

Note: The following essay was written in the 1970's before I became a feminist and they had many references to 'mankind' and used the inclusive male pronoun, which I have now expurgated, but which may appear somewhat awkward. I beg the reader's pardon for that rather obvious doctoring.

Communication and exchange

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The recent current of thought, which compares communicative exchange and economic exchange, and finds the structures of the latter reflected in the former, has shown itself to be a fertile one in the works of anthropologists, psychologists, and philosophers. Lévi Strauss, Lacan, Godelier, Rossi-Landi, Goux, and others have contributed to this current, for the most part deriving their interpretations of economic exchange from Marx, and their interpretations of communicative exchange from contemporary linguistics. From a Marxist point of view, a basic problem arises in the identification of the structures of economic exchange in communicative exchange. If, as Marx and Engels wrote in the *German Ideology*, "Language is as old as consciousness" (p. 42), and if the structure of exchange is to be found in language, then the structure of exchange is also "as old as consciousness". Marx warned repeatedly against regarding the categories of commodity production and exchange, and their all pervading principle, "the value form of the labour product as the one and only form of social production, fixed for all time by nature's immutable laws" (*Capital*, p. 55). Viewing such categories as inherent in human nature aids the *status quo* by making them seem inevitable. If we want to maintain a characterization of language or communication as similar to economic communication, or even say that they are in some ways 'the same thing', while at the same time denying that exchange is a behavior constitutive of the human in the same sense that language is, we may approach the problem by trying to individuate some economic relations which are not those of exchange.

It would seem that to determine linguistic structures in the light of commodity production and exchange, or capitalistic production, would be historically unwarranted, since language existed from the beginning, and the present mode of production is a very late development. Some striking similarities between the two have, however, been found. Linguistic value has been compared to economic value (Saussure); kinship systems, linguistic communication, and economic exchange have been compared (Lévi-Strauss); language has been found to have the aspects of work, capital, and

money (Rossi-Landi). If these similarities are not merely imagined, they are perhaps an indication of some basic area of correspondence between the linguistic and the economic activity of men. In order to find this area without resorting to exchange, we will look at the premises of history and development of language, as described in the chapter on Feuerbach of the *German Ideology*, and at an abstraction of the “content of exchange, which lies altogether outside its economic character” as described in the *Grundrisse* (pp. 242- 43). The fact that both passages are abstractions - describing, in the first case “aspects of social activity . . . which have existed simultaneously since the dawn of history and the first men, and which still assert themselves in history today” (p. 41), and in the second “the simplest economic relations, which, conceived by themselves, are pure abstractions” (*Grundrisse* p. 248) and the ideal of the bourgeoisie — does not prevent us from looking at them to find a common character as regards communication. In the first place, language, if it can be regarded as some sort of ‘economic system’, is still, in many respects, an abstract and an ideal one. Secondly, due to the division of labor between head and hand, it would not be surprising if the laborers of the head saw economic relations in the reflected light of their main instrument, language.

The reason for discussing these two passages together is that they each give an indication of human relations logically preceding the relation of contract. If it is true, as some of those who resist the interpretation of language in economic terms have maintained, that there is no private property in language, we must avoid taking contract as a starting point, since it implies private property. (1)

In the *German Ideology* Marx and Engels make a wide use of the term Verkehr ‘intercourse, traffic, association, commerce’, in both a material and a “spiritual” sense. It is a category which, while it may include exchange, is wider than exchange. It seems to encompass combined activity as collaboration and very generally the reciprocal satisfaction of needs. The human “mode of life” in which people “produce their means of subsistence”, their mode of production, “only makes its appearance with the *increase of population*. In its turn this presupposes the *intercourse* of individuals with one another. The form of the intercourse is again determined by production” (p. 32) (2)

Four basic moments or conditions for history are described by Marx and Engels: the production of the means of life; the “production of new needs”; the reproduction of life and its corresponding social relation, the family; and finally, the appearance of a natural and social relationship, the “materialistic connection of men with one another, which is determined by their needs and their mode of production” (pp. 3941). At this point we come to the famous passage on consciousness and language.

From the start the “spirit” is afflicted with the curse of being “burdened” with matter, which

here makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, of language. Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well: language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men. Where there exists a relationship, it exists for me: the animal does not enter into “relations” with anything, it does not enter into any relation at all. For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation. Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all. (pp. 41-42)

In *Grundrisse*, abstracting from the act of exchange, in order to explain it as it were, piece by piece, in the ideal fashion in which it is viewed by bourgeois economists or by socialists like Proudhon, Marx provides an account of the extra-economic content of exchange:

“The content of the exchange, which lies altogether outside its economic character, far from endangering the social equality of individuals rather makes their natural difference into the basis of their social equality.... Regarded from the standpoint of the natural difference between them, individual A exists as the owner of a use value for B, and B as owner of a use value for A. In this respect, their natural difference again puts them reciprocally into the relation of equality. In this respect, however, they are not indifferent to one another; so that individual B, as objectified in the commodity, is a need of individual A, and vice versa; so that they stand not only in an equal, but also in a social relation to one another. This is not all. The fact that the need on the part of one can be satisfied by the product of the other, and vice versa, and that the one is capable of producing the object of the need of the other, and that each confronts the other as owner of the object of the other’s need, this proves that each of them reaches beyond his own particular need etc., as a human being, and that they relate to one another as human beings; that their common species-being is acknowledged by all. It does not happen elsewhere that elephants produce for tigers, or animals for other animals.” (pp, 242-43)

In both cases we have a comparison of men (sic.) with animals on the basis of relations which men have but which animals do not have. In the first passage, language “arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men”. In satisfying such a need, it produces or mediates relations. (And there is a deleted phrase in the text: “My relation to my surroundings is my consciousness” (*German Ideology* p. 42) which, though it did not satisfy its authors, at least shows the direction in which their thought was proceeding.) In the passage from the *Grundrisse* a social relation is instituted between the two men by their providing the object of the other’s need, by the fact that each “reaches beyond his own particular need”. Their relation to each other as human beings is this satisfaction of the other’s need.

We may now ask if this relation always requires reciprocity. There is a significant echo in this passage of a description by Marx in the *Manuscripts* of what would happen if men “produced really as men”.

But let us suppose instead that we have produced really as men: each of us, in his production, would have doubly affirmed himself and the other. I would have: 1) objectified in my production my individuality with its particularities and thus I would have enjoyed as much of an individual expression of life during the activity as, in looking at the object, [I would have enjoyed] of the individual joy of knowing my personality to be an objectual, socially evident power, above any eminent doubt; 2) in your enjoyment or in your use of my prod-

uct I would have immediately enjoyed both the consciousness of having satisfied in my work a human need, and of having objectified the human being, for having procured its object corresponding to the need of another human being; 3) I would have enjoyed having been for you the intermediary between you and the species, of being therefore known and felt by you yourself as completion of your own being and as a necessary part of yourself, and therefore of knowing myself confirmed both in your thought and in your love; 4) I would have enjoyed having produced immediately in the manifestation of my individual life the manifestation of your life, and therefore in my individual activity I would have immediately realized and sanctioned my real being, my human being, my collective being. (“Excerpts from James Mill”, p. 26)

Here, as in the *Grundrisse*, we find that it is the production for the satisfaction of another’s need that confirms the “species being” of the individuals involved. One important difference between the two passages is that in the one, the production for another’s need can stand alone (“each of us, in his production, would have doubly affirmed himself and the other”), while it is necessarily reciprocal in the other. This would thus allow us to consider the satisfaction of one’s need by the production of another as the more fundamental human relation, and exchange, or satisfaction of the need contingent upon reciprocity, as a complication, a doubling, of this relation.

