

I. Definitions in Marx (AND LENIN)

- The Bourgeoisie: the class (and classes are usually defined in Marx by their relation “over against” an opposing class) that owns the “means of production” of life. All other classes are reduced to “proletarians,” meaning that at least over time any individual means they might have to produce and sustain their own lives is wrested from them, so that they become utterly dependent upon a wage, which they can only get insofar as they produce more capital.
- “Means of Production”: Anything that is used to produce material / intellectual things in the world. Typically Marx refers to heavy industry, but the publishing industries also fit in, and in principle so does *anything* used to alter the physical form of the world and the patterns of life within it. “Means of production” produce *necessities for life*, although in Capitalism of course production quickly expands to include and ultimately to produce new (often frivolous) wants.
- The Proletariat: the class of people who because they have no “means of production” of the necessities of life themselves are forced to work for a wage. They can live only by a wage, and they can get the wage only if they increase capital. Thus the productive activity of the proletariat is systematically turned against itself: the harder it works, the stronger capital is, and the greater their subjugation.
- Mode of Production: the overall pattern or system by which products are made—beginning with the production of what fulfills the “necessities of life.” Modes of production vary through time. On the coarsest scale, Marx tends to delineate the “ancient,” the “feudal,” and the “bourgeoisie” epochs of production... In the last of these epochs, our own, the world is radically transformed. A “world market” is created with colonialism... the whole world is compelled into this mode of production. A global interdependence comes into being.
- “Forces of Production”/“Instruments of Production”: the elements that are deployed in a particular constellation within a mode of production. Typically Marx refers to hardware—infrastructure and machines—as forces of production (and mostly in the Manifesto these are “instruments of production,” which I take to be equivalent). But he also considers labor a “force of production,” as well as capital itself.
- “Relations of Production” (social pattern): the set of social relationships, especially including hierarchical systems of subordination, typical of some mode of production. Thus in the feudal era there are lords, vassals... and serfs... In the bourgeois epoch, increasingly millionaires (and billionaires), their managing class, and the regular old workers.
- Capital: concentrated/accumulated value, cycling through a circuit where it is invested in the production of a commodity (in our world, often services or experiences), the commodities are sold, the profit pocketed but then put right back into this cycle of accumulation. Capital thus has two bases. Base #1, the origin of surplus value (which accumulated is capital itself), is the wage relation. Base #2 is the circulation without which capital cannot complete its “valorization”—its accumulation of further value. The “general formula” for capital is “M-C-M’”, where “M’” (“m-prime”) = $M + \Delta M$ (Money + the difference in money after circulation—intended to be greater than M). Marx contrasts this to the sort of circulation typical of non-capitalist producers, for example a small farmer. That “circuit” = C-M-C. In this latter case one starts with a commodity (grain etc), sells it at market for money, then uses that money to acquire other needed commodities. Marx considers this circuit at least somewhat “self-limiting”—you only need certain things, and eventually there’s no room left to accumulate commodities. But the former circuit, that of capital: M-C-M’, is fundamentally unlimited. Here one starts with (accumulated) money, invests it in the production, distribution and sale of some

commodities, and receives back a greater amount of money, the primary purpose of which is for investment. There is no limit to the degree of accumulation of capital. Capital thus tends to an extreme (and only revolution can stop it).

- The State (Lenin): "A centralized organization of violence"; "a special repressive force"; "a special organization of force, separate from society"; instrument for the oppression of one class by another, which "creates an order" establishing legalized/perpetuated oppression. A key opposition regarding the state, from the revolutionary perspective, is whether the state ought to be "seized" and used "by the masses against their former oppressors," or whether this would simply yield a new oppressor, such that the state ought to be "smashed," not seized—in order for some *other* form of power to emerge (popular power).

