

*THE SELF AND THERAPY*

G.W.F. Hegel:  
The **D**ialectic  
of the **S**elf

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## G. W F. Hegel: The Dialectic of the Self

The selves of Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant are rather schematic and abstract. This is true of Descartes's self as cogitator, of Locke's self as synthesis of memory, of Hume's self as illusion, and of Kant's noumenal self as the *I think* that must accompany all of my perceptions. This is less true of Kant's phenomenal self, but he himself does not concretize the potential richness of the empirical self. This is not the case for our next thinker about self, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). Hegel's concept of self is complex, dynamic, and far from clear. Hegel's self develops, and that development proceeds only through conflict. Thus, Hegel's self is epigenetic and conflictual. Further, the realization (development) of the Hegelian self depends on its externalization, on *praxis* (the action of the self on and in the world) that results in cultural products: thoughts, works of art, social and political institutions, religions, and philosophies that Hegel calls *concrete universal*. The self only becomes the self through action. That which is externalized is then internalized, and the self that becomes itself in interaction with other selves and in the projection onto the world of its inwardness reintegrates that which flowed out to reach its next stage of development. No longer abstract thinker, detached observer, patched-together identity, grammatical fiction, or prerequisite of any possible experience, this self unfolds, acts, creates, develops, struggles, and finally identifies with the results of its actions, creations, developments, and struggles. A dynamic view of self, indeed.

The man who so conceived self was hardly himself dynamic. Hegel's life was singularly uneventful. He started as a tutor and ended as a university professor, serving as an editor and high school principal en route. So bland was his life that he has been referred to as "secretary to the Absolute," the Absolute being the highest categorical concept in his philosophical system. Hegel came from an upper middle-class family in Stuttgart, Germany. Little is known of his formative years, except that he was a middling student. He went on to study theology at the University of Tubingen. He spent his 20s as a private tutor for a number of aristocratic families, finally turning to philosophy in his early 30s when he became co-editor of the *Journal für Philosophie*. His co-editor was Friedrich Schelling, who developed a "Philosophy of Nature" in which Nature is seen to be an "Odyssey of the spirit," which has some parallels in Hegel's thought. Schelling taught a mystical, romantic interpretation of religion. The two men ended as bitter

rivals. While editing the philosophy journal, Hegel was writing his first major work, the *Phenomenology of Mind* (1807/1931). He mailed the manuscript to his publisher just as Napoleon's troops were assaulting Jena, so the theory of development through conflict was itself launched in the midst of conflict. Hegel, like most intellectuals of his generation, had been an admirer of the French Revolution, and he was sympathetic toward Napoleon, whom he saw as the representative of progress even though the French Emperor was attacking Germany. Hegel fled from the chaos of battle and became an increasingly conservative newspaper editor in Bamberg, after which he was appointed director of the Gymnasium—the European classical high school—in Nuremberg. While headmaster he developed his philosophical “system,” first expounded in his *Science of Logic* (Hegel, 1812-1814/1929b). The *Logic* established his reputation, and he was successively appointed professor of logic at Heidelberg University and at the University of Berlin. His influence while at the University of Berlin was enormous. Students came from all over Europe and beyond to study under him, and European intellectual history in the second half of the 19th century would have been radically different if he hadn't shaped the thinking of so many. He himself became increasingly conservative, even reactionary, during his Berlin years, and wound up deifying the Prussian state. However, some of his followers interpreted his thinking in a revolutionary way, leading to a split between the “Left Hegelians” and the “Right Hegelians.” If the ceaseless striving of spirit unfolding itself is interpreted as ongoing, the implications are revolutionary; if, on the other hand, the process is held to end in Hegel's System, the implications are justification of the status quo and conservatism. Hegel himself ended as a Right Hegelian. Hegel is the first of our thinkers about self who married and had a family. Becoming a professor, a civil servant of the Prussian state, an apologist for that state, and a contented bourgeois householder, the implicitly revolutionary Hegel became a harbinger of Victorian smugness.