Taken by itself, the satisfaction of the need of another may seem simple and, so to say, uninformative. However, if we locate it in a social context, (3) in which new needs have been produced, we can already see that the satisfaction of anyone’s socially *determined* need requires both a knowledge of that need in its specificity, and participation in the mode of production corresponding to that need, as well as access to the processes, means, and materials of production. Moreover, the use of the product by the receiver is also determined by h/er appurtenance to the specific mode of production, when h/er need has been specified by previous consumption. The producer, if s/he is to perform a completed act, is dependent on the capacity of the other to use the product, which has been given to h/er. (4) We can thus see that the production by one person, for the satisfaction of another’s socially determined need, would not only confirm h/er as a species being in contrast to the animals who do not “produce ... for other animals”, but would also confirm h/er as a species being belonging to a *particular mode of production*.

It is particularly interesting that one person’s satisfaction of another’s socially determined need would have these results independently of a consequent reciprocity. If the need is determined and specific, there would be no way of satisfying it except at the level of development of means and processes of production in which the individual consumer and producer participate. In order for the relation to be established as a *human* relation, it would not be necessary that the individual receiver ‘pay back’ the individual who has produced for h/er. On the other hand, however, it is necessary that both belong to the same mode of production. For the education and specification of their needs *some* others belonging to that mode of production must have produced for them in the past. And, since one learns to produce by producing, and one’s first product may not be a complete one, the producer must

have already produced the object in the past, either for h/erself or for others. The human infant, due to h/er helpless condition, is incapable either of independence or of production for others. S/he is dependent on the satisfaction of h/er needs by others, and these needs become specified to the objects or products by which they are satisfied. At the beginning s/he is incapable of reciprocity, and so is necessarily the receiver in a one-sided relation of the satisfaction of h/er needs by others. H/er life depends on the capacity of others to produce for h/er without reciprocity on h/er part. Later, as s/he gains independence, s/he learns to consume actively, to produce for h/erself and for others, within the mode of production in which h/er needs have become specific. If h/er relation to others remained similar to the one-sided relation by which h/er early needs were satisfied, at least in some zones of h/er later life, it would not require a necessary reciprocity either. This is not to deny that reciprocity occurs often in all zones of life and is the overriding norm in some. Isolated as a basic social relation, however, the satisfaction of another's need does not have as its prerequisite an immediate or consequent reciprocity between the individuals involved in the relation at the moment.

(5)

In addition to these considerations, we must add that the relation between persons established in this way is not 'pure', not only between them. It is also a relation to the object by which the need is satisfied. This is the same material *object* for both persons, although for the one it has the character of being a product, which s/he does not use, and for the other the object of h/er need, which s/he has not produced. The producer sees it also as an object of a specific need, though not at the moment of h/er own need. The receiver sees it as being produced by, or at least as *coming from*, the other, and thus as related to the other as its provenience. For both, the object is a specifically social object, due to their previous acquaintance with similar objects and to their immediate social behavior with regard to it at the moment. Such a relation can be seen as one of mutual inclusion with regard to and by means of the object.

While, as we said above, reciprocity is not necessary in this relation between persons, there is a sense in which it carries with it its own reciprocal. For the relation of the producer to the receiver is at the same time a relation of the receiver to the producer. In so far as h/er need is satisfied by the other, the receiver is dependent on the producer for that satisfaction, and this can be said to be a personal relation when s/he recognizes the other as the source of the production. This s/he can do especially when s/he can h/erself produce for others, since the relation is the same as h/er own to others at other times. When both individuals have the two aspects of producer and consumer, we can see that this internal opposition becomes externalized by one's satisfaction of another's socially determined need. For the producer, the other takes the place of h/erself as consumer of h/er product; for the consumer the other takes the place of h/erself as producer of the product. (If the consumer cannot recognize the source of the satisfaction of h/er need,

the relation to the other becomes similar to h/er relation of dependence on others in general for the satisfaction of h/er needs.)

II

Let us now return to language as discussed in the *German Ideology*, considering it as an instrument for the satisfaction of needs. "Language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse (*Verkehr*) with other men." In the first place we may say that whatever is socially or objectively a necessity appears on an individual level as a need when the necessity touches the individual in some way. (6)

Interchange (*Verkehr*) with others is a general necessity for all, but it is not a specific need for all with regard to everything at the same time. Rather, because individual needs can be satisfied and therefore 'disappear' as immediate needs for a time; because needs are different at different times in a person's life due to h/er physical make-up and growth; because needs vary with changes in the environment; and with regard to social position and division of labor, one does not need interchange with other people all the time, and the kinds of interchange one does need vary with the needs and the objects. If one's individual needs have been satisfied in the past by means of interchange, and thus have begun to require it and its products, we may say that any individual need may arise also as a need for interchange with other people, and that this has a specific character with regard to the kind of need which is satisfied by it. (This occurs when interchange with other people is seen as a means to the satisfaction of individual needs.) However, it is not necessarily limited as a means to the satisfaction of one's own individual need, but involves also the needs of individuals other than oneself, for otherwise there would be no interchange at all. Also, if an objective or social necessity for interchange can be recognized as a need individually, we can say that if something occurs which affects the community, or which objectively requires interchange-as, for example, when moving something heavy requires collaboration, and thus interaction is the means for obtaining some result-this can be seen as a need for interchange which is not in a sense anyone's individual need, but is rather a requisite of the task being performed. We can call such a need an 'objective' need (the social necessity is this kind of objective need generally).

If language arises from the individual need (whether our own or that of others, whether material or instrumental) and the social or objective necessity for interchange with other people, it can be seen as a means to facilitating this interchange.

The question is: how does this means work? how is interchange facilitated? If interchange with other people is taken as a means to the satisfaction of the group of needs existing in a society, then language can be taken as a means to a means, an instrumental need.

