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Identity As Developed Through Self-Actualization and Material Rendering

by Hard Working Netizen

I am nonbinary. I expect that this will be the only time I reference a denoted label that establishes what constitutes my sense of bodily-self while writing under this moniker in this publication. Identity, in this month of Pride, is an opportunity for reflection on the process of self-actualization. There is a common and fundamental misunderstanding about this process, which should be dispelled even if you are unfamiliar with the term 'self-actualization'; it is not something that you have to decide or come into once in some grand, total finality. It is an explorative process that can be ongoing and ever-changing, and thus makes itself a direct contradiction to what Capitalism 'offers' the working class: your time must be converted into surplus-value, used to aid the profit-motives of the ruling few, or you die.

The time to truly live, and the space needed to explore one's self, is heavily restricted and discouraged because it is a preventative mechanism utilized by capitalism. Adhering to concepts such as the gender-binary simplifies marketing strategies, and reinforces strict 'definitions' and patriarchal role expectations. If a person ever has the means to question this concept, along with the time to reflect and reckon with how it applies to them, an opening is created to question who established those 'norms' – and for what purpose. To stamp this revolutionary opportunity out as quickly as possible, institutions such as schools and media (as formulated within a bourgeois grounding) reproduce binary gender norms early in life – long before many people have the space to question them. This has to be countered because education should be where exploration is encouraged; to learn about one's self and the material world they exist within.

"To build socialism, there must be socialists."
- Ho Chi Minh, 1960, Complete Volume, Vol. 12

"I think it's time to kill for our women
Time to heal our women, be real to our women
And if we don't, we'll have a race of babies
That will hate the ladies that make the babies"
- Tupac Shakur, Daryl Anderson, Roger Troutman and Stan Vincent 1992
2Pac, Keep Ya Head Up, Strictly 4 My N.I.G.G.A.Z

Reflection and Self-Actualization

Hegel first presented the dialectic "between Essence and immediate Being" as reflection.[1] Essence and Being in the Hegelian definition are subjects for another time, but the contradiction which reflection manifests is one of observing the outer material world we exist in, and the awareness of ourselves existing as material within that world. Marxists apply the materialist understanding to this contradiction as how we render our thoughts on these observations—produced by a material brain through biological reflection—back onto the world.[2]

"Reflection: The re-creation of features of one form of matter in a different form of matter which occurs when they mutually impact each other through interaction."
-Curriculum of the Basic Principles of Marxism-Leninism, Part 1: Dialectical Materialism, Translation by Luna Nguyen

"In inorganic nature, reflection is the process of things reproducing, under the influence of other things, as traces or imprints of the things exercising that influence. In organic nature, reflection is an active process, such as in the adaptation of animals to their environment or the irritability of plants and other organisms. The idea of reflection for the materialist is that mental images correspond with the material world as the source of those images. For dialectics, Reflection refers specifically to the 'recognition' of quantities and qualities in terms of notions which have already been acquired through past experience and thought."
-Encyclopedia of Marxism, Marxists Internet Archive

Applying these thoughts back unto the world includes ourselves; a person observes the world, and traces and imprints from past experiences begin to shape how that person materially renders unto the world. A persona develops and self-actualization occurs as that persona is applied to new interactions, which themselves become past experiences that shape the existing and later personas. I will write further on 'later personas' in this text, but for now that phrasing helps to highlight that personas come and go, and stresses the position that self-actualization is a continuous process.

Self-actualization as a principle is attributed to the work of Kurt Goldstein and Abraham Maslow, but that current presents it within idealist finality, the peak of human needs in which one's potential is 'fully' realized. An appropriate criticism of Maslow's formulation of the concept in his theory is how it backs the Western focus on individualism. A healthier formulation would focus on what conditions allow a person to grow comfortable with themselves and others around them. They can actualize a definition of their self through a persona, while acknowledging that it isn't something they will be forever chained to. When that kind of comfortability becomes the social norm, self-actualization as a principle can be applied to social engagement, developing a welcoming culture and a superstructure that invites and celebrates a natural diversity of personas.

The recognition that current conditions need to be changed to allow the development of this kind of superstructure means that, in the process of that revolutionary kind of change being undertaken, the people enacting and aiding in that change must learn both how to be open to criticism and how to speak to their position with confidence.