Hegel published relatively little in his lifetime; the *Phenomenology of Mind* (1807/1931), the *Logic* (1812-1814/1929b), and the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* were his chief works. After his death, his students published his lectures as the *Philosophies of Religion, Aesthetics, Law, and History*. For our purposes, the *Phenomenology* and the lectures on the philosophy of history (Hegel, 1837/1929a) are the most important. Hegel is extraordinarily difficult to read and interpret. His prose is a thicket of neologisms and technical terms; his style is epigrammatic at its best, but at its worst, it is turgid, obscure, arcane academese. German students are said to read him in English translation, the English being more

intelligible. In spite of this, Hegel's school of thought, in its various interpretations, dominated philosophical thought for three quarters of a century. That school is generally called *idealism*. It is idealistic in the sense that mind or spirit (i.e., the realm of ideas) is the ultimately real for its adherents.

The *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807) is a remarkable work. A phenomenon is that which appears, hence phenomenology is the study of what appears. The common German word *Geist* is difficult to translate. It means both *mind* and *spirit*. Hence, Hegel's book is a treatise on the manifestations of the mind, the spirit, or both. It is a history of the *forms of consciousness*. As such, it is an account of the vicissitudes of the human mind and its thought processes. On one level, it is not about the individual self at all, but about the way spirit, as incarnated in human consciousness, has manifested itself in history. However, on another level, at least implicitly, the *Phänomenologie* is about the individual self and its vicissitudes. At least, some commentators have so interpreted it. For our purposes, Hegel's analysis of spirit will be regarded as an analysis of self. If ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny—if the development of the individual recapitulates the development of the (human) race—then there is no conflict between the two interpretations. In German literature there is a tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, the novel of spiritual and sensual education of a young protagonist. Hegel's contemporary and acquaintance, Goethe, initiated the *Bildungsroman* *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. Hegel's *Phänomenologie* is a *Bildungsroman* of the human spirit.

A few more words about *Geist*. *Geist* is both individual minds and what Hegel variously calls *Spirit* and the *Absolute*. The Absolute seems to be something transhuman or at least more than human, something like the traditional transcendent Judeo-Christian God. It is and it is not. *Geist* is not transcendent; it is immanent—indwelling. There is no Absolute apart from its manifestations in nature and its unfolding in human history. The Absolute may exist somewhere as potential, and although Hegel seems interested in this possibility, its realization is in human history. The theory of immanence holds that there is no creator apart from his (its) creation and that the creation is ongoing. So to speak, God (the Absolute, the Spirit) comes into being in human consciousness, especially self-consciousness. History is the process of spirit becoming aware of itself. Self-awareness or self-consciousness is the culmination of the process. At first there is nature, inert, existing only *in-itself* (i.e., without consciousness); later there is consciousness, and finally *being-for-itself*, self-consciousness or self-awareness. The unfolding of the absolute, the phenomenology of Spirit, is the acquisition of self-consciousness not through introspection

(or not only or primarily so), but through the production of cultural products: art, science, religion, economic and political institutions, law, and, at the highest level, philosophy. The Spirit becomes aware of itself by individual human beings becoming self-aware of that which they individually and humankind collectively have produced through action. *Self-consciousness* in German also means *self-accused*, so there is an element of guilt in self-awareness, perhaps because Hegel believed that conflict between self-consciences is inevitable. For Hegel, as Susan B. Anthony says in Virgil Thomson's *The Mother of Us All*, "Life is strife." Spirit is as Spirit does, but only when Spirit is aware of what it does. Furthermore, *Geist* is in conflict with itself and with other consciousnesses. In our terms, the self is its own consciousness of what it does through action, that awareness never being without conflict both within itself and in its relation with other selves.

For Hegel, *The Truth is the Whole*, and all previous philosophies suffer from one-sidedness. They are not wrong; rather, they are incomplete. Their error is that they do not see that incompleteness. Thus, empiricism has something valid to say, and so does rationalism, but neither is the whole story; hence, neither is the truth. Hegel is striving to build a system that will encompass all previous *Weltanschauung* (world views), each of which has its own validity. To understand a philosophical system, a work of art, a religion, or a culture (or, I would say, a person), we must feel ourselves into that cultural product's point of view. These manifestations of Spirit, these actualizations of itself at a given development of *Geist*, which Hegel calls *concrete universals*, cannot be understood from the outside, from a hostile or critical standpoint, but only through empathy, through assuming the point of view of that concrete universal or cultural product or the point of view of that individual consciousness. In our terms, Hegel is saying that the self at any point of development has a *Weltanschauung*, a way of experiencing and creating a world, that has validity but is not Truth, because each and every *Weltanschauung* is limited and biased, is a partial view and mistakes that partiality for totality.

