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ON USE VALUE AND MONEY HOARDING

The natural desire for commodious living

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Abstract

In this research paper, we will try to prove that because Marx failed to give a significant regard to the human desire not only to live, but also to live well (our new notion of commodious desire) his use value came as lacking this aspect of human nature. We will show how this same lack that has eventually lead Marx to see money hoarding and eventually the capital as of unnatural origins. So, we find it our task, as believers in human's natural desire not only to survive, but also to survive well, to delve a little into the Marxist aspect of use value and try to extract the main misfortunes that the great socialist philosopher could have avoided had he built his theory on a human being who is in constant search for the most commodious in life.

***Keywords*:** Marx, The Commodious Desire, Commodious and Need Value.

Introduction: The Argument

The basis of every society for Karl Marx is the circulation of commodities[1] between commodity sellers and commodity buyers. Unless people buy and sell commodities among them, any kind of social development would thus appear impossible. Labor is of a significant effect to this process of social development, since, after all, it is with labor that man can produce and later sell his product. Each individual labor is automatically interrelated to others' individual labor where it enters what Marx calls the "circuit" of circulation and is thus recognized by others as a product of a useful value or a "use value" and it is only when this labor product is socially recognized as of a useful value that this product is a commodity. So a use value is basically a labor product of any kind that serves personal needs and wants. It is the product of some individual labor-time spent on its production, and this labor-time is in its turn related to a universal and abstract labor-time. The value of this product, when put in the circuit of exchange, is exclusively decided by the amount of abstract universal labor-time[2] put in it. Above is the first basic step of Marx's

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It is worth mentioning here that our use of the term commodity in this research, unlike Marx's, covers under its shade anything that satisfies human needs and wants. Whereas Marx made a clear specification that a commodity is only so when it is a use value that is being advanced for circulation: "Whoever directly satisfies his wants with the produce of his own labor, creates, indeed, use values, but not commodities. In order to produce the latter, he must not only produce use values, but use values for others, social use values." MARX, Karl. *The Capital Vol. I*. Progress Publishers, Translated: Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, edited by Frederick Engels, Proofed: by Andy Blunden and Chris Clayton (2008), Mark Harris (2010), Dave Allison (2015), Moscow. p.29.

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Time is the only unit of measurement of labor. "The quantity of labor, however, is measured by its duration, and labor time in its turn finds its standard in weeks, days, and hours." MARX, Karl, *The Capital Volume I*; p.28.

Capital[3] on which his whole theory of political economy is based. In order for a researcher to be able to inaugurate a proper critique of Marx, we find it necessary - even mandatory- to give a very substantial credit to the very basic origins of the theory, and we tend to believe that in "use value" dwells the first loop of the Marxist theory.

The labor time implemented in the production of a commodity is, according to Marx, its homogeneous factor that renders all use values, all commodities, of different nature, equal under this process[4]. This sounds so true and serves as the basis of deciding the value of an object since labor is an inevitable factor in the process of deciding value. But, alas, labor is not the only factor. If labor was the only factor involved in such a process, then all exchangeable items would have the same price all over the world. But they do not. We see that the value of the commodities is not only decided by the labor-time involve in their production as use value, there is however another very peculiar and qualitative factor that presents the use value of the commodities as of a very variant nature and thus renders the act of omitting use value from the process of exchange impossible; this is the *commodious value* that is inherent in the use value. And this is the consumer's want to satisfy in the action purchase, not only a need for survival but also a want of commodious living. We believe that Marx did not give this idea a worth of significance when he considers that whether a product of labor satisfies desires that "spring from the stomach or from fancy, makes no difference"[5].

The origin of our argument against Marx lies, as a matter of fact, in this very specific dismissal of use value from the process of deciding the exchange value or the value of a commodity. So to Marx the formula is as such:

Use value A + labor time expanded on A = use value B + labor time expanded on B

Thus, always according to Marx, since the use values on both sides of the equation is equalized by the very first acceptance of exchange of both sides (bearer of commodity A and bearer of commodity B) of the process of exchange then they can be cancelled out. What is left then to decide the exchange value of commodity A with commodity B would be the labor time invested in each one of them. This labor time when measured can give us, according to Marx, the quantified figure of units of A to equalize units of B: x units of A = y units of B. x and y are decided thus in accordance to the general labor time invested in each of them, which is decided by a process that has many factors that we judge irrelevant to our argument now and thus won't go through their details.