Reckoning and Self-Criticism

'Reckoning' will require some explaining, as it is a concept that I can say has grounding in materialist dialectics, but that remains an idealist hope until it finds footing in the field. It finds its etymological roots from the Greek λογίζομαι:

1. to count, reckon
2. to calculate, compute (in mathematics)
3. to consider, ponder, take into account
4. to count on, expect
5. to think, believe

For the purposes of this writing, treat this definition as a proposal:

Reckoning: The process of calculating potentiality of outcomes, either reactive in the short-term or layered by planning for the long-term. For the materialist, the mental stimuli initially produced via reflection are used to produce 'original' (or imagined) mental stimuli. While not directly from the material world, these stimuli are still sourced from past experience obtained from it. For dialectics, the recognition previously obtained is used to weigh the worth of the calculation; these imagined notions produced are compared against 'organic' mental stimuli obtained by biological reflection.

In addition to this definition, I am proposing a measure called a 'reckoning rate', which in a quick summary is how quickly a person calculates a synthesis between a thesis and its antithesis. With that in mind, it must be made clear that this does not mean that being 'quick on your feet' to come up with 'an answer' to a contradiction, or a fast reckoning rate, corresponds to a high quality synthesis being produced. When a person takes the content and notions of theories to produce a theory, every theory involved still needs to be tested by being put into practice.

Every day we are faced with and make decisions, often without conscious awareness that a choice exists. A persona developed through self-actualization has to contend with the material world it is engaging with. The persona and the material world may be critical of one-another. How a person 'sleeps at night', so to speak, is made of the results of calculations being applied to new calculations. If nothing confronts an individual's axioms, there's not much that needs to be reconsidered, or recalculated, or reckoned with. If one is not willing to challenge the notion of who they are, how can they become willing to challenge current conditions? This is why self-criticism is a critical methodology to be aware of and put into practice.[3]

"A political party's attitude towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it fulfills in practice its obligations towards its class and the working people. Frankly acknowledging a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analyzing the conditions that have led up to it, and thrashing out the means of its rectification—that is the hallmark of a serious party; that is how it should perform its duties, and how it should educate and train its class, and then the masses."
- Vladimir Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism: an Infantile Disorder

To individualize this from the organizational application, it is important to note that often this methodology renders within a person as a lingering focus on previous experiences perceived as mistakes or failures. To utilize it in a healthy and progressive manner, the focus should instead be on holding themselves to task; how did an action live up to the values and principles imbued by your persona? What theorems were you applying to your action, and why? If the outcome wasn't the expected result you had calculated, have you determined why? How does this new understanding settle with your previous notions?

Are you going to rest on your laurels or acknowledge that a change in the self might be needed? Do you feel like an outsider to the norms of your assigned gender? Do you feel like one to the notion of 'gender', the interplay of sexuality [asexual btw], and the roles the current superstructure imposes definitions upon for the sake of their bourgeois project? Seven question marks later, I wish to transition[4] to an established 'end point' of materialist dialectics and another proposal to the field. In this, I will make good on explaining the concept of how personas can become 'previous', and how contrasting 'totalities' in this process can be a healthy part of rendering oneself in this material universe.

"You've become art, how could they even start to see
Beyond your presentation when they've got no imagination?"
- Liz Lehman, The Scary Jokes, Icicles, April Fools

Reasoning and Self-Obliteration

Feuerbach was correct in his notion of love, as the consideration for how one will act (and with what spirit of intention) must come from a positive source of appreciation. What gives them euphoria and contentment - but this is also why Marx and Engels criticized Feuerbach. That appreciation has to extend outwards, and be made material by applied and proactive practice. Idealists and vulgar materialists underplay the act of reasoning, of acknowledging material conditions and the need for change to occur, because they settle with the 'status quo' despite its explorative roots.

"Reasoning: The final phase of rational consciousness, formed on the basis of synthesizing judgments so as to extrapolate new knowledge about the perceived subject."
- Curriculum of the Basic Principles of Marxism-Leninism, Part 1: Dialectical Materialism, Translation by Luna Nguyen

"For Marxists, Reason, or rationality, is the objective form of processes of social action... Reason is the objectively necessary content of our practical activity which we have internalized in a mental, subjective form."
- Encyclopedia of Marxism, Marxists Internet Archive

CONTINUED ON BACK

I Don't Want To Set The World On Fire

by ozhaawashko animikiinini

I just want to start a flame in your heart

I'm going to reach you

all I need to do is reach you

and it's over

and we can finally get to work building the kind of strength it will take to rip down our oppressors and sing life again

but there's so much in the way. entire industries fighting to take up every scrap of your attention they can get their grubby paws on. "the attention economy".

you're listening to a congressional hearing. Pam Bondi or some shit like that. and a woman from the public is given her five minutes to address the chamber. she talks about her struggle to see anyone held accountable (or even investigated in the first place) for their connections to Jeffrey Epstein. she talks about getting stonewalled by the justice department. she names specific people and organizations that have the power to do something and are choosing not to.

and in the time it takes to look up her name and start connecting this voice in your head to other context, you've already forgotten the bulk of what she actually said. it wasn't even a long statement. your brain is just that fucking fried from constantly being pulled in every direction at once. mine too.

