

The revival of Hegelian Marxism

On Martin Hägglund's *This Life*

Nathan Brown

When a notable philosopher, having established a reputation for rigorous argumentation and scholarship, directs a major new book toward a popular audience, a certain skepticism may be forgiven among those familiar with the earlier work. However welcome an accessible style may be, popular address too often gives way to the *popularisation* of philosophical concepts and problems with results that are seldom adequate to the complexity of their history and significance. The general reader receives a bowdlerisation of conceptual difficulties, while the price of public reception is inconsequence at the level of philosophical intervention, and the demands of legibility offer an excuse for setting aside abstruse debates and technical details.

Martin Hägglund's third book, *This Life: Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom*, may be met with varieties of such skepticism among seasoned readers of Marx, Hegel, Heidegger – and of the traditions from which their work emerges and to which it gives rise. But in fact *This Life* is a rare example philosophical writing that achieves conceptual rigour in the medium of a style open to anyone, regardless of academic training or theoretical persuasion, who wants to think about how life ought to be lived and about what we must do, collectively, to make it livable in common.* First and foremost, this is a book that revives and reconfigures an argument for the unity of Karl Marx's thought across the early and late phases of his career. Hägglund's arguments force a reconsideration of how concepts of freedom and equality traverse and ground Marx's entire oeuvre, as well as a reconsideration of how the critique of *both* religion and capitalism co-determine Marx's theoretical accomplishment. That Hägglund has

been able to carry out this project with such accessible clarity is so unusual as to be disorienting.

Hägglund's book unfolds in two parts: the first articulating a concept of 'secular faith' as a condition of intelligibility for any form of care; the second articulating a concept of 'spiritual freedom' that demands for its actualisation the overcoming of capitalism and the determination of value in terms of socially available free time. The critique of religion in the first half of the book will be broadly familiar to readers of Hägglund's *Radical Atheism* (2008): across three chapters engaging most substantially with C.S. Lewis, Charles Taylor, Sören Kierkegaard, Saint Augustine and Karl Ove Knausgaard, Hägglund argues that the religious orientation of desire toward eternal life – in itself incompatible with care for *this* life – in fact obscures an implicit commitment to a secular form of faith grounding any and all commitments to the projects of finite existence. Defining as religious 'any ideal of being absolved from the pain of loss' (47) (here briefly engaging such philosophical ideals as Spinoza's *beatitudo* and Nietzsche's *amor fati*), Hägglund seeks to show that the condition of intelligibility for the forms of finite care these frameworks also avow is a commitment to the fragility of mortal life incompatible with the religious logic of eternity and dependent upon the ineliminable finitude of time. He thus offers an immanent critique of religious appeals to the primacy of eternal life as grounded upon and inextricable from a more fundamental logic of constitutively finite time, a logic such appeals both disavow and rely upon for their ethics of care. I will return briefly to Hägglund's critique of religion toward the conclusion of this review –

* Martin Hägglund, *This Life: Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2019). 464pp., \$29.95 hb., 978 1 10187 040 2. Subsequent references are given in the text.

to its relation to Hägglund's thinking of value and its consequences for his understanding of the unity of Marx's work. For the most part, however, I will leave readers to their own appraisal of this aspect of the book, focusing my own attention upon its second half, which I view as more theoretically and practically consequential.

Here, Hägglund applies his refined grasp of the existential stakes of temporal finitude to a breathtaking reconstruction of Marx as a thinker of freedom, re-grounding the conceptual priority of time and value within his critique of political economy. Indeed, the reading of Marx pursued in the second half of *This Life* may be the most important revival of Hegelian Marxism since Louis Althusser's critique of that orientation in the 1950s and '60s. In this respect, the book's importance lies in Hägglund's engagement with American readings of Hegel that have transformed the reception of his philosophy since the 1980s, especially those by Robert Pippin and Robert Brandom, which foreground Hegel's thinking of conditions of conceptual intelligibility, discursive normativity and social recognition. However one views these readings of Hegel, it has become necessary to take a position on their intervention. *This Life* is the first book to produce a major reading of Marx from a perspective systematically informed by this work, and to show how our understanding of both Marx and Hegel might be transformed by such an encounter. But to grasp the stakes of this move, we have to further complicate its framework by recognising that Hägglund's contemporary Hegelian Marxism is also saturated by his engagement with Heidegger's existential analytic.