What is of matter to our argument is the dismissal of this use value from the formula since we believe that it cannot be dismissed and this is due to the very essential reason that we will present below.

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3 We actually see the beginning of this idea with Marx in his *"Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy"* but we do not feel the urge to rely on this resource for reference since in the *"The Capital"* lies the more mature phase of his theory of value.

4 Ibid.,p.28.

5 Ibid p. 26.

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The use value of a commodity to Marx is a characteristic that enables it to satisfy human wants and needs. Thus it is this quality that the product has which makes this product an item of exchange. In this exchange of equivalent use values Marx finds it logically follows that the use value of the two products to be exchanged should be cancelled out since they are the factors that where equalized in the very first beginning of the exchange process. So he omits them. This is a logical corollary from Marx's postulate of use value indeed. *But we believe that there is more to the process of exchange than the use value and labor. And this is totally ignored by Marx; namely the rate of satisfying wants and needs that a product has on the subjects that are exchanging commodities*. This rate of satisfying the needs of the body and the wants of fancy of the subject that a commodity has, grants the use value a very peculiar, variant and subjective nature which we believe can never be equalized with any other. Where the use value is the characteristic that this object has of satisfying my needs and wants as a buyer or seller, the rate of satisfaction that this commodity has on our bodily survival needs and on our commodious desire we will call them the *need value* and the *commodious value* respectively. Those two values concern the level of satisfaction that this particular commodity at that particular time can provide for me as this particular person. This we believe it to be an indispensable factor in deciding the value of the product and would later on have a major effect on the resulting surplus value and money accumulation. We also tend to strongly believe that, the fact that a commodity serves a utility (wants of fancy) this necessitates that this utility is satisfied to a certain extent or rate. This level of satisfaction that the appropriation of a commodity has on me we will prove it to be independent of its producer and totally dependent on the commodious desires of the buyer and of the seller that are being served by this commodity provided (in case of buyer) or exchanged (in case of seller).

Commodities appear to us as having a need value and a commodious value. In the need value the commodity is satisfying needs of the body (survival) and in the commodious value it is satisfying what Marx calls wants of fancy (desires of commodious living). The use value to us is an assemblage of the two.

But there is something to be notified for here, that which Marx acknowledges at first but dismisses later, the fact that for things to enter the domain of circulation and exchange, they should not only be useful but also utile. It seems as if Marx has combined under his use value the notion of utility (our notion of commodious value) without paying any regard to the distinction of the nature of desires to be satisfied by this use value and the rate of the satisfaction that it provides. Of this erroneous disregard of the difference between those two aspects of use value, we believe originates the germ of our critique against Marx.

When we contradistinguished in use value the two aspects of *need value* and *commodious value,* and recognized the effect that this contradistinction has on the value of the commodity we succumbed to results very different from those of Marx's. Let us see how.

Thus, to us, the use value of a commodity comprises two components: *need value* and *commodious value*. Those two values are decided by two different aspects of human desires: the former is decided by the level that a commodity satisfies needs of the body, and the latter is decided by the level of satisfaction of the desire for commodious living that this commodity procures. Those two values, are of different natures: one has a quantitative nature (survival needs) can be easily measured in numbers as in the amount of food and shelter necessary for survival; and the other is qualitative (commodious desire) who's only scale of measurement is inherent in the person's character (buyer or seller) since its scale is a subjective one that is highly affected by the social conventions of what is commodious to appropriate and with the individual character of each and every person. Each one of these components would thus have an opposing effect on the value of the commodity. Whereas need value would tend to fixate the

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price at one level, commodious value tends to increase it or decrease it in accordance to the intensity of satisfaction of the subject's desire for this commodity.

We notice thus a very vibrant inversely proportional relation between the need value and the commodious value to decide the use value. When the need value is fixed, that is when a commodity is known to be that which satisfies basic human needs for survival, its commodious value - being the rate of satisfaction that this commodity provides for me - is inversely proportional to the level that this commodity satisfies my need. The more my survival depends on this commodity the less this commodity satisfies a commodious desire. The higher the rate of satisfaction for my commodious desire is when appropriating this commodity, the less relevant it is for my survival, and accordingly the lower its need value is. Until we reach to a state where a use value is solely a need value or where use value coincides with commodious value. As for commodities where a use value is satisfying both a need as well as a commodious desire, this is the type of use value is where the need value is of the fixating nature and the commodious value is the fluctuating nature.