We said above that the satisfaction of another's socially determined need institutes a relation between the producer and the receiver. There seems to be no reason why the same should not hold for the satisfaction of an instrumental need as it does for direct material need. The production of an instrument by one for another, who then uses it, would establish the same sort of relation as production for direct consumption by the other. If one gives another an axe with which to cut down trees with which to make a house, the need for the axe is even more fully socially determined than the need for something which is consumed directly. If the satisfaction of another's socially determined need by the production of a socially determined product establishes a human species relation between people with regard to and by means of something, it can be used also *for that purpose*. That is, one can satisfy another's need, not only in view of that need, but also *in order to* form a species relation with h/er, a common relation with h/er to the object of h/er need. (7) This takes place on a material level. In language, the material objects, which are produced by the speaker, are sounds, "agitated layers of air". The needs which they satisfy are on the one hand needs for interchange with other people and, on the other, needs for relations which will facilitate this interchange and thus for the means for establishing the relations. Certainly the needs which language satisfies are in a sense ideal needs, so that the relations established in their satisfaction would not have the all-round importance that material production 'as men' to satisfy material needs had in Marx's description of it. Narrowed down to its abstract and ideal character, however, the linguistic satisfaction of another's socially determined need for a means to facilitating interchange would still have the capacity of establishing a species relation between persons, if only an ideal one.

While it is possible to establish human relations when satisfying another's socially determined material need (following this line of reasoning), it must also be said that there are many kinds of human interaction which preclude the immediate consumption of the object by another. Language allows us to establish a human relation to each other in regard to the object by satisfying a specific communicative need, which arises from the object as an object of potential human interchange. While the object may be something in regard to which human relations may later be established directly- for instance, cooked food, which is prepared for another to satisfy h/er socially determined need for it-it may also be something in regard to which no direct consumption can take place: a heavy rock which must be moved by the collaboration of many (the satisfaction of an 'objective need'), or something which no direct human activity can alter, for example, the sun (with regard to which, however, a great deal of ritual interaction takes place among so called "primitive" peoples). Language supplies a verbal object which satisfies a socially determined need for a means to interchange, thus instituting human relations in regard to the verbal object. In a sense, the verbal object substitutes the nonverbal object as something with regard to which human relations are established, something, that is, *produced by the one and used*

by the other. However, the need, which arises with regard to the material object is not usually direct need for the consumption of the object, but a need for interchange with other people in which the object is to be an element. If species relations with other people, formed by language, facilitate the interchange with regard to the material object, then the verbal object is no longer simply a substitute, but is itself a means. That is: if it is seen as contributing to the interchange, and the interchange is seen as contributing to the modification of the object, the verbal object and the relations established by its production and use have had an instrumental value, or use value, with regard to the final product or result. As Marx says, with regard to the bee and the architect, that the latter constructs his palaces in his head before he constructs them materially (*Capital*, p. 170), we can say the same regarding many of the various kinds of human interchange or praxis, as human products. They are relations between people, and between people and the environment, which are constructed ideally as human relations by means of language before they are put into effect. The fact that linguistic mediation of human relations has entered into all the details of the social world, and into most of the kinds of human interchange, has allowed also the formation of new kinds of interchange which are primarily linguistic. While these can continue to be considered as praxis, we will try here to keep to the level of direct material praxis or interchange as mediated by language, in order to maintain the basic distinctions.

III

In any society there are many kinds of interchange, or interaction, which can take place with regard to almost any kind of object present in the social and physical environment. In this regard the kind of object would appear as a constant, while the kinds of interaction or interchange (also depending on what *other* kinds of objects were involved in the interchange) would appear as variables. The need for interchange with other people as a way of dealing with the object becomes a need which is specific with regard to the object. A means to instituting relations and facilitating this interchange thus arises to satisfy a need, which is specific with regard to the object. Such a need would arise socially insofar as the object in question is dealt with repeatedly by different persons in many different socially determined ways (when these require interchange with regard to the object). It also would arise *individually* whenever one's own dealings with the object require interchange with others. Socially a linguistic means has been devised (by others, from the individual's point of view) for the satisfaction of this general and repeated social need. It is available to the individual for the satisfaction of the individual socially determined need.

At this point we would like to introduce 'communicative need' as a terminological simplification and alternative. Communicative need arises from the need for interchange with other people with regard to some part of the environment, both on a social and an individual level, and it is at the same time

the need for a means to this interchange. It thus has two constant aspects: the first that it is always a need regarding other people, and interchange with them; the second that it is, as a specific, socially determined communicative need, a need which regards a specific object or kind of object. Between these two constant poles lie the variables of the different kinds of actions and interactions, which may be performed with regard to the object, complicated by all the different kinds of objects which these actions and interactions may include as their elements. In fact, it is the weight, so to speak, of these variables-the number and differentiation of the kinds of behavior which can take place with regard to any given object-which determines the constancy, the repetition, of the need for interchange with other people in its regard. More simply, it is the differentiation of the behavior with regard to the object that determines the need for communication in its regard as a constant and repeated social common need, and thus a need for the production of a specific means to its satisfaction with regard to that object, or kind of object. Social differentiation of behavior concerning the object provides a group of variables with regard to which the object becomes a constant. Since interchange with other men is necessary, both for the differentiation of the behavior (development of new types of use, production, interaction) and for the execution of different kinds of combined behavior, the need which regards the object, and at the same time other people, becomes a need which is also constant, a need for the means for establishing relations which will facilitate the interchange. With regard to this need and means, the different kinds of actions and interactions are variables. If we consider language as a kind of behavior we can see that, of all the different kinds of behavior that are possible with regard to any thing, there is always one kind which is possible, linguistic behavior. There is one thing we can do to almost anything, and that is communicate about it, establish relations with other people in its regard. A particular kind of linguistic behavior can thus be seen as constant with regard to the group of non-linguistic behaviors, which can take place with any non-linguistic thing.

Thus communicative need - as a bi-polar need, arising on the one hand from the necessity of acting and interacting in socially determined ways with regard to an object (or kind of object), and on the other hand from the need for an instrument for facilitating this interaction - would provide one link between the object of the action and the means to the facilitation of the interchange with regard to that specific object. This means we may identify in the word.

When a communicative need arises for us, it arises as a need for a relation with another person in regard to something (which is at the same time the need for some socially determined interchange with h/er). We can see this as a need of the other person for a relation to us and to the thing. We know that, as a member of our linguistic community, h/er communicative needs have been educated to the same linguistic means of satisfying them that our own have been. We are conscious of h/er need for a relation with us before

s/he is, since this is first our need for a relation with h/er. We satisfy h/er need by personally supplying h/er with a group of social linguistic products (which in turn have various relations to each other within the sentence) by which h/er communicative needs have become specified in the past, and to which they have become specific. These allow h/er to identify the object or situation, which was the cause of our communicative need, as that with regard to which some kind of interchange is to take place. (This may also be further discourse.) What has happened is that a relation has been established between the speaker and hearer on the basis of the production and use of the linguistic product; a relation of the hearer to the thing, which was the source of the present communicative need of the speaker has been established, which insofar as it is mediated by the same verbal product may be said to be the same relation. The speaker's communicative need has been satisfied, since it was a need for the relation *of the other* to the thing in question. Thus, h/er own relation to the thing is duplicated by a relation of the other to the thing, a relation, which s/he, the speaker, has helped to form. S/he has made h/er own relation to the thing as a relation, which has an *equivalent* at the moment in the relation of another. (For both speaker and listener the relation is already *for others* in several ways, especially since for the speaker it is a need for the relation of the other to the thing, and for the listener it is already the speaker's relation.)