II. Definitions / **Conceptions of Power** in Marx (and Lenin)

- Class power: "Ruling Class" = owners of means of production. As owners of the means of production of life, in a situation where the mass has no access to means for sustaining its own life, these owners are structurally positioned so as to exploit the (proletariat.) But this is not only a potentiality, a capacity for corruption—it's an ongoing necessity. Owners of the means of production *do* systematically exploit the working class. That's how their structural superiority is maintained/augmented.
- Inheritance Rights=power of sustaining structural inequality across generations.
- "State Power": state as tool for ruling class. The Marxist theory is that the State (Althusser will refer more specifically to the "state apparatus") is systematically controlled by the ruling class. The state might on occasion operate opposed to the interests of one or another capitalist, but it always acts *for* the *general* interest of the class of capitalists as a whole. The preliminary goal of Marxist-Leninist revolution is the seizure of state power. One preliminary goal of anarchist revolution is the destruction of state power.
- (→State as Totalitarian in [State] "Communism") The world Marx envisions as a substitute/overcoming of Capitalism ("Communism") has, apparently, an even *more* powerful state than the form of state existing in Capitalism. Everything is centralized under it: transportation, communication, economy, agriculture, etc. This is roughly the system built by Lenin and Stalin.
- Class War: power within the development of the proletariat→one big union
- Unions disrupt the competition between workers, which interrupts the function of wages, which together with the *circulation of commodities* = the "foundation" of capital itself.
- (So there are two clear targets here for a counter-power: the wage relation, and circulation, and two corresponding strategies: the replacement of solidarity for competition; the interruption of the flows of goods and money.)
- Capital itself is a substantial power. Capital is the capacity for production, provided there exists a body of impoverished workers and an infrastructure for circulation. Capital is also of course capacity for any of a number of other things—bribery, luxury, physical mobility, campaign contributions, etc. You can also talk about *Capitalism* as a power, which remakes the whole world, revolutionizing everything—ways of life, religious conceptions, popular opinions, etc.—everything *except* the bourgeois property relation, (that individual capitalists control capital), without which capitalism according to Marx will pivot or topple into communism (for which capitalism has built the infrastructure with its webs of global interdependence).
- Labor Power/Productive Power. It's labor, in intimate combination with machinery, that produces both use values and exchange values. It's labor that builds the world. Capital seizes and manipulates labor for its own purposes, but labor itself remains a distinct

entity. The basic power of production is that it *imposes form upon matter* (according to a plan). In other classes I've therefore referred to this as *formative power*. The “anarcho-syndicalist” model rests on the idea of re-purposing labor to build alternative, non-capitalist networks *underneath* the existing capitalist ones.

III. History / Development of the Bourgeoisie

- Bourgeois come to power through the two hundred years before the American and French Revolutions, and fully seize power in those revolutions
- Through this time the "mode of production" was changing radically, while political and legal structure, including key laws/practices about *property* stayed the same. These revolutions pushed the feudal ruling class out of power and replaced them with rich merchants.
- Over time middle/upper middle class individual capitalists give way to millionaires
- Industry develops... communications and transport develop... (Marx does believe that competition in capitalism drives innovation)
- The world gets globalized
- *The bourgeoisie are a new and strange class of rulers, because their rule depends on the perpetual *innovation* of the base, not on its conservative preservation. They want perpetual revolution technologically, economically, and in terms of social relations, with the exception that they are conservative in terms of ownership (*their* class must stay the one that is in control of the capital and hence of the processes of production and the arrangement of everyday life for others).
- But the Bourgeoisie is also developing its own executioner: the proletariat, which will use the globalized system to destroy the bourgeoisie