So we have a relatively fixed quantitative figure that is the need value. It is always universal, in the sense that human needs for survival are universal, and in this lays its relatively fixed nature. The other factor involved in this process of the use value is the *commodious value*. This commodious value of ours appears to be of a qualitative nature since it is strictly dependent on the desire of two individuals: the seller in the first place and the buyer in the second place.[6] Now for the buyer he wants the exchange to take place because he finds in this commodity a satisfaction of a desire[7]. With this want that he manifests to the seller he is actually manifesting a use value that he accords to the seller's commodity. He is telling the seller that your commodity satisfies my want. This desire we find it inevitable and ultimately crucial for the process of deciding the use value and later on the value of the commodity since it is the motor that has stirred the buyer's attention to the commodity. Now the intensity of this desire is proportional to the commodious value that the buyer places on this commodity. Say, for instance, there is an urgent desire in the buyer for this commodity, the buyer puts a high commodious value on it which will be added to its basic need value to come out as the *buyer's use value* of the commodity.[8]

As for the seller, the same thing occurs. The seller is after all selling his commodity because he is aiming that with the outcome of the process of selling, he would be able to satisfy a desire in him. Now again the seller's estimated use value of the commodity would follow the same path as that of the buyer's, he would put the fixed need value in it and add to that his commodious value. And again, it is the urgency of the desire to be satisfied in him that decides if his estimate of use value is overvalued or undervalued.

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Notice that it is of no pertinence to our discussion at this point whether the seller is the producer or a reseller or not or whether the buyer is a consumer or a reseller or not. This is to later be discussed under Marx's alienation.

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Also it comes as corollary from the previous note that it is of no significance if his desire is to be immediately satisfied by the commodity or be mediated by a process of retail.

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Notice that in case of human crisis the need value replaces the commodious value and follows the same path.

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The individuals' *estimated use values* will confront each other in the process of exchange and the result of this opposition will be the *collective use value*. The collective use value of the exchange process will in turn contemplate with the labor time invested in the production of the commodity and thus produce the value or the market price of this commodity or its exchange value.

The word "estimated" for use value here is crucial since it is that which adds particularity and subjectivity to each use value and thus presents each of a different magnitude that cannot be cancelled out, as Marx did in the process of deciding the exchange value. So to us the formula looks like this: Estimated use value of person A + labor time spent = Estimated use value of person B + labor time spent

So in place of use value of commodity A or B, which seems an objective value (essence of our criticism of Marx) we have instead the estimated use value of the persons A or B which, as we have seen it, is a subjective value that cannot be cancelled out from both sides of the formula. Notice that this commodious value employed here is highly affected by and directly dependent on social conventions of what is commodious and thus by the level of civilization of the society. So we see that when a commodity is introduced in a community, regardless of the fact that people were living very well without it before, the moment this commodity is introduced people would want it. The second remark that needs to be put in the spot light is the individual character employed in this commodious value. Each person, buyer or seller, implements his character in the process of exchange just like he/she implements this character in any activity. So part of the utility value would be also decided by the person's character as his insatiability, his gullibility to be convinced by the other, his level of determination on achieving what he wants.....etc.

Hence we say that, an estimated use value is a use value that can never be fixed and universal and is thus a rate fluctuating with the fluctuation of the desires that are to be satisfied in the subject after appropriating the commodity. Thus we affirm, since Marx ignored the commodious value which would result in this estimated use value that majorly interferes with the process of value, he ended up considering labor as the only factor in this process, a fact which we will see as having confusing outcomes when discussing market circulation and surplus[9]. *So it is our task now to show how, when acknowledging the commodious desire of the buyer and the seller in the process of purchase as of a decisive role to the use value of the item that is being circulates, money hoarding and eventually capital will appear as a natural outcome of a human being who is always searching for a better living*.

A capital to Marx is the result of buying to sell and not the result of the simplest form of circulation that is selling to buy. In the first simple circulation form C-M-C (commodity-money-commodity) the seller, according to Marx, sells in order to buy another commodity of use value using the money he acquired from the process of selling, where as in the M-C-M process, money is the end and not the commodity, not the use value. And this is what creates a hoarded capital.