Selves and their manifestations, including our own selves, cannot be understood by a purely intellectual process, but only by empathy, by feeling ourselves into, by feeling with that which we are trying to understand, be that ourselves or another. Veridical perception of consciousness in all its subjective and objective manifestations, as self-consciousness and as cultural product, is only possible through empathy. We must understand before we criticize.

There is something playful in understanding; I play a role to understand a point of view. Hegel is recommending a kind of psychodrama of ideologies in which I play skeptic, stoic, empiricist, and rationalist successively as I trace within myself the development of Spirit objectified in these concrete universals of thought.

The same is true of each developmental phase of the self. I cannot understand my point of view as a child except by becoming a child again or by playing at being one. This side of Hegel implies a certain compassion of the self for itself. Even the actions that I now most regret and repudiate once made sense, once reflected a stage of development that was necessary and inevitable.

So much for the validity of each developmental stage, of each philosophical system, of each *Weltanschauung*. Yes, each is valid within its own terms, but each is a distortion, each is guilty of what Alfred North Whitehead called the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness,” of taking the part for the whole. This being the case, any proposition or standpoint will generate its opposite or antithesis. For example, empiricism pushed far enough is self-contradictory and leads to Humeian absurdity, to a skepticism that cannot really be lived; this in turn generates a neorationalistic philosophy, which in its turn also becomes one-sided and generates its own absurdity. Thesis generates antithesis, which in turn generates a higher synthesis. That synthesis is itself a one-sided viewpoint, albeit one that encompasses more reality than its antecedent thesis and antithesis. The synthesis in turn stands as a thesis generating its antithesis, leading to yet a new synthesis, *ad infinitum*, or at least continuing until Hegel created his System.

Hegel developed this *dialectical logic*, which the American Hegelian Joshua Royce called a logic of passion, most fully in his *Logic*, which is not a treatise on logic but more of what would have traditionally been called metaphysics. In it, Hegel starts with the concept of Being, the most general of possible concepts: so general, in fact, that Being is without definition or characteristics. Being generates its antithesis, Nothing, which is implicit in it. In a sense, Being and Nothingness are codeterminous. In another sense, Being’s lack of internal distinctions, articulations, and spaces necessitates its antithesis, Nothing. If there was only Being without Nothing, there would be no world at all. The synthesis of Being and Nothing is Becoming. Process and history begin. Hegel goes on to elaborate an extremely complex System a priori, by spinning out his logic. He calls this *dialectic*. Dialectic takes each position to its extreme or turns it into its opposite. Each extreme leads to a contradiction; hence, the emergence of the opposite.



The self has a similar dialectical development. The self, for Hegel, is historical both phylogenically and ontogenically. It evolves. Furthermore, development occurs through conflict between thesis and antithesis. The results of our actions are not what we expect. “The moving power of human passions which produce unintended results and in that way sudden reversals” (Hegel, 1837/1929a, p. 368) is what drives history.

Hegel’s theory of truth is worth comment. Most theories of truth are variants on the correspondence theory of truth. A statement or proposition is true if, and only if, it corresponds to a set of affairs. “The pencil I write with is red” is such a true proposition since it corresponds to a set of affairs—my pencil being red. Hegel wouldn’t deny this, but his is a coherence theory of truth. A system is truer than another system if it accounts for more of reality, if it organizes more data into a coherent picture. The truth is the whole, and my truth is never whole, but approximates it by successively taking into account more and more of reality.

In tracing the dialectic of the unfolding of spirit, Hegel looks at the history of human consciousness as objectified in philosophical systems and *Weltanschauung*. His range is impressive, yet his selection is itself partial and limited in ways that Hegel does not see. Among these concrete universals are *skepticism*; *stoicism*, which he calls the unhappy contrite consciousness; *traditional morality* (custom), or *Sittlichkeit*; *rational morality* (*moralität*), which he attributes to Kant; and *Spirit alienated from itself*. His history of the forms of consciousness proceeds dialectically, each one-sided view generating its antithesis, which in turn leads to a new synthesis, until Spirit finally becomes conscious of itself in Hegel’s System. If the history of the forms of consciousness does indeed come to an end in Hegel, which is one reading of his meaning, then the social, intellectual, and political implications of his System are conservative; however, if the process continues as given Hegel’s premises it should, the social, intellectual, and political implications of that System are either evolutionary or revolutionary.

