history. With money, man can think himself as his own creator, he may forget that he is the product of generic humanity.

But at the end of the passage, we see an additional idea, which will be developed in the last part: “Does not my money transform my inability to its contrary?” [6]. Commenting on Shakespeare’s text, Marx returns here to the logic of the alienated spirit. Money reach right inside the logic, since it eliminates the principle of non-contradiction, which is best illustrated in Timon from Athens expression: a little gold would be enough to turn “in white what’s black and beautiful what’s ugly; / What is wrong will be good; what is inferior, noble” [6].

The elimination of contradiction concerns not only the principle of unity of thought, but also the possibility of knowing the truth. For if anything can be one and its opposite, then nothing can be said about it; there is no truth anymore, and finally no possible horizon for knowledge.

Thus, due to a strange inversion, the fraternization of impossibilities is the triumph of the spirit against the truth, while at the same time offering the image of a philosophy whose dialectics is a source of alienation. Marx believes that this is a misleading dialectic: just as money turns anything into its opposite, idealistic dialectics makes the spirit, due to its abstraction, turn into its opposite, which reflects the objecthood of the impossible contradiction.

In contrast to this denial of contradictions, we must mention the importance that Marx will later attribute to the notion of real contradiction, in other words, historical and manifest. In the same way, we can say that in the progressive movement of our author’s thinking, the material reality of contradictions will be the proof of the effectiveness of the process, its historicity, and even its truth. Marx points out in *German Ideology* that all conflicts in history originate in the contradiction between the productive forces and the exchange ways [17]. As Mao Tsé-Toung will remember, historical contradictions are never general or universal contradictions, but real and determined contradictions. But Louis Althusser in *Reading Marx* points out that although Mao Tsé-Toung considers the contradiction in its

“universality”, he does only treats seriously the contradiction in the practice of the class struggle [18].

4.3. Alienation-abstraction of generic humanity

This overturning of the method will be put into practice by Marx in the last part, simultaneously giving us his thesis. Until now, he has placed himself on the field of the alienated consciousness of the capitalist, the owner of money. He showed how the illusion of divinity, the power of abstraction and de-realization work. In a sense, it is about a real de-realisation, since it alienates the real need and replaces it with the phantasmagoric (in the Faustian sense) need for money.

From now on, Marx will restore real, historical and material contradictions that function in the money field. And so, all the contradictions appear that “the spirit of money” or the money of the spirit have hidden behind its power. The method will consist in confronting this phenomenon with the generic power of man.

4.3.1. Money, an intercession that divides

Marx restores the notion of intercession, of universal means of exchange between all identities: and finds that if money connects all the different things, this power of relation becomes a power of division in the generic man. Because the relation that money creates is a relation without identity, without efficiency and without reality, making, in turn, the human relations unreal. For example, the generic relationship between people also involves an amorous relationship in which only similar things can be exchanged, such as love for love [6]. But if this relationship is mediated by money, it becomes a relationship that connects strange things. Thus, lovers are only connected by unrealistic relationships, because they do not exchange identical things, but indifferent differences. Love for money is always superior to love for love, since the first gives a universal power, while the second gives a singular constraint, a constraint of uniqueness. But the price to be paid for this power is terrible: we have to be fundamentally divided by what we love. Money is the universal means of separation. In other words, money destroys the social relationship as a whole, transforming it into a relationship between things, external and artificial. But the contradiction exists: although it is the universal means of exchange and unification, money is at the same time the universal means of separation. Not only did it put generic man in opposition to his social essence, but in addition, it recreates a new sociability, an alienated sociability, namely the economic sociability of the capitalist exchange.

4.3.2. The generic humanity's estranged, alienated power that aligns

The text ends with the thesis: money is the alienated power of humanity. But we see here that the interest of the text is in the triple statement: alienated, alienating, self-alienating.

First, money is the alienated generic man, because he loses, due to money, the power to manifest himself in his work, the self-enjoyment in the objectualization and naturalization of man. What does this power consist in? In the fact that the man who has the money no longer depends on work and even less on relations with nature. What does this alienated power consist in? In the fact that the objects they buy are really human objects, but objects that deny the humanity that produced them. To buy is to alienate the product from the worker, to make work a hostile power for the worker. With money, work itself has become an alienated object.

Secondly, the power of money is “the alienated capacity of mankind” [6]. Through this power, man is all that he can buy. What does this power consist of? In that he becomes a universal subject, a subject without identity, without the limitations of social determination. What does it mean to alienate? In that the universal subject is an abstract, spiritual subject, a simple representation, but a more dangerous representation than the ideas of the philosophers, because it is a false representation that produces however real objects, that produces real power over the subject. Therefore, money is a de-subjectivation of the generic man, de-subjectivation which becomes objectual. It is therefore a power of denial of self.