—

In my heart I have but one Desire, and that one is you

I'm going to reach you

all I need to do is reach you

but why is there all of this shit in the way so much of the goddamn always?

There has been a fire in my heart for you since we were kids. And maybe it was pushed aside for a while. And maybe I fucking grieved it. And hated myself for ever losing grip of it. But the fire has always been there. And I still want you, no matter your worst fuck-ups.

I want to crawl inside your chest, curl up and start making a nest there. I want to stoke a flame there, roaring to match the one I have for you. I'll build such a fire in you that it wakes up parts of you that you didn't even know were there. ancient codes. the kind of shit Europeans spent centuries trying to beat out of each other long before they ever extended their grip to the rest of the world.

I want the fire I build in you to burn so hot and steady that it blows down everything that would get in our way. I want to pour through your head like a waterfall. And rip out every brainworm that's ever made you feel shame, or the fear of not being enough. I want to grind those worms in my fucking teeth. We don't need that shit where we're going.

Communism means being as loud and as gay as possible. And if we don't have communism yet it's because we're not being loud and/or gay enough yet. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Excerpts from Lavender and Red

by Leslie Feinberg

The outbreak of World War I derailed the thrust of the movements for sexual and gender emancipation and for women's rights in Germany. ... In each of the capitalist countries, the bosses appealed to the workers to unite behind them in battle. ... Going along with this right-wing, murderous patriotism put the brake on every social movement - gay, trans and lesbian, women's rights, workers' and socialist struggles - because it gave the ruling class the upper hand, strengthened the right wing and set back the progressive movement.

... But World War I contributed to making the monumental Russian Revolution a necessity. It was not military defeat on the battlefield, but revolutions in Russia and Germany, that brought World War I to an end.

Socialist revolutions strike down anti-LGBTQ+ bigotry

Eight weeks after the October 1917 Russian Revolution - which brought the Soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers to power - the new government led by Lenin abolished czarist antigay laws, which were similar to the German Paragraph 175. This went hand-in-hand with guaranteeing the rights of workers, land for the peasants and equal rights for women. ... The left wing of the Russian revolutionary movement did more than just strip the antigay laws from the Russian penal code. The Bolsheviks argued that walls separating same-sex love from the rest of human sexuality should be torn down. ...

The fresh winds of the Russian Revolution filled the sails of struggle in other parts of the world, including Germany. In 1918 mutiny broke out in the German Navy. Workers throughout the country went on strike in support. On Nov. 7, a council of workers, soldiers and peasants established the Republic of Bavaria. The revolutionary wave spread to Berlin, where a socialist republic was proclaimed Nov. 9. The kaiser abdicated the next day.

Hirschfeld: queer socialist, internationalist

The revolution gave the Homosexual Emancipation Movement [in Germany] new energy and lent inspiration to the lesbian and gay movement's hope that their liberation was on the horizon. . . .

Magnus Hirschfeld, a leader of the Homosexual Emancipation Movement, along with members of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, supported the new republic. "We took the most active part in all the revolutionary events," reported the Committee.

Hirschfeld spoke at a Berlin mass rally on Nov. 10 at the height of the revolution. Between 3,000 to 4,000 people gathered in front of the Reichstag building, near where revolutionary Red Guards were fighting pitched battles with reactionary officers who supported the kaiser.

Recalling Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Wilhelm Liebknecht and other revolutionaries, Hirschfeld said, not only in Germany "but elsewhere, nationalism attempts to destroy internationalism, and militarism attempts to destroy socialism."

Hirschfeld stressed why socialism was so important: "Socialism means solidarity, community, mutuality, further development of society into a unified body of people. Each for all and all for each!"

He said, "We want the community of peoples, struggle against racism and national chauvinism, removal of limitations on economic and personal communication between peoples, the right of peoples to self-determination regarding their relationship to a state and their form of government."

The greatest LGBTQ+ library in the world

Historians John Lauritsen and David Thorstad explain that when the [German] revolution broke out, "The Committee immediately sent a delegation to the new government to press for a total amnesty that would include the release from jail of all inmates convicted of homosexual acts.