IV

The reader may at the moment be perplexed by our insistence on the satisfaction of the need of the other, for despite the fact that we do satisfy the communicative needs of others in giving them information which they do not have, or in teaching language to children, there are many cases in which it seems to be one's own communicative need which s/he is satisfying. There are two possible lines of reply. If language does, in fact, establish a relation between people with regard to something, such a relation, by definition, necessarily involves more than one person. One cannot have such a relation unless the other also has it. Thus one's own need for the relation to another is necessarily h/er need for the other to have such a relation. S/he must be able to see that the other could establish such a relation, if s/he were given the means to it. Thus the lack of the other's relation to the object at the moment is seen as the other's lack of a means to establishing the relation, an instrumental need, as we said above. We can express this also by saying that the speaker sees that the object has some socially determined relevance or importance to the listener, which the speaker recognizes in view of some further interchange with h/er, but the listener at the moment does not. This is possible with regard to any part of the socio-physical environment, including the part which is 'internal' to the speaker, and the listener can be seen by the speaker as having an instrumental (communicative) need in its regard.

Secondly, if linguistic investigation has been to some extent modeled on exchange-because of the similarity of the exchange relation and the commu-

nicative relation in that both are concerned with the satisfaction of needs - we must beware of the distortions of our point of view which derive from the fact that we live in a society in which the exchange relation predominates. It is easy for us to make the mistake of projecting upon language the type of human relations which exchange comports. For exchange, reciprocity is essential, and the producer enters in to it only in order to receive the product of the other. Modeling the communicative relation on this forces us to look too much at the linguistic producer and to say that s/he is only satisfying h/er *own* need, just as the material producer only produces in order to satisfy h/er *own* need in exchange. In fact, in exchange the needs that are satisfied are exclusive of each other, as are the products that satisfy them. In linguistic production, on the other hand, there is 'alienation' of the product without its loss, for it is made in order to establish a reciprocal relation. The listener may of course become a speaker in h/er turn, but though this enriches the relation which has been established, by determining it in different ways, it is not a prerequisite for the functioning of the linguistic process, since the reciprocal of the relation already exists in the use by the other of the linguistic product. The listener's reply may in fact be seen as one way of confirming to the speaker that the reciprocal of the relation is in fact in effect. The listener shows that s/he recognizes the other as the source of the satisfaction of h/er communicative need by repeating the process, becoming h/erself a producer. S/he thus satisfies the ex-speaker's need for a relation to the product s/he (the ex-speaker) has just produced, a need to know that the relation has indeed been established. In order to satisfy this need the listener only has to show h/erself as a producer, thus even the hint of a product will be enough, even an inarticulate vocalization may often suffice as a reply. (8)

V

The constitution of parallel relations through linguistic production for others can now be seen in contrast to the relations of contract, and the exchange relation as described by Marx in the *Grundrisse* (continuing under the rubric of the "simplest economic relations, which, conceived by themselves, are pure abstraction", p. 248):

Each divests himself of his property voluntarily. But this is not all: individual A serves the need of individual B by means of the commodity a only in so far as and because individual B serves the need of individual A by means of the commodity b, and vice versa. Each serves the other in order to serve himself; each makes use of the other, reciprocally, as his means. Now both things are contained in the consciousness of the two individuals: (1) that each arrives at his end only in so far as he serves the other as means; (2) that each becomes means for the other (being for another) [*Sein fur andres*] only as end in himself (being for self) [*Sein fur sich*]; (3) that the reciprocity in which each is at the same time means and end, and attain his end only in so far as he becomes a means, and becomes a means only in so far as he posits himself as end, that each thus posits himself as being for another, in so far as he is being for self, and the other as being for him, in so far as he is being for himself - that this reciprocity is a necessary fact, presupposed as a natural precondition of exchange, but that, as such, it is irrelevant to each of the two subjects in exchange, and that this reciprocity interests him only in so far as it satisfies his interest to the exclusion of, without reference to, that of the other. That is, the common interest which appears as the motive of

the act as a whole is recognized as a fact by both sides; but, as such, it is not the motive, but rather proceeds, as it were, behind the back of these self-reflected particular interests, behind the back of one individual's interest in opposition to the other. (pp. 243-44)

Taking the satisfaction of the socially determined need of another as the basic action which establishes a human species relation, we can see how, in exchange, the constraint of reciprocity and the satisfaction of the need of the other by the individual only in order to satisfy h/er own need, and thus the treatment of the other only as means, contorts the original relation but does not entirely obliterate it. In fact, the most contradictory thing which the exchangers do, as described in this passage, is to use the action by which they can demonstrate themselves to be species beings, and form a human relation, only as a means to their individual (as opposed to species) being. The neatly aligned chain of relations of self-interest, which reflect each other in exchange, is longer than the chain of relations which are formed through linguistic communication, for the latter stops with a simple, common relation to the object. However, the common relations which are formed in linguistic communication can vary qualitatively with the communicative needs which are satisfied and the objects (linguistic products) by which they are satisfied. In exchange, "the self seeking interest ... brings nothing of a higher order to realization" (p. 241). The "general interest is precisely the generality of self seeking interests" and there is an "all-sided equality of its subjects". The individual exchange and reflection of relations takes place on the basis of the quantity of a single quality. The single quality which is found in all commodities, and with regard to which the exchangers form their reciprocal self interested equal relations, is abstract labor. They form their specific relations to each other in regard to the quantity of this quality, which is contained in the products they exchange.

There is an interesting correspondence between a part of this passage from the *Grundrisse* and the one quoted above from the *German Ideology*. Here "each becomes means for the other (being for another) [*Sein für andere*] only as an end in himself (being for self) [*Sein für sich*]", while in the *German Ideology*, "language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men [*für andere Menschen*] and for that reason alone it really exists personally for me as well". The dialectical movement here seems to begin with others, and only afterwards does it begin to be also for the subject. In the passage from *Grundrisse*, "being for another" is a parenthetical explanation of one's becoming "means for the other". However, due to the necessary reciprocity of the exchange, the process starts from the interest of the individual alone, and by using the "being for another" as means, returns to the individual. That is, the contradiction lies in the fact that a process which begins with others (being for others) is used as a means so to say embedded in, a process which begins with and returns to the self of the isolated individual.