Money has the ability to disconnect man from the real world, from nature and can even lead him to death, as illustrated by the myth of Midas, mentioned by Aristotle, then by Marx and Keynes in their reflections on money. Stagirite was afraid that, ultimately, money would destroy society, degrading it from the inside.

Ultimately, money is the power of humanity that alienates (itself): money is the universal pander. In this sense, they allow the exchange of all identities and the fraternization of impossibilities. What does this power consist of? In allowing every man to be something and its opposite, to be everything with nothing. What does this alienated humanity consist of? In the fact that the relationship with another becomes a relationship between indifferent things, a relationship in which mankind generates a sociability contrary to human needs: a sociability in which individuals no longer see each other as subjects, but as separate substances.

Starting from this abstraction scale, we can wonder if Marx is ultimately detached from classical analysis to give money an original characterization. Money is thus the cause of a specific alienation, even if it is

not autonomous, for the abstraction of which it is able to grow: what at first is only a means of exchange, gradually becoming what governs any human relationship and what conditions its terms. Thus, Marx generally remains close to Hess in describing the relationship between alienated labor and money, reiterating the essential argument of money that separates and overthrowing relations [19]. However, he is distancing himself from Hess from three points of view: first, in describing the links between money and needs; then by a more radical definition of abstraction; and, finally, because it does not take up the idea of social organism, whose evolution is described by Hess. These differences are mainly due to the fact that Marx tries to integrate Hessian concepts into a thinking that conceives alienation in a personal manner. Marx's purpose is to describe the alienation system based on the theory of alienation. And starting from this theory of alienation, Marx will re-style Hess's proposals in his own way. But in spite of the descriptive richness present in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, a veil of abstraction seems to replace the absence of a rigorous analysis of alienated labor and the relationship of money with alienation.

5. Arguments to argue the thesis

5.1. Some critical remarks on Marx's philosophy of money. The problem of the relationship with the theory of alienation

The development of Marxist thinking - whether it is the internal development of Marx's work or the development of later Marxism - involves a multitude of ups and downs. Though today it is no longer possible to maintain the trenchant Althusserian thesis of "epistemological rupture", the abandonment of the ethical and anthropological issue of alienation, presented in the texts of 1844, remains one of the most striking and instructive aspects of Marx's intellectual evolution. The problem is to find out what happened to the critical impulse specific to his reflection in his maturity works, since Marx renounces the initial philosophical formulations symbolized by this theme. If we go back to the sixties of the last century, when the issue was debated in depth by interpreters, we notice that two opposing solutions were put forth. On the one hand, the *philosophical* solution can be summed up by saying that Marx maintains, using a different vocabulary, his first theoretical insights, but in a discreet, almost encrypted way, which partly diminishes his scope. Indeed, in 1867, as in 1844, Marx brought back into question, even if in other ways, the return from product to production, and thus to the radical source of social things, to show how sometimes human activity becomes obstructed even by its results, thus

making possible the proliferation of numerous social pathologies. K. Kosik's [20] works in the East and K. Axelos' [21] in the West give us a pretty fair idea of this theoretical orientation for which the notion of alienation remained at the center of the Marxist thinking.

On the other hand, the *positivist* solution, totally contradictory to the previous one, was equally defended at that time. The intuition that underlies its development, hailed by Althusser [18] and rejected by Habermas [22], is that Marx from maturity, at least intentionally, has given up his social theory around a particularly critical conceptuality (which, in the end, would have stuck him in philosophy, since he tried to separate himself from it); he has rallied to the model of analytical positive science, neutral from an axiological point of view, which aims to explain the phenomena in a sober way. In this sense, alienation, with its characteristic evaluative vocabulary - the limitation and loss of self, the dispossessions, the sufferings - are overcome, in the course of Marx's evolution, due to stronger intellectual instruments, less dependent on a normative image of subjectivity and normal human life; its alienation and vocabulary lose, in fact, any legitimacy, any theoretical status, in *The Capital*.

Besides these two classic solutions, we are tempted to find ourselves in a less tense position. In fact, Marx reorients the critical discourse of the *Manuscripts of 1844*, too marked by the philosophy of alienation, on the theme of exploitation (in other words, on unjust extortion and irrational accumulation, so poorly defined in 1844), better controlled epistemologically. For, in order to achieve the new purpose, the essential intentions of the old discourse of alienation can still be identified and could thus maintain relative relevance. Thus, in this third hypothesis, everything happens as if Marx would try a risky theoretical bet, but which is neither absurd nor undeniable. For easy-to-understand methodological reasons, the causes and non-economic manifestations of social pathologies (domination, repression, oppression...) suggested, in the *Manuscripts of 1844*, the probability of the indeterminate notion of alienation. Subsequently, Marx would approach the theory of exploitation from the point of view of a discourse on capitalism, capable of concretely demonstrating the most deplorable human consequences of the capitalist economic system. Thus, formerly subsumed phenomena in a philosophical manner, in the category of alienation (the misery of the worker, various phenomena of dispossession), as well as the philosophical correlations of the analysis of these phenomena present in the texts of 1844, were, as the case may be, filtered, re-qualified, subordinated in their content to an analysis of the exploitation of labor, but by no means simply abandoned by Marx.