"The removal of censorship and the greater freedom of the press and speech that ensued, following the revolution, were a boon to the gay rights struggle for a time. But perhaps the most tangible benefit to the gay movement was the acquisition of a building that was to become an international center for gay liberation and sex research. ..."

The first of its kind, [Hirschfeld's Institute of Sexual Science] compiled historical, biological, anthropological, statistical and ethnological documentation regarding human sexuality and gender [in a collection of over 20,000 volumes. The institute is credited with being one of the first medical facilities in the world to provide gender-affirmation surgeries for trans people.]

Fascism burns books, targets LGBTQ+ people

At the same time the German counterrevolution - headed by Hitler and bankrolled and backed by a segment of the industrial and banking class - had obtained a base in the middle class.

This fascism targeted the gay/trans/lesbian and women's rights movements, even before anti-Jewish and anti-gay laws, codified in 1933-35, officially marked the unleashing of the widespread campaign of terror.

Hirschfeld was targeted by the Nazis because he was Jewish and gay, as well as a movement leader and socialist. ... On May 6, 1933, fascist youth were organized to march on his Institute for Sexual Science, accompanied by a brass band. They trashed the international archive, making a mountain of the many thousands of books, journals, photographs and charts - at that time the largest collection [on sexuality and gender] in world history. Storm troopers showed up and took over the ransacking. Four days later, the enormous heap of archive materials was publicly burned in Opera Square. ...

After 1933 the Nazis forcibly dismantled all independent youth organizations, even the Catholic ones, by denouncing their leaders as "homosexual degenerates." ... A harsh new antigay edict issued in 1935, Paragraph 175A, criminalized kisses, embraces, even homosexual fantasies. The law gave the fascist state license to carry out arrests and internment in camps with impunity. . . . Although laws against lesbianism had not been codified, women were snared in the state web, rounded up in SS raids on lesbian bars, sentenced and sent to concentration camps where they faced horrific brutality.

Learning from mistakes

Communists and socialists of all sexualities and genders fought the Nazi attacks on the gay/trans/lesbian and women's struggles. Yet, was there backwardness about homosexuality on the part of socialists and communists in the German left? Yes.

"The Left" was [and is] not politically monolithic. ... Like a fast-moving river, political movements are made up of many currents. ...

Revolutionaries must constantly be working to shed centuries of ruling-class indoctrination that serves to divide and conquer the vast laboring class. Every form of bigotry and backwardness holds back unity and progress in a revolutionary struggle of all sexualities, genders and sexes to abolish capitalism and liberate humanity.

Error vs. ideology

There is a profound difference, however, between political error and political ideology. [In 1928] lawyer Felix Halle ... provided this formulation of the German Communist Party's stance:

"The class-conscious proletariat, uninfluenced by the ideology of property and freed from the ideology of the churches, approaches the question of sex life and also the problem of homosexuality with a lack of prejudice afforded by an understanding of the overall social structure. . . . In accordance with the scientific insights of modern times, the proletariat regards these relations as a special form of sexual gratification and demands the same freedom and restrictions for these forms of sex life as for intercourse between the sexes. . . ."

The Nazis deliberately hid the fascist nature of their party by calling themselves "National Socialists." But their response to a poll [of German political parties about their position on Paragraph 175] shows the Nazi program was the opposite of a communist workers' party. The Nazi reply included this succinct sentence: "Anyone who even thinks of homosexual love is our enemy."

Capitalist repression, socialist resistance

By the late 1920s, the fascist movement - with its base in the economically devastated middle class - began to win the backing of a sector of German industrialists and bankers to carry out the dirty job of counterrevolution. State repression of sexuality, gender and sex to enforce the capitalist economic unit of the patriarchal nuclear family was a key plank in the fascist platform.

Nazi campaigns focused on eradicating homosexuality and abortion, mandating procreation and sharply restricting women's rights and role in society, in addition to vicious racism and national chauvinism.

The progressive movements battled the state to decriminalize variance in sexuality and gender. They were trying to free the lives of women of all sexualities and genders, who were tightly corseted by lack of basic social and economic rights.

These modest but vital goals, raised during a period of working-class struggle and capitalist economic depression, made these movements enemies of the Nazis.

CONTINUED FROM IDENTITY AS...

In understanding history, both of the self through experience and social change observed through historical materialism[5], the application of criticism results in a decision being made, and thus applied. Theory into practice resulting in praxis - but a praxis always needs refinement based on obtained experience, and this is where having a self-awareness of one's persona can reckon its worthiness, how it contends with one's values and principles. If a person recognizes via reflection the harmfulness in some habit, behavior or trait, how is that materialized into taking action? To this, I present another draft proposal:

Self-Obliteration: The application of reason to invoke an acknowledgment that change needs to be undertaken, the knowledge and context of why through self-criticism, and making this acknowledgment visible to the material world through practical action.