Spiritual and natural freedom

For the most part this engagement with Heidegger is implicit. Heidegger's name appears only twice in the book's endnotes, but the existential analytic is inextricable from Hägglund's understanding of finitude, and it is thus essential to his reading of Marx as a thinker of the relation between freedom and finite time. We must consider how Hägglund's Hegelian reading of Marx is transformed by the passage of Hegel through Heidegger that he performs. We can then consider what sort of *historical materialism* that transformation produces.

We see an implicit synthesis of these philosophical resources in the distinction between natural and spiritual

freedom that opens the second half of *This Life*. Here Hägglund develops a distinction between human beings and other animals that, he notes, is neither biological nor anthropological. Rather, his account is grounded in the intelligibility of our specific relation to normative commitments. All animals are possessed of 'natural freedom' insofar as they are capable of self-movement and self-determination, and they are agents *for which* 'things appear *as* nourishing or damaging, appealing or threatening' (174). We could say that animals not only relate to an event *in itself*, as something that happens, but also *for themselves*, as something that matters to a living being in light of its own ends. Indeed, other animals are capable of norm-governed behaviour, insofar as they may acquire learned behaviours that are not instinctually innate. Thus, for Hägglund, what distinguishes the 'spiritual freedom' of human beings from the 'natural freedom' of other animals is not simply the distinction between norms and instincts, but rather our capacity to question, challenge and transform the norms to which we hold ourselves accountable (176). We are *intelligible* as spiritually free beings – it makes sense to understand ourselves in such terms – insofar as the validity of norms is always implicitly and potentially at issue for us, insofar as *who we should be* and *what we should do* can always be questioned and contested in a manner inseparable from our social practices and institutions.

Now this is already a theory of spiritual freedom that fuses Hegelian and Heideggerian concerns. We find in normative/pragmatic readings of Hegel an account of *Geist* conceiving of self-consciousness, sociality and collective reason in terms of conceptual, discursive and intersubjective *commitments* that depend upon structures of mutual recognition for their actuality. Moreover, these readings of Hegel emphasise his understanding of modernity as that epoch in which the intersubjective recognition of normative commitments, and the institutions in which they are actualised, become *in principle* open to a 'space of reasons' unbounded by the absolutism of divine law or sovereign authority. Hägglund builds upon this approach to Hegel through a theory of 'secular faith' as commitment to normative ideals that are *ungrounded* by any appeal to absolute authority, and of 'spiritual freedom' as commitment to the unbounded contingency of such norms, insofar as they must in principle remain open to questioning, contention, transformation. Spir-



itual freedom is distinct from natural freedom insofar as ‘there is no natural way for us to be and no species requirements that can exhaustively determine the principles in light of which we act’ (177). Thus commitments must be *sustained* insofar as they are never finally and fully achieved but rather finite and fragile; they must be held in the face of doubt, uncertainty and ineliminable anxiety.

It is this essential *finitude* of spiritual freedom – of the structures of collective recognition and existential commitment it entails – that renders Hägglund’s account so powerfully consonant with Heidegger’s existential analytic. We are *questioning* beings for whom the possibilities of our existence are constantly at issue, and we are thrown into a world whose history we can only belatedly take up, while our finitude projects us toward the anticipation of a death that may interrupt our commitments. In both the first and second half of his book, Hägglund emphasises that the finitude, fragility and anxiety of our

temporal existence is a condition of intelligibility for any form of *care*, for any establishment of an order of priorities, any urgency of our actions, any effort to bring our projects to fruition or make our commitments matter. Hägglund’s understanding of the relation between care and finite time is routed through Christine Korsgaard’s theory of practical identities (188) and through Sebastian Rödl’s work on self-consciousness and first-person perspective (194), but more fundamentally it is grounded in Heidegger’s understanding of temporality as the meaning of care and in Heidegger’s profound analysis of temporal structures such as historicity, thrownness, anticipation and resoluteness. We are spiritually free beings *because* our being-toward-death puts the finitude of our existence in question for us, such that what we ought to do with our time is never given but constantly at issue among possibilities that are taken up or left aside, commitments that may be held or broken.