With regard to language, there are several ways in which(1) the dialectical process begins with others and then arrives at the individual. First, language is the product of previous generations and is thus available to the individual

in all its determinations. Second, language is something we acquire from others, and our communicative needs are at the beginning satisfied and thus educated by others as similar to their own. Third, Vygotsky (1956, 1960) has shown in his discussion of the interiorization of speech (formation of linguistic thought), that language, which has first been for others, directed to others, becomes a monologue (for oneself) and then internalized (altogether for oneself as a tool to thought). Lastly, our speech satisfies the communicative needs of others and therefore our own as well. Altogether, this can be regarded as a process of socialization in which the individual becomes adequate to a pre-existing group. This group is both linguistically (thus ideally) and materially constituted, and continues to exist on the basis of the satisfaction of the needs of others by its members. The satisfaction of one's needs by others prepares one to satisfy in turn the needs of others at a given level of development of production. This process does not stop with the maturity of the individual; s/he rather continues to form relations with others, and they with him, by satisfying each others' needs, both materially and linguistically. If we can say that the satisfaction of another's need is the confirmation of h/er species being and our own, both in the material and in the linguistic zone - and, we may add, the more complex the system of socially determined needs becomes, the surer this confirmation becomes - we can also see how exchange, which uses the satisfaction of another's need only as a means for the satisfaction of the isolated individual's need, takes a step backwards from the species relation, or relation of socialization. It allows the formation of a "new species", so to speak, (9) of isolated individuals whose main common social relation is the relation of mutual exclusion. Due to the division of labor and the diversification of needs, the members of this 'species' are dependent on each other for the satisfaction of their socially determined needs, but the only way they can mutually include each other (satisfy the other's need) is by at the same time reasserting their mutual exclusion. And this they can do only by exchanging *equal* items.

Thus, if we compare language to commodity production and exchange as seen from a Marxist point of view' we can see language as a sort of ideal interchange by which humans continue to socialize themselves, satisfying each other's communicative needs, constituting themselves as species beings in an ideal way. Common human relations to each other in regard to things are made possible by language. On the other hand, in their material interchange humans have not entirely followed the path of language; rather, they use their species relation only in order to constitute and maintain themselves as isolated individuals, building a "new species" on top of the other one, in which the only common relation that exists among its members is that of mutual exclusion in a situation of complete mutual dependence. Our "material intercourse", the "language of real life", is thus reduced to a qualitative minimum and is self-contradictory, while our linguistic interchange serves to maintain us as ideally a species, mediating, among others, also our non-species material relations, so to speak, from without.

Both linguistic material products and non-linguistic material products may be used to form species relations through the satisfaction of the needs of others. The two kinds of production can be distinguished under capitalism by the fact that non-linguistic material products are used to form a particular kind of non- or anti-species relation. On the other hand, they can also be distinguished with regard to the kinds of needs they satisfy. Language satisfies a communicative need, while non-linguistic material production satisfies a material need. In satisfying communicative need, language permits the formation of human relations to something before these relations are formed in the use of the material thing itself. Despite the enormous restrictions of their relations to each other, the new material 'species' continue to reciprocally satisfy a large system of socially determined needs. As possessors of private property, the exchangers are mutually exclusive. The one act, which they perform in common, is exchange. The generalization of this situation and the requirement that the exchange be an equal one (so as not to detract from the substance of either dominant subject of the exchange) makes it necessary that their relations to each other in regard to this act, and thus to the object of the act, be prepared in advance. Thus exchange itself can be seen as containing communicative need.

VI

In the situation of commodity production and exchange, the communicative need re-presents itself, in a general way, as the need for interchange with other men regarding all the products which are produced by other men, and which satisfy the socially determined material needs of the individual. The individual must establish a relation with others in order to permit this interchange. We must remember that here we are talking about the "new species" of mutually exclusive "independent" individuals, whose communication is material communication. Granted the differences between the "ideal" species, which is mediated by language, and the "real" species of exchangers, we can see that, since in fact they are two developments of the form of life of human beings, the latter satisfies its communicative needs in a way, which is similar to the former.

The reciprocal independence of the individuals is the other side of their complete mutual dependence (*Grundrisse*, pp. 156-58). Each is independent as a producer, who produces something, which s/he does not h/erself use. As with linguistic communication, this product is destined for use by others, and one's production for others is the means for establishing a relation with others which will allow interchange with them for himself. H/er own product is h/er only communicative instrument. Since, in exchange, the movement of the dialectic begins with the individual, we may say that the communicative need s/he is trying to satisfy is h/er own communicative need (h/er need for a means to exchange with others). It is a material need; but, since s/he is dependent on others for its satisfaction, s/ he has to be able to establish a relation with them which will cause them to satisfy it. Thus it is a material

need for which an instrument of communication, for establishing the relation is necessary, a material need which is also a communicative need. The individual thus produces for the other in order to establish a relation, which will cause or permit the other to produce for him. Here, as in the linguistic dialectic, the product receives its determination in the kind of use the other makes of it, and thus begins to exist for the individual as well. The other, in exchange, in fact, is under the constriction of reciprocity, and h/er receipt of the first individual's product is for h/er the necessary alienation of h/er own. Each uses the satisfaction of the other's need as a means to cause the other to alienate h/er own product.

We said above that, if the satisfaction of another's socially determined need establishes species relations between human beings, it can also be used for that purpose. Since the character of communicative need in exchange arises with the generalization of exchange, it is much more clearly seen when this is mediated by money, for here the 'species' of exchangers is more clearly evolved. Here in fact, the commodity is seen as having two aspects, that of use value and that of value. As use value, it satisfies a socially determined need. As value, it is a product of abstract human labor and is expressed in, and replaced by, another commodity, money, the general equivalent. In its character as product of human labor, and in its exchangeability, the commodity is qualitatively similar to all other commodities, though they differ quantitatively. It is our hypothesis that value and exchange value may be seen as those aspects of production for others by which a species relation is established. In other words, they are the aspects of the commodity taken as a material communicative instrument. The mutually exclusive situation of exchange causes the splitting of the use-value and the exchange-value, for when the establishment of the species relation is used only for the maintenance of the isolated individual, what the individual receives from the other is only a different form of h/er original product, only something which satisfies a material need. (When a product has been exchanged, it drops out of circulation and is no longer a commodity but only a use-value.) The producer uses h/er ability to establish species being by means of h/er product, to transform h/er own product into a use-value, and, in fact, that is all s/he gets. The product is a commodity only when it is also exchange-value, and it is exchange-value only when it is "for others", and it is for others when it is in circulation, when it is not for the individual. It is thus in the zone of the use of being for others as a means that we must look for the communicative character of the commodity. What is the process involved?

We saw above that the dialectical process of language starts with others and then arrives at the individual. If commodity exchange has a communicative aspect, we would expect there to be in it a similar dialectical process. Marx discusses the expression of value in the first book of *Capital*: "x commodity A = y commodity B", and says that "the whole mystery of the form of value lies hidden in this elementary form" (p. 18). The expression of value has a relative and an equivalent pole, which are "polar opposites". The relative com-

modity expresses its value in the equivalent commodity through this relation. Both commodities are products of abstract labor; in our terms, both are produced “for others”; however’ in the expression of value the equivalent “figures only as a definite quantity of some article” (p. 27) and as such is the expression of the value of the relative commodity.