This is the process by which personas become 'previous'. 'Obliteration' is, understandably, a loaded word that carries the weight of totality. Making the decision to stop doing anything feels like a finality, like something has to be laid to rest. That metaphorical framing internalized within the context of self renders a depressing worldview, a misanthropic and hateful persona, when that sense of totality isn't contrasted by a positive spirit of intention and progressive action. There's little worth in acknowledging something is harmful when maladaptive criticism is going to create additional harm.

Consider this with the experience of gender dysphoria and the pain brought by adhering (or masking) to the standards of a rigid binary-based identity. That dysphoria is examined through reflection, and the methodology of self-criticism results in a euphoria for some, and a reasoning that their current persona is no longer indicative of who they want to be as a person. To whatever extent they then choose to make this overtly visible, it nonetheless is the beginning of a new persona. This is self-actualization, made possible by the openness to contend with a previous persona developed from a prior self-actualization.

Because it is a synthesis, it still carries the history brought by the experiences of the previous persona, but contrasted by a change that is mentally instigated and materially rendered. This is why the notion of obliteration when a person acknowledges they're no longer what they once were (and the context for how that came about) does not, and cannot, be a totality or a finality. They were once some other persona, but they persist in a synthesized form; a persona created through sublation.

Exploration and Material Rendering

For the sake of our world and the well-being of those that dwell within it, we need conditions that allow for and invite exploration. We need new experiences to contrast against previous ones, so that reckoning can be induced and criticism applied with the intent of betterment - in oneself and in our collective conditions. When the necessity of change is left unfilled, we're met with personal and cultural stagnation. Social action to bring change about, theorized and then attempted in practice, is the manifestation of a praxis that has been honed for ongoing change. Someone that conducts themselves with this aim displays the material rendering of a persona educated to understand it.

As the term has been alluded to previously in this text, 'material rendering' as a concept should be thought of as the external display of the internal persona. Self-actualization cannot remain just as thoughts as much as theory cannot be studied without applied practice. This extends to contrasting our current conditions to our notions of how conditions could be, and taking action to attempt to make them so. If they fail to materialize, or do so with apparent contradictions that need to be synthesized, examination and criticism is applied to refine theory.

For dialectical materialists, this loop which results in practice that feeds back to further refinement is how change is made tangible. Thus, desired change does not have to be left as imagined utopias or as an unfulfilled life – it is never too late. The inherent right a person has to live life, to take action to explore and realize themselves—identifying however they want to present themselves and being met with a mutual respect embraced by a culture of diversity—is tied to the development of a disciplined, professional revolutionary. When one labors to make that world possible for others, expressed through their personal values and principles, those actions deserve to be reflected upon with pride.

Have fun out there.

[1] Hegel, Logic, Second Subdivision, VIII. Essence, § 112 1873 (First Edition 1817) – there are other such works, if you wish to examine idealist dialectics.
[2] 1st recommendation: Lenin, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism 1908-1909 for an application of the concept of reflection. If you wish to skip ahead for Lenin's Proof of the Theory of Reflection, refer to Chapter 2.1: The 'Thing-In-Itself,' or V. Chernov Refutes Frederick Engels.
[3] 2nd recommendation: Stalin, Against Vulgarising the Slogan of Self-Criticism 1928 for a further examination of self-criticism and its application within organizations.
*[4] Much like international socialism is a transition to global Communism *rimshot**
[5] 3rd recommendation: Curriculum of the Basic Principles of Marxism-Leninism, Part 2: Historical Materialism

Fuck the Graham Platner "Left"

by ozhaawashko animikinini

fuck your attachment to Whiteness

fuck "a more efficient military"

fuck "he has to appeal to conservatives"

fuck the man who chose his SS totenkopf tattoo "off the wall" (of a Nazi tattoo parlor)

fuck his several tours in the military and fuck even more his private military work, and fuck him for thinking he gets to be proud of it

fuck how easy it is for some to accept that this man is taking accountability for anything

and fuck how quick you are to line up for a little material gain no matter expense to the rest of the world

like if there people voting for him solely out of an attempt to do something, anything more for Palestinians - then so be it

but don't try and tell me this man isn't the fucking Devil, or it'll be a lot harder to trust you when it comes to anything else political

Authors Note: This article was written well before the allegations that finally got his ass to drop out.

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