In a note at the end of his Introduction, Hägglund

acknowledges that ‘the most important sources for my thinking regarding freedom, finitude, and temporality are Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* (as well as his *Science of Logic*) and Heidegger’s *Being and Time*.’ He holds ‘that if we pursue the core insights of Hegel and Heidegger in the right way, we will grasp why their notions of freedom are mutually required’ (394). Hägglund shows that we can do so by understanding *freedom* in terms of the relation between *spirit* and *existence* – or more precisely, between *Geist* and *Dasein*. Note that ‘the self’, for Heidegger, is not *prior* to care. On the contrary, ‘the structure of care, conceived in full, includes the phenomenon of selfhood.’¹ It is our existence – our exteriority to ourselves, thrown into the world and riven by the temporality of anticipation – that makes temporality the meaning of care and grounds our being in *possibility*; and this exteriority of *what we are* throws us also into the situation that Hägglund gleans from Hegel: that our freedom is only actualised ‘through our mutual recognition of one another as essentially social, historical, material, and finite beings’ (36).

But this passage of freedom through the crux of *Geist* and *Dasein* would be empty without its passage through Marx, in whose work Hägglund finds ‘the greatest resources for developing a secular notion of freedom’ (212). For how can any serious reader of Marx traverse arguments concerning collective, institutionally objective reason in normative-pragmatic readings of Hegel without pondering the historical impossibility of an ‘I that is We and a We that is I’ within the structural conditions of capitalist wage labour? There can be no *Spirit of Trust*, to cite the title of Robert Brandom’s major book on Hegel,² as long as all social wealth depends upon the extraction of surplus value from surplus labour time, a dependency that deeply structures our technological capacities and political institutions. *This Life* rescues normative-pragmatic readings of Hegel from their ideological dereliction by showing how their own conditions of intelligibility depend upon a critique of capitalism which they ignore, yet which Marx carries out in a manner that makes explicit the normative commitments liberal political philosophy would *have* to recognise to be consistent with its principles. Hägglund’s immanent critique of liberalism is aimed at such figures as Keynes, Rawls and Piketty, who fail to recognise that the capitalist measure of value – socially necessary labour time –

renders structurally impossible a redistribution of social wealth that would enable the *actual* freedom of social subjects who require material resources (not only political rights) to determine, take up and enact existential possibilities. However, this critique applies also to the political liberalism of Hegelians like Pippin, Brandom and Pinkard, who do not confront the political and historical consequences of the understanding of Hegel they have helped to make legible. The institution of *ideals* of freedom and equality in democratic forms of political organisation may be an achievement of modernity but, as Hägglund argues, ‘capitalism and actual democracy are incompatible’ (271), since capitalism entails an objective, practical commitment to inequality. While the *distribution* of wealth may be at issue in modern democratic politics, the very production of that wealth relies upon a form of value and a system of wage labour that structurally *necessitate* unequal social relations that are in contradiction with the equal distribution of practical freedom. Like Jurgen Habermas, Pippin, Brandom and Pinkard at least implicitly understand modernity as an unfinished project. The same may be true of Hägglund, and indeed of Marx. But Hägglund follows Marx in thinking through the disarticulation of capitalism and modernity that is a minimal condition of possibility for the actualisation of such ideals as freedom and equality. He thus displaces the self-contradictory political horizon of normative-pragmatic readings of Hegel from which he also sets out.

Similarly, Hägglund participates in a lineage of deconstructive readings of Heidegger that have sought to delimit and displace Heidegger’s reactionary politics while retaining key insights of the existential analytic. Jacques Derrida, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy have each made valuable contributions to this project – including Nancy’s effort in ‘Of Being Singular Plural’ to reframe the existential analytic through the priority of *Mitsein*, being-with, and on that basis to structure ontological reflection through the conceptual relation of singularity and plurality.³ But in order to make these ontological reflections more than an evocation of ethical desiderata, Nancy would have to engage with the structural determinations of capitalism analysed by Marx, which foreclose the actualisation and recognition of singular plurality in the historical world. The challenge Hägglund takes up is to construct a co-

herent, systematic approach to Marx's critique of capital which is grounded in the core categories of the existential analytic: finitude, temporality, anxiety and care. This is what his deconstructive predecessors were unable to achieve, despite the interpretive and rhetorical brilliance of Derrida's *Specters of Marx*.⁴ Indeed, this is also a task that had remained latent in Häggglund's earlier book on Derrida, where he does not confront the problem of how a commitment to 'radical democracy' is in contradiction with the historical actuality of capitalism. *This Life* realises the most important task of deconstructive engagements with Heidegger: to coherently articulate the compatibility of Heidegger's existential analytic with Marx's analysis of the relation between time and value. By doing so, Häggglund re-grounds the question of the political implications of the existential analytic – and that is an intervention in intellectual history of the first order.