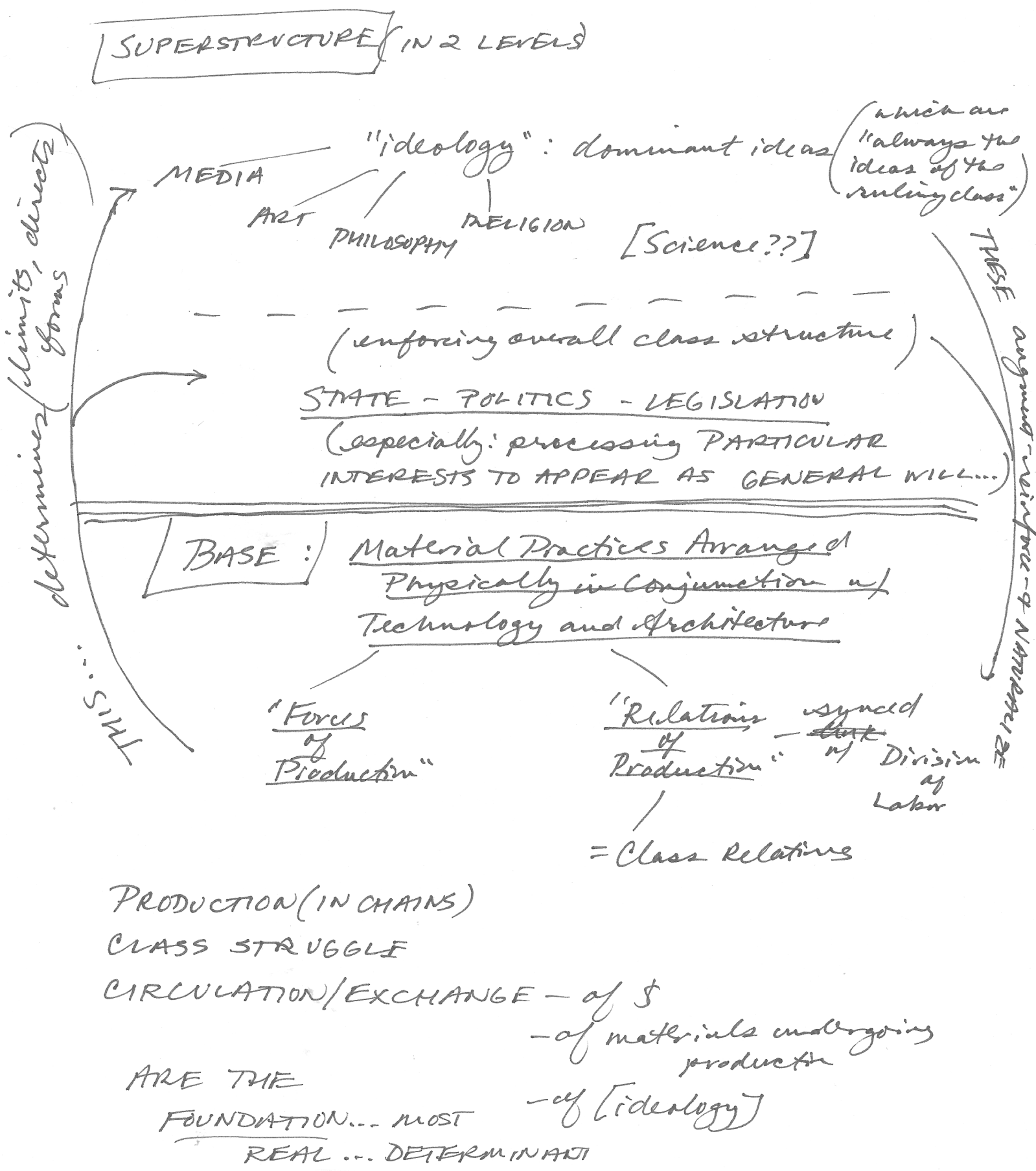
IV. Theory of Ideology

- **The "Base and the Superstructure":**
- A “materialist” theory. Refer to nothing beyond perceptibility—keep your eyes on the earth and the physical practices here. Specifically, be attentive to *what work people do all day, and how, and where, and for whose benefit*.
- BASE: production, exchange, and consumption, including physical labor, machinery of production, networks of communication like railroads and telegraphs, but also the very layout of space (all these together = “forces of production”), and more, social relations, corresponding with ownership (and producing “classes”), phasing in and out of sync with technological developments... all these relations = “relations of production.” ** Marxist theory often suggests that revolutions stem from different rates of change between the forces and the relations of production.
- SUPERSTRUCTURE: 2 tiers: law and politics (which reflect and facilitate existing structures of production and control); ideas—philosophical, religious, moral, artistic; opinions, thoughts,* common sense
- What CAUSES e.g. revolutions is NOT ideas. It’s changes in the modes of production and exchange, together with class conflict (that is, social differences regarding which changes are desirable.)
- **The "retroactive action" of the superstructure upon the base**
- (Ideas etc. do have a role in keeping people obedient and at work, or moving them to revolt).
- The superstructure in general, but particularly the upper tier (philosophy... common sense) are technically referred to as “ideology.” For Marxists, ideology “veils” the base, so that typically people don’t think about it, don’t question it, and hence don’t change it. More specifically, ideology *functions* to make what is actual seem like all that is possible,

and the truly possible seem outlandish and fantastic. Common sense thus tends to say: “hey, this is how it is—it has to be this way—there’s no other way—nothing else works—resistance is not only futile, it’s delusional... Only idiots resist.”