In this tracing of the history of consciousness Hegel tells us that it is a rational process and postulates that Reason is the ground of all things. Although the unfolding of the Absolute is a temporal process, this unfolding is a logical, or logically necessary, progression, and Hegel’s interest lies in its logical rather than its temporal structure. For Hegel, whatever is, is logically necessary, and could not be otherwise. This constitutes its rationality. In his *Logic*, Hegel tries to demonstrate the rationality of the

process that is the universe. In effect he deduces the world and everything in it, including human history, from the dialectic of Being and Nothing. In Hegel, the transcendental method, the a priori elucidation of the prerequisites of experience, which Kant used critically, becomes an excuse for the reintroduction of metaphysics—a reintroduction with a vengeance. Hegel is all too ready to tell us about the thing-in-itself, and to tell us in extensive detail.

Related to the dialectic is the notion of *Aufheben*. This is a German verb that has three antithetical meanings: to annul or destroy, to preserve, and to exalt. When a culture, an idea, an institution, an art form, or a developmental stage in the existence of our individual self is *Aufgehoben*, it is annulled, preserved, and transcended at the same time: annulled as it passes into its opposite and preserved as it passes into a new state of being. It is destroyed, transcended, and incorporated simultaneously. This is an epigenetic theory of self, in which each earlier stage of development is contained in, finds representation in, is a living presence in, each higher (later) stage of development.

In his *Philosophy of History* (1837/1929a), Hegel states that “The Real is Rational and the Rational is Real.” What he means is that whatever exists, exists because of logical necessity; that is, what comes into being is entailed in and necessitated by its antecedents in the same way as the conclusion of a syllogism is entailed in its premises. Logical necessity also means that what is could not be otherwise. According to Hegel, “the cunning of Reason” (1837/1929a, p. 380) uses human passion to “bring forth that which is ripe in the womb of time” (1837/1929a, p. 377). Men believe that they are fulfilling their personal desires when actually they are the instruments of the Absolute’s self-realization. Hegel is here anthropomorphizing Reason. His intention may be metaphorical, but this anthropomorphizing of Reason points to a difficulty that runs throughout Hegel’s System. The characteristics he attributes to Spirit, the Absolute, and the World Soul are human characteristics, and his theory may have more to do with projection than with logical deduction. That is, Hegel seems to be projecting human motives onto the totality of things understood as the Absolute. According to Hegel, history is tragic because it takes no account of human purpose or desire. But not to worry, this is perfectly all right because it is “necessary.” This part of Hegel seems to me to be nonsense. He justifies anything and everything. As Ivan asks in *The Brothers Karamazov*, can children being tortured be part of God’s (the Absolute’s) plan? Of course, Hegel’s Absolute doesn’t have a plan, but is merely “rational.” But one wonders, in what sense was the Holocaust rational? Was it logically necessary?

Hegel says that the rationality of being is not such as to allow us to predict the course of events. As his famous aphorism says, "The owl of Minerva flies only at night," so that we gain wisdom, or at least understanding, only after the event. That may be true, but Hegel also seems to say the opposite, that he can understand and indeed deduce a priori, that which is logically necessary. Either Hegel is a Monday-morning quarterback calling the plays after the game, or his System is not rational and driven by necessity. History is certainly tragic but it isn't made less so by its necessity. Hegel might agree, but he is, nevertheless, writing a theodicy, a justification of the ways of God to man. This part of Hegel seems to me either mistaken or pretentious. His theodicy is no more convincing than any of the others. Not so his psychological dynamics.

One of the most famous and most insightful parts of the *Phenomenology* is the "Dialectic of Master and Slave." In it, Hegel shows that, insofar as the Master cannot be Master without the Slave, the Slave is master of the Master, and the Master a slave to his dependence on the Slave. The Slave is master of the Master because the Master cannot be master without him. Hegel is here depicting a dialectical role reversal. Hegel certainly is onto something here, but he misses something, too. As psychologically sound as his analysis is, the power relationships remain, and the slave can be flogged by the master, but not the master by the slave.