The equation of value is, so to say, seen from the point of view of the producer, who wants to find out how much h/er product is worth. Thus s/he sees h/er product in relation to that of another, who will potentially exchange it with h/er. At this point, what is the point of view of the other? In what way does the product of the first producer exist for h/er? It exists for h/er only in the form of h/er own product (which s/he may give up in exchange for it). (“... your object is for you only the *sensible hull*, the *hidden form* [*Gestalt*] of my object; for its production *means*, wants to express the acquisition of my product” (“Excerpts from James Mill”:25).) If we then ask, what is the producer’s product for the other, the answer is, the product of the other. From the producer’s point of view, then, what h/er product is for the other, is what it really is also for h/erself. In other words, the producer’s product receives its determination as a particular kind (and quantity) of communicative instrument, in its present or actual existence for others as their own product, before the exchange takes place.

A commodity, taken by itself, has both use-value and value; however, it does not, on its own, have exchange-value. The latter only exists in its relation to something else. “A commodity is *exchange-value* only if it is expressed in another, i.e. as a relation” (*Grundrisse*, p. 205). In a situation of private property and mutual exclusion, the commodity receives its determination first as something in the hands (or pockets) of others, in its relation to what is still their property. It is for its producer also what it is for the others, because on the one hand it cannot become something they do not have (a use-value which they do not produce), and on the other it cannot be exchanged for more than they will give up for it, and s/he will not exchange it for less. Moreover, since the producer is a *commodity* producer, the commodity does not exist for h/erself as a use-value, and thus it has no determined character for h/er except as a potential exchange-value, which is determined by others, by what is in their hands. It thus becomes really an exchange-value for him as well (it really begins to exist for him) when it expresses its value in something else which is someone else’s property.

The exchangers, as a mutually dependent and mutually exclusive ‘species’, must prove themselves to be members of the ‘species’ in order to perform their one common act, that of exchange. (The fact that this act unites them behind their backs as producers in common of the same thing, that is, parts of the totality of social production, is important to our argument but must be left till later.) They provide this proof by producing for others. The need of another must really be satisfied (at least the use-value must become another’s property) in order for a product to become a commodity, because

a product which is not bought falls out of circulation completely, and has no existence, neither as use-value nor as exchange-value, even though its producer originally made it for others.

In a sense, however, the exchangers are not members of the same 'species', since their production for others is really only production for themselves. They are only members of the 'species' transitorily, in the zone of the operation of the means and its process. Each time the individual produces for others, s/he proves that s/he is a member of the 'species' and thus prepares a relation of exchange with them. Each time s/he receives a product in exchange for h/er own, however, s/he proves that h/er production (for others) was really only production for h/erself, and thus shows that s/he is not a member of the species. Though, more precisely, if species H(uman) satisfies each others' needs, and a non-human species does not, the species E(xchangers) must be said to be H and not H, E (H and not H), since though they do it as means, they do it. Once again, if the satisfaction of another's need proves that one is a species being, it can also be used for that purpose. Thus other interaction which is not directly need satisfaction is possible with the object. Here we find that it is used for that purpose as a means in order not to be used for that purpose. One establishes h/erself as a species being in order not to be a species being, but to continue as the "exclusive and dominant (determinant) subject" (*Grundrisse*, p. 244). This can also be expressed by saying that there is no identification of the needs of the individuals involved beyond the need to permit other interaction with regard to the object. When we enter the zone of the working of the means, the needs begin to coincide, since all need a means to the satisfaction of their own needs. They need their own products as this means. They momentarily need the need of others for their products, which is the only thing that will allow them to become means. And this takes the form of a need for the characterization of their products as exchangeable in the eyes of others (and of the products of others as exchangeable). It is on the basis of this shared need for the existence of one's own product (for others) as means, that exchange-value splits off from use-value. When in exchange the product really becomes for another, satisfying h/er need, and thus for h/er only the realized transformation of h/er own product into something useful for h/er, it becomes at the same time what it really is also for the first producer - an exchange-value, a means for inducing the satisfaction of h/er need by others. When money has entered the picture, and the moments of selling and buying have become distinguished, this appears more clearly. The 'aspect' of the product, that it may be used for proving the species being of the producer, and thus as a means for establishing relations with others and mediating interchange (exchange) with them, acquires a form of its own. It is divided from the aspect of the product that it satisfies a material need (as such only the transformation of the previous product of the one who buys it). In simple exchange by means of money, the producer, A, produces for another, B, who buys h/er product, giving to A the aspect "for others" of A's product, in its equivalent in money. The original producer, A, then gives this aspect "for others" of h/

er product to another, C, in exchange for a use-value for h/erself. At this point, the same sum of money becomes the aspect “for others” of the product s/he has bought, that is, for the present producer (seller’s) C’s product, and so on. In *Grundrisse*, Marx remarks that “The individual can employ money only by divesting himself of it, by positing it as *being for* others, in its social function” (p. 228). If money is “being for others” it must satisfy a need of others. How can this need be characterized? It is the need for a means for establishing species relations with others in order to permit the interchange or interaction of exchange, and in the situation of commodity exchange, all have this need. The buyer, when s/he gives money to the seller, satisfies this need. This allows the seller to keep the aspect “for others” of h/er product while giving up its aspect “only for h/erself” to another. The buyer is now related to the product which s/he had given up before as seller as contradictorily, pure “being for others” which is “only for h/erself”.

VII

The institution of money permits a mutually exclusive property relation with regard to something, which is only for others. The need for money may be characterized as communicative need, a need for (a means to) establishing species relations. But it must be remembered that, in exchange, the establishing of species relations is only a means to establishing non-species relations, or material interchange of private property. (The linguistic dialectic applied to money is that for others it is again for others, and therefore for ourselves as well, it is for others.) The common relation is the relation of mutual exclusion.

When the buyer gives up money to the seller, satisfying h/er communicative need, s/he causes the seller to have an actual relation to h/er product, which was before only a potential relation. The seller produced h/er product “for others” but it had to actually become for another, in order to be proven to have this aspect. Moreover, it had to be proven to have this aspect in order to have it actually, in the form of money. The seller, after the sale, becomes directly related to h/er product as “being for others” in the form of its money equivalent. H/er relation to h/er product as having this particular social quality has changed from a potential to an actual relation. On the other hand, s/he is also related to h/er product as potentially only for h/erself. When s/he gives up the money to another, becoming a buyer, and satisfying the other’s communicative need, h/er previous potential relation to h/er own product as only for h/erself becomes an actual relation in regard to the new use-value which s/he has bought. Thus, in exchange each causes the other to have an actual relation to h/er product, which before was only a potential relation. From the point of view of each one taken singly, there is a succession of relations to the product, which is identical to that of the other. However, taken together, the moments in which these relations occur are different, and in fact each has a relation to the product which is the opposite of that of the other. At the moment in which the buyer gives up

h/er money (h/er own product's being for others) and thus allows the seller's relation to h/er product to become purely social (a relation to a purely social object), s/he changes h/er own relation to h/er product into a purely private one. Or, insofar as the seller is considered as active, s/he changes the buyer's relation to h/er (the buyer's) own product from a purely social one into a purely private one, by giving h/er a use-value.