So, while *This Life* mobilises Hegel and Heidegger toward an integral reading of the early and late Marx, it also deploys Marx's critique of political economy to expose and go beyond the limitations of Häggglund's Hegelian and Heideggerian sources. Let me now specify the implications of this double movement with respect to Althusser's theory of the epistemological break between the early and late Marx, and his associated critique of Hegelian Marxism. Althusser sharply divides Marx's theories of species being and alienation in his 1844 Manuscripts from his structural critique of political economy in *Capital*. In particular, he rejects all suppositions of a human essence, grounded in labour, *from which* man has become alienated under capitalist relations of production. Without mentioning Althusser directly, Häggglund's reading of Marx sets out from a critique of this position. He emphasises that for Marx 'the species-being of the human is precisely that we have no given nature or essence' (213), and he determines to 'show that there is no opposition between the appeal to "species-being" in the young Marx and the method of historical materialism in his mature work' (214). According to Häggglund, 'the key is to grasp that neither life nor species-being should primarily be understood in biological or anthropological terms' (214). While acknowledging that 'Marx himself tends to invite such a reading' (214), Häggglund notes that Marx's concepts can be deepened by grounding them in the distinction between natural and spiritual

life he develops.

Again, this distinction is in turn grounded in Häggglund's synthesis of Hegel and Heidegger: it is because we are finite beings whose commitments are self-consciously subject to an economy of time that we not only follow normative behaviours to reproduce our existence but also question and justify the very norms to which we commit the time of our lives. It is the capacity to interrogate and justify the fundamental question of how *time* is spent from which proletarians are 'alienated' under capitalist relations of production – and from which we were differently divided by pre-capitalist social relations. Thus Marx's mature critique of capital is an exposition of the historically specific manner in which capitalism contradicts our capacity to question and transform our normative commitments, since we are structurally committed to inequality, whether we like it or not, through the extraction of surplus value from surplus labour time.

Häggglund thus constructs a formal, logical expressivist theory of social existence – integrally bound up with the economy of time – that places the concept of freedom back at the centre of Marx's mature theory. Although my own understanding of Marx has been strongly influenced by Althusser's critique of Marxist humanism, and although I tend to view the foregrounding of political ideals such as 'freedom' and 'equality' as idealist deviations from Marx's understanding of revolution in terms of class conflict, I must admit that I find Häggglund's reconstruction of the consistency of Marx's corpus highly persuasive, and it has forced me to reevaluate my own theoretical positions. His recuperation of the concept of alienation does not entail an ideological 'humanism' but rather a theoretically precise exposition of exactly why and how a commitment to freedom is implicit throughout Marx's structural critique of capitalism, and of how capitalism is in contradiction with the political ideals of modernity.