Hegel's rather forbidding technical terms *Being-in-itself* and *Being-for-itself* have resonated down the years and played an important role in European intellectual history. Being-in-itself is thingness, the way of being of a rock or stone: solid, stolid, self-identical, and not self-aware. According to Hegel, Being-in-itself exists for Being-for-itself. Being-for-itself is self-awareness; it is consciousness of Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself. That is, it is self-conscious. For Hegel, self-consciousness is not something added to consciousness but is intrinsic to Being-for-itself. To be conscious is to be self-conscious. Of course, this is but another version of the distinction between mind and matter; however, in Hegel, the distinction is given a new twist. First, both are aspects of Being. Although Hegel does not say so, this is reminiscent of Spinoza's one Substance, which he calls Nature or God, which is the cause of itself (Hegel's Being) and which has infinite attributes, only two of which, extension and thought, are known to us. Hegel was indeed influenced by Spinoza, yet his understanding is different. Being-in-itself is characterized more by solidity and self-identity than by extension, and Being-for-itself is characterized more by self-reflectedness than by thought. The self-consciousness of Being-in-itself is a uniquely Hegelian

contribution, as is his description of what happens when a Being-for-itself meets another Being-for-itself, each trying to reduce the other to a Being-in-itself, a thing that is the object of the reducer's consciousness. Hence, conflict is inevitable, indeed ontological (i.e., built into the structure of Being). For Hegel, Being differentiates itself into Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself, but a reintegration is then possible to create Being-in-itself-for-itself. Hegel does this by assimilating Being into thought. In his system, self-consciousness (Being-for-itself) includes consciousness of inanimate, un-self-aware Nature (Being-in-itself)-Self-consciousness comes in gradations from the inchoate to the fully self-aware. In fact, Hegel believes that the achievement of full self-consciousness is the task of philosophy. He views his own philosophy as the culmination of human thought in which Being becomes conscious of itself. Hence, he concludes that "Thought and Being are One," moving from Spinoza's pantheistic monism to philosophical idealism, the belief that thought is the ultimate reality.

Hegel states that "Spirit is the Idea which has returned to *itself* from *otherness* and *self estrangement* from a state of being not itself." Although couched in rather forbidding language, this is an extremely important notion. Hegel is describing what psychoanalysts call *projective identification*: the projecting outward of an aspect of self, which is either unacceptable or in need of protection from some other aspect of self, that is then identified with and reintegrated. Thus, in part, the self becomes the self by passing through otherness and self-estrangement before returning to itself.

Furthermore, Hegel sees that development (of the spirit or of the self) is a process of differentiation and integration. What starts as an undifferentiated matrix (pure Being, the neonate) undergoes differentiation in the process of becoming, and in turn integrates that into which it has differentiated through projection, action, and creation, reclaiming it and making it part of its internal structure. The integration is once again unitary, a plenum, but no longer without internal structure. The product of integration is in turn differentiated, and the products of that differentiation are in turn reintegrated, in an ongoing process terminated only by death. This is the dialectic at work as self or, better yet, the self as dialectical process. In that process the self is continuously *Aufgehoben*: destroyed, preserved, and transmuted.

According to Hegel, the ego (the I or self) is Being-for-itself; that is. Being conscious not only of objects but of itself. I as subject can have myself as object. Therefore, I am for myself, but a stone is not for

itself—it is only for me; that is, its being is a Being-for-others. In philosophy I realize that others can only have being, for me, as objects of my subjectivity (my consciousness). Consciousnesses are in conflict with each other. It seems that another can only be an object (in itself) for me, but this seems to contradict what Hegel says about empathy, the understanding of art works, philosophical systems, and historical periods by entering into their points of view.

Hegel believes that in philosophy the Spirit sees the world as a manifestation of Thought, that is, of itself. The world is only an aspect of self. Thought's object, the world, is identical with the self as subject. Subject and Object are identical. Philosophy is finally a union of subjectivity and objectivity, and the Idea returns to itself. A psychoanalyst would see evidence of infantile grandiosity, a belief in the omniscience of thoughts, and a failure to complete the developmental tasks of separation-individualization (differentiation) in this equation of Thought and Being. It is almost as if after brilliantly enacting the developmental processes of differentiation and integration and the psychological mechanism of projective identification and projecting them onto the Absolute, Hegel regressed to predifferentiation, to symbiosis, in his various attempts to reconcile conflict in a higher synthesis.