As such, despite the reorientation of his discourse around exploitation, Marx is required, in *The Capital*, to assume the existence of a plurality of critical schemes: there are, for Marx, phenomena characteristic of capitalism which, although profoundly related to exploitation, cannot be reduced to it. Among these schemes, some are very close to those suggested by the old philosophical analysis of alienation. Money criticism plays a strategic role in this respect: obviously irreducible to exploitation theory, it guarantees at the same time the maintenance of a part of the old-time intuitions expressed through the philosophy of alienation and a remarkable critical mastery of these insights.

Marx's resumption of the money problem does not imply a smooth continuity between the issues of 1844 and the ones of *The Capital*. Marx, on the contrary, has clearly detached himself from the first, and even more so, has distanced himself from it at the final elaboration of his theory. In view of this evolution, J. Bidet [23] observes that Marx from maturity consciously resists the embedded strategy, in other words the temptation to *directly* criminalize money. His purpose was to make the generalized trade-money exchange the source of work-specific pathologies and social life in general.

If the analysis of money has to remain relatively autonomous, this is primarily due to all the reasons for the construction of the economic theory. But also, although it seems like a paradox, only the analysis of capital dynamics as such will make it possible to present concrete and, eventually, the possibility of thinking of individual alienation. What Marx means is that once we know what to do with the role of money and their power of abstraction, there are still many things to think over, which require many other concepts and many other hypotheses; first of all, we need to highlight the exploitation-alienation link. In short, the systematic reification, whose engine and symbol are money, no matter how significant it is in the capitalist society, is not alienation and does not justify the resumption of this notion through itself.

Although the Marxian analysis of money of 1844 is not economic, it still suggests the possibility of an anthropological study of money and legitimizes its place in a critique of the political economy. Being less interested in providing an economic theory of money, and especially in determining the human consequences involved, Marx tries to relate to the relationship of money with alienation, which he conceives as a reflection of the growing needs, more and more foreign and alienating.

6. Conclusions

In the end, the power of money allows us to understand the alienated labour process as comparable to metaphysics: a logic that rejects the differences and objecthood, a universality considered a principle prior to all contradictions, and first of all, the opposition between subject and objects. A relation with the world that denies actual history and nature by removing them from the circle of conscience.

Nevertheless, we should understand that this critical analysis of the alienated power of money still remains idealistic in Marx: he speaks about money, but not about capital. To him, in this stage of his reflection, money can be understood only as a process in itself, not as a result of production relations. Money is considered here as a phenomenon with its own autonomy, not as an instrument of capitalism, as an universal means of exploitation. From an economic point of view, the Marxist position proves a great confusion as it does not allow a distinction to be made between money and capital. In fact, in a way that reminds of Rousseau in *Discourse on inequality*, it seems that Marx saw in the private property the distant source of social domination of money, but he didn't actually try to correlate the two phenomena. As it stands, in Marx's thinking from 1844, in which a consistent theory of the capital isn't yet outlined, he considers money as a principal and a symbol of social life domination, with pathological effects.

Jean Salem underlines, in good standing, that *The Manuscripts* contain the alienation concept rather than the exploitation one. Or, these two social reports do not have the same nature: alienation is a universal estrangement of mankind, including the capitalist, the owner of money. With the concept of exploitation, the unit – be it generic – of humanity disappears from Marx's mind. Exploitation is a reality of production, not of trade. The irreconcilable opposition between the worker and the capitalist becomes the contradiction that makes only the proletariat to carry on the future of mankind, due to the fact that it's the only one that produces. On the one hand, exploitation depends on production, while trade depends on commerce: „the idea of alienated trade implies the non-equivalence of exchanged goods and determines, in the end, the appearance of alienation as a result of circulation operations, while the concept of exploitation is born in relation to production. On the other hand, if alienation isn't exploitation, this is due to the fact that labour, as it is analyzed in *The Manuscripts*, is a philosophical category, not a historical one” [24]. The labour category will thus be the true driver that will allow Marx to free himself from the Hegelian philosophy and from the logic understood as „the money of the spirit” [6].

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