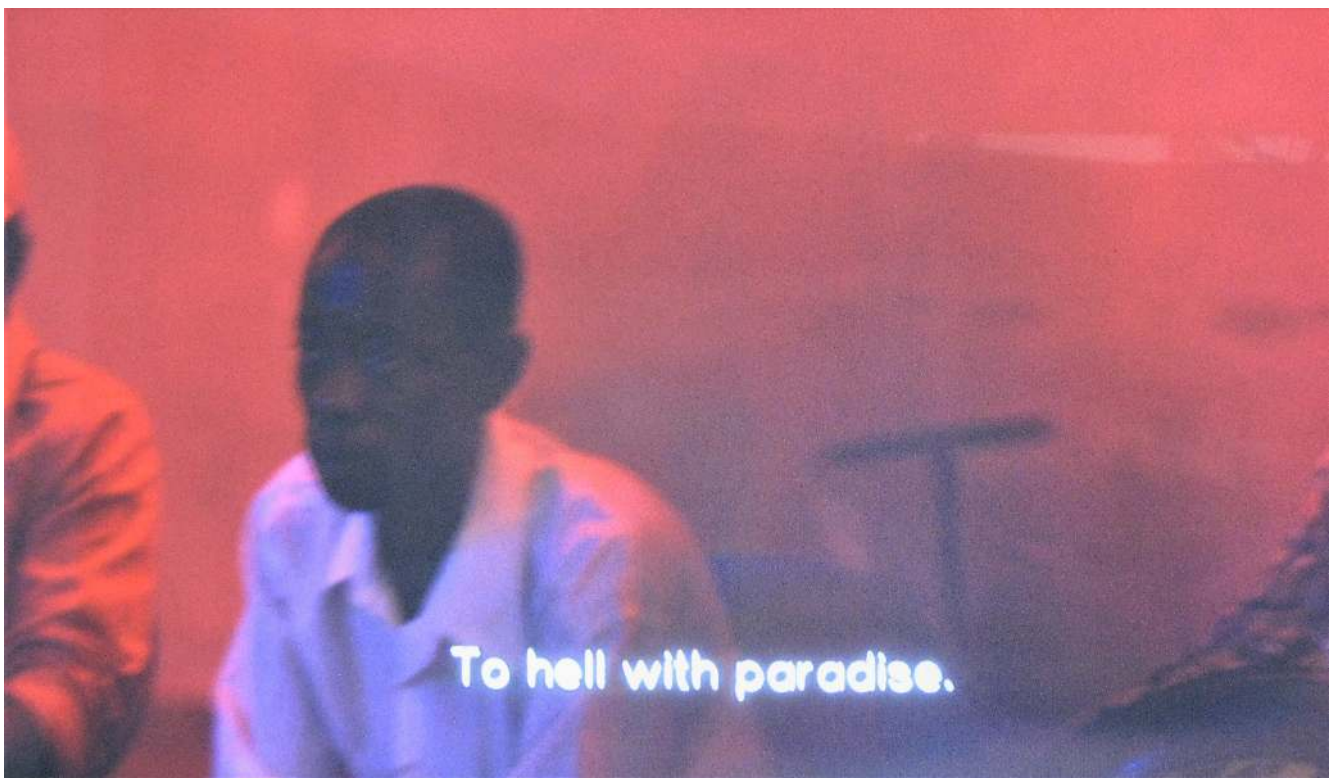
Capitalism, time and history

If it is the relation between *time* and *freedom* that is at the core of Häggglund's reading of Marx, my critical question is whether his account of the *history* of capitalism is sufficiently robust to account for the collective conditions of possibility for overcoming it. Can Häggglund's

account allow us to understand the historically mediated relation between *freedom* and *necessity* as it bears upon the theory of revolution? When considering the dialectical relation between freedom and necessity as it pertains to political struggle, it is typical to cite Marx's recognition that 'men make their own history, but not they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted by the past.'⁵ Note that this recognition is also at the core of Heidegger's thinking: we are thrown into this world, and our freedom to take up the possibilities of our existence is constrained by historical conditions we cannot choose. Marx offers an analysis of exactly how these historical possibilities are structured by capitalism, however else they may be structured. That structure is in one sense invariant; it is always grounded in the determination of value by socially necessary labour time, and the extraction of surplus value from surplus labour time. But the way in which that extraction proceeds, the particular intertwining of forces of production and relations of production upon which it depends, is historically variable. Thus we require, to understand the relation between freedom and necessity under capitalism, a precise understanding of how the structure of capitalism

changes over time, though the value form is invariant. This relation between invariance and structural alteration changes the conditions of possibility for overcoming the capitalist measure of value.

In 'Contradiction and Overdetermination', Althusser makes an essential and permanent contribution to such understanding.⁶ He shows that historical conditions of revolutionary possibility are *overdetermined*, beyond the level of individual wills, through the sharpening of economic contradictions by a multiplicity of other social contradictions that fuse into a 'ruptural unity'. Thus he obviates any recourse to economic determinism while also avoiding the idealism of voluntarist politics. That is, he theorises the historical mediation of freedom and necessity without recourse to historical determinism. But in addition to such a theory of overdetermined contradiction, Marxism also requires a theory of how the economic structure of capitalism itself changes over time, and of how these changes alter conditions of revolutionary possibility. Hägglund takes a strong position on a particular Marxist debate concerning this question, which bears upon crisis theory. Quite rightly, he notes that while 'many avowed Marxists continue to hinge their critique of capitalism on the prediction of a "terminal crisis" ... such a critique of capitalism is deeply misguided' (293).



In rejecting that position, Hägglund implicitly agrees with Althusser: while the economy may condition class conflict ‘in the last instance’, the lonely hour of the last instance never comes. Hägglund argues that ‘it is a grave mistake to think that the tendency toward crises heralds the end of capitalism’, since ‘crises are essential to cycles of capitalist accumulation and necessary for the continued production of capital wealth.’ In this sense, crises are ‘a condition of possibility for capitalism as a system to reproduce itself’ (293). And this is true: the destruction of accumulated capital by crises opens new opportunities for accumulation such that new cycles of growth can begin.