Considering both participants in the exchange as communicatively active, we can say that each changes the other's relation to h/er (the other's) product, in order to change h/er own relation to h/er own product. We saw above that the same thing happened in language. By satisfying the other's communicative need with a verbal social object, we changed h/er relation to the material object with regard to which the communicative need arose.

VIII

Up to now we have been looking at production and exchange as communicative processes, and we have seen the exchangers in their reciprocal independence. Marx tells us, however (as we mentioned above), that this reciprocal independence is only the other side of their complete reciprocal dependence. In this regard, no one in commodity production can produce for h/erself, so that each is totally dependent on others for the satisfaction of all of h/er socially determined needs. Thus, the material interchange which takes place here is a particular kind of interchange. Others must satisfy all of the individual's material needs, since s/he h/erself is helpless and unable to satisfy them. The independent producer makes h/er product only as being for others (a means of access to the labor of others), and this is a communicative device or instrument; we can see that s/he is "free" and independent only in h/er communicative capacity. As a consumer s/he is completely dependent materially, and thus s/he is in a situation similar to that of the newborn child, who is capable only of crying (communicating) and whose needs must all be satisfied by others. On the other hand, s/he is also like a king, whose needs are all satisfied by others and who only produces communicatively. This centering upon the individual reflects the social relations present in the situation of private property, where the individual is related to h/er property as h/er own only socially - only because all others are related in a parallel way to their property as their own, and to h/er property as not their own, while s/he is related to their property as not h/er own. The relation of an individual to h/er own property involves a relation of others in general to h/er, as well as h/er relation to the property of any individual, as a member of 'others in general', equal to h/erself as having the same relation to others in general and to h/er own property as h/er own. Any individual appears to another as a member of others in general, with regard to the property relation. Money as a communicative instrument is particularly useful in that it permits communication with others in general, of which particular individuals become merely the momentary representatives.

Under this aspect, the individual does not produce for any other individual, nor does s/he consume the product of any other individual. Rather, s/he produces for others in general and consumes the products of others in general. Viewed on this abstract level, the individuals have a common relation to each other with regard to a thing, in that each produces what the other also produces, and in that both consume the same thing, a portion of abstract labor, of the totality of production for others in that society. Money, in its character as general equivalent, discloses the relation between the individuals' own "private labor and the collective labor of society" (*Capital*, p. 49). Insofar as money expresses a general relation between the individual and others, and therefore a relation between h/er and another particular individual (who has the same relation to others in general that s/he has), it expresses a social relation. As the mediator of an exchange between isolated individuals, confronting each other directly, it serves as a communicative device, allowing them to continue as mutually exclusive, non-species beings. Despite the intention of the self interested individuals involved in the exchange, and within the zone of the operation of the means (production for others as a means for the satisfaction of one's own need) which has become extended in commodity production to cover all the economic relations, we find that they are actually satisfying each other's needs, insofar as these are needs for portions of the totality of social production. Thus they are "species beings" as producers and consumers of the same thing, the total social product. As a species, however, they are very limited, and their labor is, so to say, undivided, since all produce and consume the same thing. The only differences within the 'thing' that they produce are quantitative. Thus in order for there to be a momentary and *particular* species relation between two individuals, the quantitative measurement of their portions of the total social product is necessary, in order to prove that they are really producing and consuming the same thing. Money, as quantitatively divisible being for others, provides this measure.

IX

When money was seen as the exchange-value of the commodity, it was a communicative device which, replacing the commodity, gave it an independent existence as something for others. This allowed a series of changes in the relations of the producer (seller) and the consumer (buyer) to their own products. Though neither was directly related to the other's product as the product of that particular other, s/he was related to h/er as a representative of others in general - one producer of the totality of social production. The transfer of money satisfied the communicative need of the seller for h/er own product as being for others, and was a means for transforming it into its opposite, a use-value for h/er alone. In money as measure, on the other hand, the commodity becomes related not only qualitatively but also quantitatively to the rest of the total social product. This is done on the basis of a system of oppositions similar to that of the system of values in Saussure's conception of *langue*. That is, each sum of money, or price, has its particular

positive character in opposition to all the other sums or prices which it is not. (See also Jakobson on phonetic value, 1962.) In this light, money can be seen as a sort of quantitative *langue*, containing also the articulation of larger into smaller elements which make them up. This *langue* is organized in a quantitative progression, giving a more stable relative 'position' to its elements than those of the *langue* proper. Moreover, it also gives the possibility of explaining the positive content of the price of any particular article, by analyzing it into the prices of its aspects, means of production, material, labor - something which the system of linguistic oppositions does not provide. This aspect of money is more directly and evidently linguistic than its aspect as qualitative equivalent. It makes use of a system of numbers which, after all, is itself a derivative of language. Marx himself notes the linguistic character of prices, calling them ideal money or the "money names" of the value contained in commodities. Money as qualitative equivalent confirms and expresses the commodity as for others, and as part of the total social product. As quantitative equivalent it expresses the commodity as a particular quantity of something for others, a particular quantitative part of the total product. As qualitative equivalent it permits the exchangers to establish equal qualitative species relations with one another, and as quantitative equivalent it permits the exchangers to establish particular quantitative relations with one another. These quantitative relations are particular in view of all the other quantitative relations which they are not. By satisfying the communicative need with regard to money (sums of money), which is a material object itself satisfying material communicative need, price gives an ideal expression to the value of commodities, preparing the way for its real expression in money, in the material communicative act.

If we look at language as a means for establishing social relations between humans with regard to things, before individual relations are established with regard to these things, we can see that commodity production and exchange by means of money does much the same thing, and does it in a similar way. The specific differences in the two kinds of communication may be found in the different kinds of interchange which they serve to facilitate. The interchange which economic exchange mediates is in itself contradictory, since it requires some sort of mutual inclusion on the grounds of the mutual exclusion of private property. Its dialectic can be represented as follows: private property (for others and therefore not for me); communication (for others and therefore for me); private property (for me and therefore not for others). The dialectic of communication can be seen thus as inserted within the dialectic of private property, creating its own zone in the production and exchange of products for others, which has expanded and become generalized to such an extent that the originally "dominant (determinant) subjects" are in fact dominated and determined by it. (10) The material interchange which takes place is interchange between the individual and all others, as mediated by communicative relations established between h/er and a succession of particular others. Moreover, the communication that takes place in exchange is communication with regard to a single social

object which is abstract labor, and its totality as contained in the total social product. The 'species' of exchangers communicates and becomes a community only with regard to one thing. It thus has a single communicative need and a single word for expressing and establishing relations in regard to this thing. This material word is money. Thus any comparison between language and commodity exchange must bear in mind the particular human situation of commodity exchange.

