

MARXISM & PHIL. By Maurice Merleau-Ponty, POLITICS, 7-8/47

p.173

"The notion of structure or totality... is one of the fundamental categories of Marxism. A Marxist pol. eco. can speak of laws only within qual. distinct structures which must be described in terms of his."

"As Lukacs remarked, scientism is only another manifestation of the alienation or the reification which deprives man of his specific human essence & identifies him with things."

(Quoted 175)

K Mx: Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Phil. of Law, p. 84 93

"It is with justification that in Ger. the practical pol. party demands the negation of phil. Its error consists... in stopping at this demand which it does not & cannot seriously realize. It

\*\*\*\*\*imagines effecting this negation by turning its back to phil. &  
\*\*\*\*\*by giving it, softly & with averted glance, a few banal & ill-humoured phrases... In a word: you cannot abolish phil. except by giving it realization."

\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

*copy*  
"The Cogito is false only in so far as it separates & destroys our inherence in the world. One will abolish it only by realizing it, THAT IS, by showing that it is eminently inherent in interhuman relations. Hegel is not false, he is true from one end to the other, but abstract. One must only give the his. names to the mythological struggles of consciousness...."

p.173 quotes Mx on Religion, also from Critique of Law, p. 84;

*Q4*  
"Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopedic compendium, its logic in a popular form, its spiritual point of honor, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its general cause for consolation & justification. It is the fantastic realization of the human essence, because the human essence has no true reality. Religion... the soul of a world without heart, & the spirit of a period without spirit."  
*Religion is the spirit of the people.*

p.174

(if the only lack in this remarkable essay is that Ponty has no references to the all-round being & only once, when he explains Mx's statement of not counterposing the indiv. & society recognizes dimension to one self, instead of only relations with others, thus)

"Society is not an accident to which he is subjected, but a dimension of his being." but even there it is the social that is stressed, thus: "He is not in society as an object is in a box, but becomes part of it with his innermost self."

"Matter, as elsewhere, consciousness is never considered by itself, but is integral to the system of human existence where it creates the common situation of contemporaneous & successive individuals, assures the generality of their projects & makes possible a line of dev. & a sense of his."

12860



Politics

"The entire effort of Mr. in CAP. tends to show that these very laws, often presented as permanent features of 'social nature' are in reality the attributes (and the masks) of a certain 'social structure'--capitalism--which evolves toward its own destruction. The notion of structure or totality... is one of the fundamental categories of Marxism. A Marxist pol. eco. can speak of laws only within qualitatively distinct structures which must be described in terms of his... In fact, all thru the his. of Marxism the worship of science appeared only when rev. conscience began to weaken; the celebrated Bernstein pleaded with Marxists to adopt the objectivity of the scientist. As LUKACS remarked, 'Scientism is only another manifestation of the alienation or reification which deprives man of his specific human essence & identified him with things.' (Lukacs, Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein, 1923)

(Nature, on the other hand, is not grasped by Ponty who thinks of it, in strictly Hegelian terms, of "exteriority.")

"Religion is... the soul of a world without heart, & the spirit of a per. without spirit." (Contrib. to Cr. of His. Phil. of Law) fantastic effort of men to rejoin fellow-men in another world & to replace this phantom communication by an effective communication in this world."

"this interpretation of his. as a totality is given not by some law of the physico-mathematical type, but by the central phenomenon of alienation. In the course of history, men, alienated from himself, to the profit of his fetiches emptied of his substance, again takes possession of himself & of the world. The spontaneous logic of ideas are, for Marx, but other 'fantastic realizations' of the human essence. Above all we must avoid setting up... In the same way that society molds man, it is molded by him."

"We must understand the ~~truth~~ bond which ties men to the world is at the same time the means of his liberation, how man in contact with nature, without destroying necessity but, on the contrary, utilizing it & projecting about himself the instruments of his liberation constitutes a cultural atmosphere i.e. in which men every day remake their own lives" (Ger. Id., p. 166)

PRAXIS that is to say the manner in which this society has est. its ~~vital~~ fundamental rapport with nature. it is the idea that ideology are ~~essentially~~ inherently connected in the totality of his. as matter & form in a work of art. Similarly the "spirit" of a society is already implied in its mode of prod. because the latter already represents a certain mode of human togetherness of which the scientific, phil. & religious conceptions are either the direct dev. or the fantastic counterpart. (One understands consequently that it was up to Marx to introduce the notion of the human obj. which phenomenology adopted & developed... Marx, when speaking of human objects, means that this significance is inherent in the obj. as it appears in our experience. That was carrying to its concrete consequences the Hegelian conception of a "spirit-phenomenon mediated by the world & not withdrawn into itself"... Thus one can understand that logic can be the "money of the mind" or that the fetishism of commodities could induce an entire mode of "obj." thought-peculiar to bourgeois civilization"

(over)

ANGELS TO STARKENBURG, 1894: "It is not true that the cog. situation is ~~the~~ the only cause and alone active & that all other phenomena are only a passive effect." Causal thought here as elsewhere, is insufficient.

"A phil. as an art or poetry is of one gen. but nothing prevents it from grasping thru this particular gen. truths which are definitive as Gk. art found the secret of 'eternal charm'. The cog. of a gen. produces an ideology because it is lived by men who seek to realize themselves in it."

MZ: "It is...with justification that in Ger. the practical pol. party demands the negation of phil. Its error...it imagines effecting this negation by turning its back to phil. & by giving it softly & with averted glance a few babal & ill-humored phrases...in a word: you cannot abolish phil. except by realizing it." (Crit. of Heg. Phil. of Law)

"The Cogito is false only insofar as it separates & destroys our inherence in the world. One will abolish it only by realizing it, that is, by showing that is eminently inherent in inter-human life. Hegel is not false, he is true from end to the other, but abstract. One must only give the historical names to the mythological struggles which he describes between consciousness in-itself & consciousness-for-itself. Hegelian logic is 'the first of the rev.' The fetishism of commodities is the his. realization of this alienation which Hegel describes as an enigma & capital is a concrete form of the Mind. IF the philosopher knows this, IF he sets himself the task of following the other experiences & the other existences in their imminent logic, instead of putting himself in their place, IF he abandons the illusion of contemplating the totality of fulfilled his. & feels himself, like other men, caught in it, & before a future to build, then the phil. realizes itself & vanishes as separate phil."

##