But arriving at a correct position on the relation between crisis and revolution requires engaging with a second sense of the term ‘secular’, which may designate not only the worldly and temporal rather than the religious and eternal, but also refer to long periods of historical time, rather than shorter cycles. One cannot *only* consider crises in terms of cyclical phenomena of growth, destruction and renewed growth; one must also consider the *secular* crisis of accumulation with which the history of capitalism is tendentially bound up. Crises are different. And periods of renewed growth following crises are not equally robust or durable. Why? What is it that alters the conditions of possibility for capitalist accumulation in a *secular* rather than *cyclical* fashion, thus traversing and altering cycles of destruction and growth?

The crash of 1929 was followed by a massive period of growth in the real economy from the Second World War through the 1960s. But as Robert Brenner has shown, the crash of 1973 did not result in a such a period of dynamic growth;⁷ rather, it has been followed by over forty years of tendentially declining profit rates, attended by a series of speculative bubbles. The reason is that there is indeed a *secular* decline in the capacity to extract relative surplus value through increasing productivity and increased surplus labour time, and this secular decline leads to increasingly fragile efforts to revive economic growth through financial speculation in contradiction with conditions of the real economy. Moreover, measures to avert catastrophic climate change are indeed in contradiction with the priority of profit seeking, and this is a *secular* crisis – a long term outcome of capitalist production – that the capitalist measure of value may not

allow us to avert. These are the conditions under which history will be made in the twenty-first century, one way or another. That certainly does not mean that capitalism will abolish itself. But we need to differentiate capitalist crises; we need to periodise their structural differences according to secular tendencies as well as cyclical phenomena; and we need to understand the conditions of political possibility those differences entail.

In order to think through the conjunctural specificity of revolutionary struggle in the twenty-first century, Hägglund would need to expand his engagement with the tradition of Western Marxism, along with the history and present development of communist theory, beyond the parameters of *This Life*, in which such engagement is primarily polemical. While it may be true that ‘many avowed Marxists continue to hinge their critique of capitalism on the prediction of a “terminal crisis”’ (293), there are also avowed Marxists who have a complex, dialectical understanding of the relationship between crisis and revolutionary struggle, class composition and the changing structure of surplus value extraction, the diminishing returns of valorisation given the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, and the impact of climate change upon the geography of class conflict.

While he engages with and differentiates his position from Moishe Postone’s reading of Marx, Hägglund’s polemical characterisations of what Marxists have *not* done sometimes reveal a brusque indifference to the existing literature. Pointing out that ‘everything in Marx’s critique of capitalism stands or falls on his analysis of the concept of value’, Hägglund notes that ‘regarding this issue – the most seminal in all his work – Marxists have generally failed Marx’ (252). That may *generally* be true (many Marxists have indeed accepted the error of attributing a ‘labour theory of value’ to Marx, with consequential misprisions), but this claim too easily assimilates the particular to the general, since there are certainly traditions which have not overlooked the primacy of value in Marx’s theory. Michael Heinrich and David Harvey emphasise this point from different theoretical positions, while we have at our disposal Diane Elson’s collection *Value: The Representation of Labour in Capitalism*, or the edited volume *Marxism and the Critique of Value*, along with the larger traditions of *Wertkritik* and *Neue Marx-Lektüre*, which Hägglund is equipped to assimilate in German.⁸ Why not acknowledge these traditions and

contemporary interlocutors, taking a position alongside and in distinction from them?

Hägglund's book does indeed make a fundamental contribution to considerations of Marx's theory of value. Arguing that value must be measured in terms of socially available free time (rather than socially necessary labour time) in order to be compatible with the actualisation of collective freedom, Hägglund grounds this claim in a fundamental reconstruction of temporal economy *in general*, thus opening what he calls "a fourth level of analysis" of value addressed to understanding "finite lifetime as the originary measure of value" (218-220). Drawing together the two halves of *This Life*, Hägglund brings to light the fundamental normative commitments of Marx's oeuvre in a manner overlooked by approaches that take these for granted. At issue is the question of *how* freedom is related to time, and *why* the capitalist measure of value is an inversion of the most basic dimension of human existence: the constitutive bond between possibility, time, and freedom that *is* value. For many Marxists, such a level of analysis may seem superfluous, since the critique of exploitation suffices to secure the normative grounds of the critique of capitalism. Yet Hägglund shows how much is at stake in understanding precisely why and how *temporal finitude* is at the very crux of Marx's work: with unprecedented clarity, his analysis shows that this is the dimension linking the early and late phases of Marx's career, and linking as well his critique of capitalism to his critique of religion.