As a word, money is, so to say, in a continuous nascent state, for the species who speak it have only one kind of interchange to mediate - requiring its alienation. It is therefore a word which cannot be learned. Due to the singularity of the interchange, and to the fact that only one thing, abstract labor, is relevant to it, no sentences including qualitatively different elements can be formed with this word.

Our purpose in viewing commodity production and exchange in terms of communication has been to find in the former a basis for a non-separatistic conception of language. The alienated "language of real life" can be used as a point of comparison for language proper. To return to our original question, whether it is possible to generalize commodity production and exchange to language, we would say that the question should be put the other way around. The communicative forms which first developed in language are used in commodity production and exchange. The main instrument of the work of the head has been extended to the work of the hand. The continual bridging and reconstruction of the mutually exclusive relations of private property by the exchange of commodities is itself 'alienated language'. Bearing in mind the reasons for its aberration, we may say that an investigation of language in this light should begin from the variety and the specific character of the interchanges which language is called upon to facilitate. We may then see how language is just as much a social product as is "the specification of a useful object as a value" (*Capital*, 1, p. 47).

From the point of view of semiotics, the consideration of money as a 'word' may provide a useful point of encounter between what is usually seen as a non-verbal system of communication - economic exchange - and language proper. It could allow us so to say, as in chemical analysis, to put a word into a test tube containing a different human social environment from the one in which it usually exists, thereby gaining a demonstration of some of its hidden properties. While this is not the place to go into the results of such an experiment, at least one suggestion may be given. For Marx money, as the excluded commodity, is not a conventional or arbitrary sign (except in the case of paper money, where due to the rapidity of circulation "Its functional existence absorbs, so to say, its material existence", 1962, p. 110). Rather, money arises of necessity when the need for it develops with the generalization of commodity exchange. Its functions change with the historical situation and mode of production, from the means of simple mercantile exchange to full-fledged capital. Moreover, it has a 'natural' physical form in gold or

silver: “Nothing but a substance whose every specimen has identical and uniform qualities can serve as an adequate phenomenal form of value, or as the embodiment of abstract and therefore uniform human labour” (*ibid.*, 65). Marx also takes great pains to show that abstract labor is contained both in the commodity and in money, and it is by reason of this that the latter expresses the value of the former as well as by the polarity between general equivalent and particular commodities. If we take money as the *signans* and the commodity as the *signatum*, we can see that abstract labor might be viewed as an “inner, iconic tie” between the two. According to Jakobson (1973: 18), “*les liens internes, iconiques, du signifiant avec son signifié et, en particulier, les liens étroits entre les concepts grammaticaux et leur expression phonologique jettent un doute sur la croyance traditionnelle en ‘la nature arbitraire du signe linguistique’ telle qu’elle est affirmée dans le Cours.*” Alfred SohnRethel, whose fascinating work attempts to derive philosophical and scientific categories from money and exchange in the Marxist analysis of commodities, says that “for all epochs and societies the basic logical pattern of the socially necessary mode of knowledge is the same as the form pattern of the social nexus” (1965:122). If, as we have tried to show in this paper, the ‘social nexus’ of commodity exchange includes and is in some senses a derivative of the nexus first developed in communication by means of language, we may attempt to find some “basic logical patterns” which are common to both.

We can also suggest that, as a type, money ‘means’ other commodities by the fact of its being their general equivalent, and it is this not only because it is the excluded commodity (a stable or polarized sample of a class), but also because its tokens ‘refer’ to particular commodities by directly and physically substituting for them over and over again in exchange, and it is from this that its generality derives.

The semiotic utility of an investigation of this type depends upon the differences between language and exchange as much as upon their similarities; whether or not the non-arbitrariness of money depends upon its social and physical character as a ‘real abstraction’ mediating commodities, is not a semiotically irrelevant question. Either way it is answered may be informative in a comparison of money to other means of communication, using Marx’s dialectical analysis of exchange as a guide.

Footnotes:

1 In his discussion of contracts in the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel calls the gift a merely formal contract. This sort of gift exists within the framework of private property (p. 59).

2 In order to avoid the term ‘intercourse’, which is the Moscow edition’s English translation of *Verkehr*, the over-use of which would give our paper pornographic overtones, we have opted to use ‘social interchange’ as an unfortunately rather pallid alternative. ‘Commerce’ would have been better but it presently implies exchange. ‘Interaction’ smacks of the modern current

in American psychology. Thus we will be using ‘social interchange’ or ‘interchange with other men’ except in the direct quotes from the Moscow edition of the *German Ideology*, where ‘intercourse with other men’ is the translation of *Verkehr*.

3 See Hegel’s discussion of the system of needs in the *Philosophy of Right* (pp. 126-128).

4 The reciprocal determination of production and consumption is described in the “Introduction of ’57”: “Consumption produces production in a double way, (1) because a product becomes a real product only by being consumed ... (2) because consumption creates the need for new production ... production produces consumption 1) by creating the material for it; 2) by determining the manner of consumption; and 3) by creating the products, initially posited by it as objects, in the form of a need felt by the consumer” (pp.91-92 in the English translation of the *Grundrisse*).

5 Marcel Mauss, in his “Essay on the Gift” concentrates his attention on the obligation of reciprocity. Taking reciprocity as a primary social relation obscures the fact that the simple satisfaction of another’s socially determined need is *already* a social relation. Much the same thing might perhaps be said with regard to the work of Lévi-Strauss.

6 We will not be dealing with consciousness here, but with language, since the relations between language and consciousness are complex and lie outside our scope, except as directly regarding the definition of language as “practical consciousness”.

7 The Hegelian conception of the “cunning of reason” which uses natural processes for its own benefit in the formation of the instrument and in work could also apply here. L. S. Vygotsky makes much the same point with regard to the activity of mediation in the use of signs which consists in the “influence which man exercises on behavior through signs, and that is, the stimuli, making them act in a way which conforms to their psychological nature” (*Storia dello Svauppo delle funzioni psichiche*: 137).

8 We are leaving to another place a discussion of the non-verbal sign systems which also have a large part in communication since in many cases their character as social and individual products is less clear than that of verbal objects.

9 We are justified in using this turn of phrase as an expository device because if we see humanity as a species which makes itself in the continuous process of its own production and socio-material interchange, the institution of a single kind of all-inclusive interchange based on the *one* common social relation of mutual exclusion, severely restricts the process and thus the character of the species which is determined by it. The exchangers are, as it were, a “species” which makes itself in order to *un-make* itself

10 Here we have only discussed two of the aspects Marx sees in money—Means of Circulation and Measure of Value. For the others, Means of Accumulation, Means of Payment and World Money (as well as general equivalent) there is a great deal to be said. Money as general equivalent in fact, in our terms, seems to parallel the function of the word in concept formation — however this must be left to another place. It also lies outside the scope of

this paper to discuss the implications of salaried labor, surplus value and capital in terms of communication.

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This is a revised edition of an article first published in *Semiotica* 29-1/2 (1980), Mouton Publishers, The Hague.