In addition to the self as developmental, evolutionary, and conflictual, Hegel emphasizes the activity of the self and the self's coming to self-consciousness through that activity. In consciousness, I am aware of the object that is not the self, but in self-consciousness the mind's object is itself. The activity of the mind is the realization of the self. I gain a sense of self *when I feel that I act*. For Hegel, the philosophical idealist, that action is thought, but it need not be. So now the self is the feeling of volition, most powerfully felt in thought, that accompanies the dialectic of conflict, differentiation, and integration that constitutes both spirit and self. This Hegelian self is a far richer and less abstract self than the selves of Descartes, Hume, Locke, and Kant.

Hegel's most consequential disciple was Karl Marx. Marx was certainly not an uncritical disciple. On the contrary, he turns the dialectic on its head and makes human productivity and human labor and its products the material basis of existence, the ultimate reality. For Marx, it is that material base that undergoes the dialectical transformation that constitutes human history. Marx is a philosophical immanentist (one who believes that all value and meaning comes from human activity) in a much more profound and consistent way than Hegel. For Marx, there is no meaning or significance apart from

human relations and human action, which he calls *praxis*, impacting on and transforming nature—no Absolute, no Spirit made self-conscious. For Marx, Hegel's concrete universals—art, religion, law, constitutions, the state, and philosophy—are epiphenomena of man's material and economic conditions. Marx is out to demystify Hegel's System and to undercut its politically conservative and reactionary implications.

Marx is an extremely complex, often obscure, thinker, who is economist, social critic, philosopher, and prophet rolled into one. For our purposes, I want only to highlight one concept he took from Hegel and developed in a new way. That is the concept of alienation. Hegel spoke of Spirit alienated from itself. Marx spoke of men being alienated from themselves by social forces that take the fruits of their labor away from them and turn the products of that labor into commodities controlled by other men. What Marx is saying about the self is that the self does not exist in isolation, but only as a part of a family, a social class, and a society at a given level of development, both technologically and in terms of the organization of production. In the present stage of that development, which he called capitalism, alienation is inevitable. Following Hegel, Marx sees the self producing concrete universals—goods, services, and cultural products—that are the objectification of that self. Ideally, that objectification, those cultural and economic products, would be reintegrated, used by the selves that produced them, and their labor would not be alienated. But that is not what happens in the present stage of development of the means of production. On the contrary, labor is alienated and self is stripped of its own manifestations. The products of that labor take on a life of their own in opposition to their creators, and man is caught up in what Edmund Wilson (1940/1972, p. 340) calls “the dance of the commodities.” Under such conditions, the self cannot be unitary or integrated, and deformation of the self is intrinsic to living under such conditions. For Marx, both worker (proletarian) and owner (capitalist) are rendered less than human by their mutual relations. Each is deformed, distorted, and left insecure and incomplete because the reintegration of self objectified is not possible. Further, the proletariat and the capitalist class, who stand in relation of thesis and antithesis, are in irreconcilable conflict. According to Marx, the contradictions inherent in capitalism must lead to its destruction. Once again, conflict comes to the fore as constitutive of self: conflict both within the alienated self and between selves that are alienated and the selves who alienate them.

For our purposes, Marx's contribution is to emphasize, as none of our previous thinkers about self have done, that the self always exists in a social context. There are no selves solipsistically thinking, nor

are there selves synthesizing themselves in isolation, nor are there Transcendental Egos accompanying each act of thinking apart from the social relations that define them. Marx's self is much less abstract. It is always determinate of and determined by social reality. There are no selves that are not members of communities and of social classes, and that membership importantly determines the nature of those selves. At present, the self is not only determined by its social (class) relations and its relations to the means of production, it is alienated a priori by those social (class) relations. According to Marx, there is no self apart from its social relations and there is no self that is not alienated from itself, that is, not torn by the asymmetry of the distribution of power and wealth. Marx thinks that he is being descriptive, not prescriptive, here, but that is not so. He is making a normative statement about what self should be and thereby introduces the notion that self can be healthy (not alienated) or sick (alienated), and he implicitly makes the value judgment that the alienated self is pathological. We have come a long way from Descartes's self as lone cogitator to Marx's self that has no existence apart from its social relations and its relationships to products generated by its transformation of nature through labor.