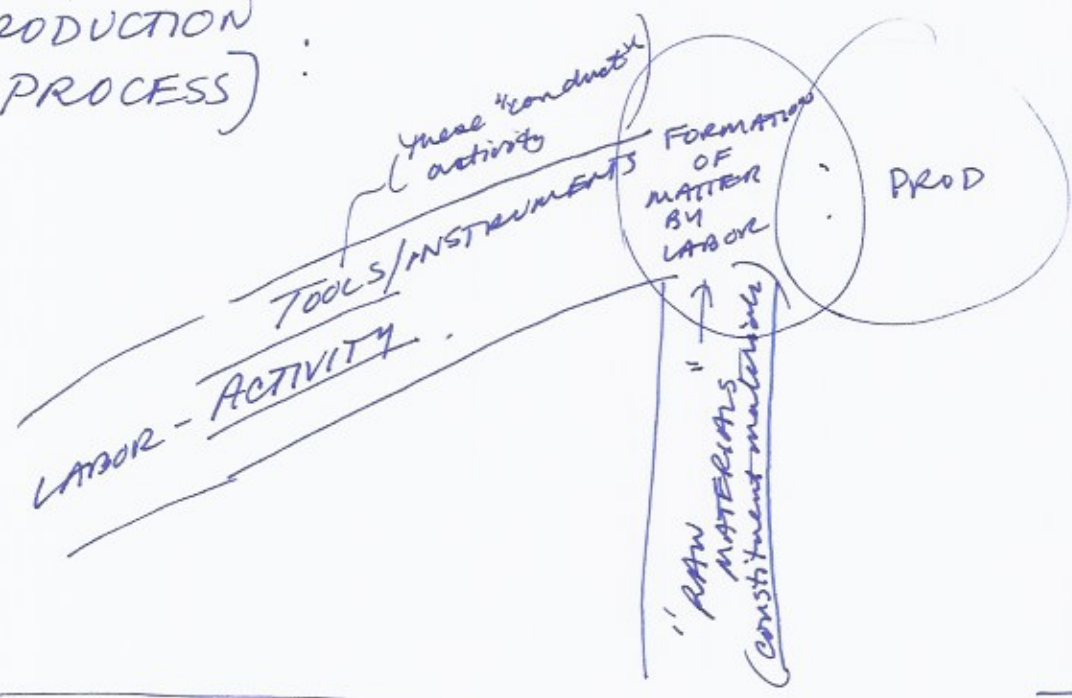
- Marx claimed that the superstructure is always dominated by the dominating class, because they control (most of) the means of production, **including the means of the production and distribution of words and images.*