However, Hägglund's critique of the religious *logic* or *desire* for eternity would be usefully informed by engagements with the *politics* of religion, including work by Talal Assad, Saba Mahmood, S. Sayyid, and Alberto Toscano.⁹ For even if one agrees with his arguments (or Marx's) on this point, what is one to *do* with Hägglund's critique of religion – at the level of collective political practice? While one may mobilise the Marxist critique of capitalism toward an anti-capitalist and non-reformist politics, the practical suppression of religious traditions was, in my view, among the major errors of actually existing socialism in the twentieth century. Hägglund does not advocate any such practical suppression, and his political thinking would be incompatible with such measures. But nor does he address that history, and the question remains: what is the relation between the imperative to overcome capitalism in order to actualise ideals of free-

dom and equality and the practical *consequences* of the rationalist critique of religion carried out by Hägglund, or indeed by Marx? This is a question that bears upon a historical materialist perspective on religion. Here the relation between theory and practice is far more difficult to conceive, even from the side of theory, than imperatives to displace wage labour, collectivise the means of production, and reconceive the measure of value. This is particularly true under the present conditions of global politics, and not least the War on Terror. Like Marx, Hägglund views religion as ideology, and his implicit position would seem to be that it will eventually wither away under the lived conditions of democratic socialism. I don't think that's true.

In any case, these are instances (the need for a more precise reckoning with other approaches to the critique of value, or the politics of religion) in which the accessible style of Hägglund's volume may impede its theoretical articulation. Engagement with such work would likely tangle the clarity and the political stakes of Hägglund's account, but it might also have obviated objections among those cognisant of debates the book leaves aside. Hägglund's book has already received an extraordinary reception. But it will also be subject to superficial dismissals by radicals because it is too liberal, and by liberals because it is too radical. It will be praised by opponents of religion insensible to the parochialism of their politics, and it may be written off by opponents of radical enlightenment eager to disavow the real stakes of universalism. In further elaborating the stakes of his work, I would urge Hägglund to ignore the unproductive antinomy of such responses, and focus instead on developing the historical dimension of his theory through deeper engagements with Marxist economic historians (like Robert Brenner), thinkers of value (like Diane Elson and Michael Heinrich), theorists of communist revolution (like *Théorie Communiste*), and accounts of the politics of religion that mount a critique of secularism on historical and anthropological grounds. That would involve engaging more closely with positions that may not be directly opposed to his own, but both proximate and tangential to it. Doing so would allow Hägglund to bring the mediation of freedom and necessity to bear upon historical contradiction, and thus supplement his theory of time, finitude and freedom with a more robust theory of historical determination.

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Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010), 309.
2. Robert Brandom, *A Spirit of Trust: A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019).
3. Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Of Being Singular Plural', in *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Bryne (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2000), 1–100.
4. Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994).
5. Karl Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963), 15.
6. Louis Althusser, 'Contradiction and Overdetermination', in *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 2005), 87–128.
7. Robert Brenner, *The Economics of Global Turbulence* (London:

Verso, 2006).

8. See Michael Heinrich, *An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital*, trans. Alexander Locasio (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2012); David Harvey, *A Companion to Marx's Capital: The Complete Edition* (London: Verso, 2018); Diane Elson, ed., *Value: The Representation of Labour in Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2015); Neil Larson, Mathias Nilges, et al., eds, *Marxism and the Critique of Value* (Chicago: MCM' Publishing, 2014). See also Riccardo Bellofiore and Tommaso Redolfi Riva, 'The Neue Marx-Lektüre: Putting the Critique of Political Economy back into the Critique of Society', *Radical Philosophy* 189 (Jan-Feb 2015), 24–36.

9. See Talal Assad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, and Modernity* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2003); Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); S. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (New York: Zed Books, 2015); Alberto Toscano, *Fanaticism: On the Uses of an Idea* (London: Verso, 2010). In particular, see Toscano's important chapter on Marx's critique of religion, 'The Clash of Abstractions: Revisiting Marx on Religion', 172–202.