THE MARXIST (ALTHUSSERIAN) MODEL OF BASE (INFRASTRUCTURE) + SUPERSTRUCTURE

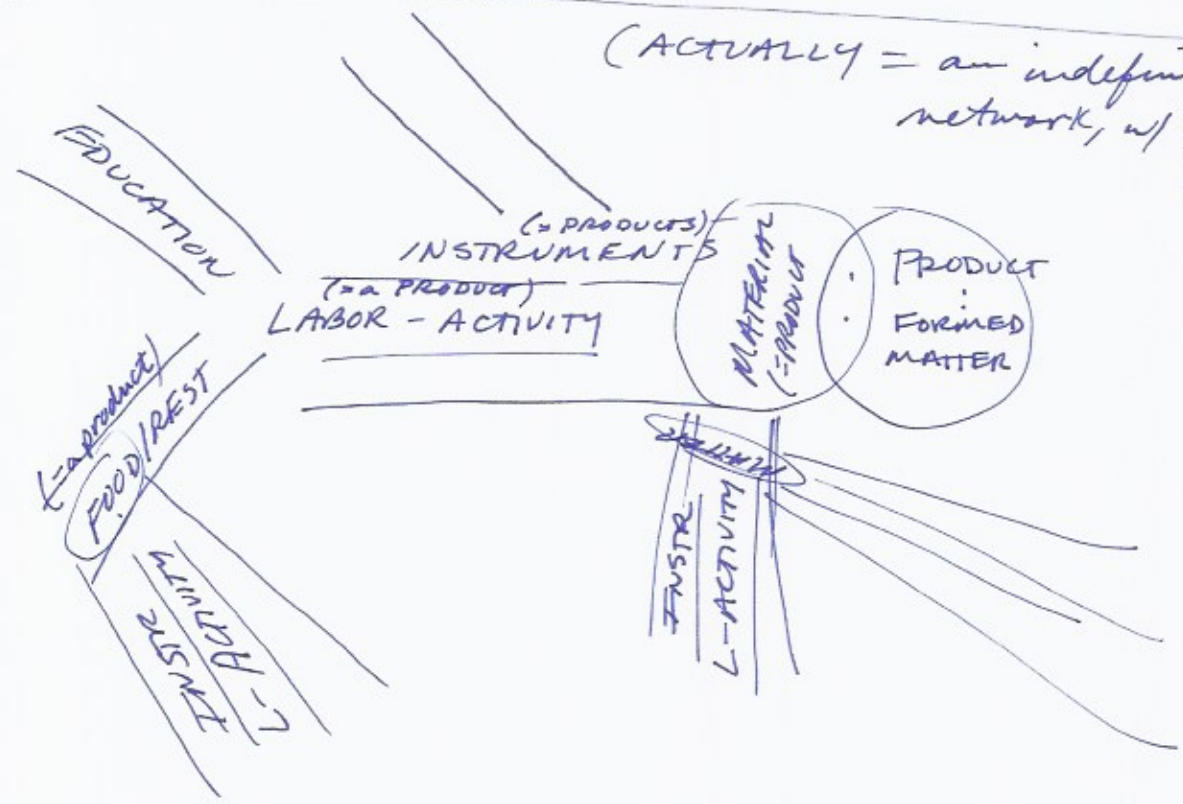


~~ARISTOTELIAN CAUSES~~

MARX:
[PRODUCTION
PROCESS]:

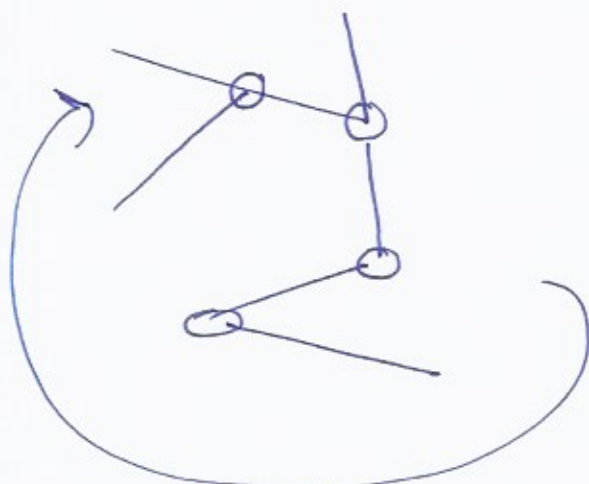


(ACTUALLY = an indefinitely-deep network, w/ POROUS CONTOURS)



(NON-ACCUMULATING /
NON AUGMENTING)

CIRCUIT(S) OF
LABOR (& MATTER)



Flows of (INSTRUMENT-CHANNELED) ^(human) LIFE
FORM-GIVING ACTIVITY
(efficient-formal CAUSALITY)

merging w/
Flows of
MATERIAL

(Flows of)
FURTHER
PRODUCTS/
MATERIAL

merging w/

(Flows of)
FORM-GIVING
ACTIVITY (LIFE)

terminal products
("consumables") - BUT
WAIT

these
merge w/

LIFE...
to produce/reproduce
LABOR (FORM-
GIVING ACTIVITY)

REPEATING CYCLES

(reproductive / static)
CIRCUIT
OF
LABOR

(you work, but
you get
nowhere.)

WHO'S THE AGENT HERE?

ACTIVITY

PROD

MKT

X-VAL (\$) :=

cost to reproduce

laborer

offspring

(+ bonus for the
history of labor
struggles)

(AMPLIFYING)
CIRCUIT
OF
CAPITAL

(= \angle Product
Sale)

\$ CAPITAL
Grows
(by nature
tendency)

\$ in

\$ out
("profit")

\$ out

Raw Mat

SPACE

Instruments

LABOR (wages)

(but - keep
labor @ work
as long as
possible)

PROD

MKT

(you don't
work, but
you get
rich.)

WHO'S / WHAT'S THE
AGENT HERE?

V. Marx's Plan

- We'll see this worked out in more practical detail with Lenin, but the basic idea is to
- Ally for the time being with any revolutionary faction (where strategically viable_
- Eventually, seize "political" power... probably by means of a violent takeover of the state
- One way or the other, the initial goal is control over the state apparatus
- With this in hand, large-scale expropriation of property can begin
- *this is where stuff gets difficult for me:*
- Centralize all instruments of production in the state
- Centralize all credit, banking, communication, transportation in the state
- Improve the means of production rapidly and radically
- Redistribute the population according to a production scheme