We tend to see things differently. To us, the only difference between the two circuits C-M-C and M-C-M is that in the former the desire to satisfy a commodity is more immediate, where as in the latter this desire is more latent. The first is a consumer the latter is a merchant. The first has a desire that wants to be satisfied on an urgent basis; the latter has this desire but can still "buy

9

Nevertheless, our socialist philosopher disagrees to what we are saying and sees that expanded human labor is the only thing that acts as a common denominator for that equalizes commodities to each other. MARX, Karl. *Capital Volume I*. p. 48

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some time" before satisfying it. At the end of the day we find that every merchant is a consumer and every consumer is a merchant. Every consumer in the C-M-C circuit is trying to buy a commodity at the cheapest value possible which would put him in the same cell with the merchant who is trying to sell his commodity at the highest value possible

The gain that the results of simple market circulations process is, according to Marx, conveyed in the use value of the object that underwent the exchange process. The gain is the use value itself, which is the commodity itself, for I have alienated the first use value because it was not a use value for me, and I have exchanged it for another use value because this other is a use value for me. The gain to our philosopher is thus implemented in the ontological nature of the commodity that satisfies me as a use value. It is reduced to my personal satisfaction in this commodity.[10]This kind of gain does not exist in with money hoarding since the "hoarder" in the M-C-M circuit does not gain any use value per se in the process. To this we have a different opinion. We do see that the essence of the gain is the same in simple circulation as well as in market processes. The only difference being the form of the gain. That is, the commodity that I have (x money) I alienate it and get another commodity and then alienate this other commodity to get a third one namely (x+100 money). The use value (x money) is not a use value for me anymore, so I alienate it, I get another commodity with it which is still not a use value for me but a moderator, and then I alienate this moderator commodity to get to the use value that satisfies me, namely (x+100 money). In the same manner the owner of wine alienates wine since it is not a use value for him, gets the moderator commodity in return (in this case it is the money), and then alienates this moderator money to get to the use value that he wants that is the corn. Now of course Marx's objection to the comparison that we have constructed would be the following: why would (x money) in the first place not be a use value for me knowing that money can take whatever form and thus be transformed to whichever commodity, wouldn't this negate the essence of money as that of use value? *The answer to his question would be deeply rooted in Marx's definition of a commodity as a use value that is not in relation with the rate that it satisfies a commodious desire which is the essence of our argument against the socialist philosopher.*

Since to us a commodity is a commodious value and a need value which would result in an estimated use value of a particular nature that can never be equalized with another estimated use value without an excess rate of satisfaction left over in the process. It comes as corollary result then that (x money) though having a use value but, to me its estimated use value is too little to be able to satisfy the intensity of the commodious desire in me, in other words, its form is not adequate to satisfy my desire just like the form of wine was not adequate to satisfy my desire, so I sell the wine to buy corn. (x+100 money) is the corn in this analogy. (The gain being nothing but the rate of satisfaction) Thus in both processes: in simple circulation and in market processes the gain is of the same nature but of different form.

From this we say that exchange of equivalents per se is never possible in the exchange process. The products that are being exchanged only "seem" as equivalents to he who is regarding the totality of the exchange process, but in reality there are no equivalents. Nevertheless, taken separately, from the buyer's stand point or from the seller's standpoint, the product that they have thrown for exchange is always in there eyes of a lower value than the product that they have gained after the exchange. So the two commodities are not of equivalent value neither to the seller nor to the buyer otherwise the process of exchange would be superfluous. So this equivalence that Marx is talking about, with our notion of estimated use value introduced as a

10

Ibid; p:110.

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rate of satisfaction of commodious desire and of survival needs (commodious value and need value), is only a "seemingly" equivalent process taken all together.
Let us see now this commodious desire in us, when always naturally seeking more commodious living, and thus, in economic terms we say it is seeking more gain, how would it hoard money and turn gain into a capital. In other terms, let us see how money hoarding and capital can be a natural result of the commodious desire of living that we are talking of.

The naissance of Capital should be, according to Marx, owed to the selling of a very special commodity; namely the selling of labor power in the market. Labor power is considered by our philosopher a very special commodity for it is a commodity which, when put in the market to be sold, creates the bases to alienation and exploitation and consequently the origins of money hoarding and capital[11]. Marx provides the reader a very scrutinized and detailed analysis of how accumulation of money into Capital is only possible on the expense of the laborer; nay, on the expense of the exploited laborer.

This to Karl Marx has its roots in two aspects: first, in the process of creating the capital, the capitalist invests a constant capital (raw material and means of production) and a variable capital (labor-power and machinery use). This is his initial capital that we will call C. So C= c+v. Now for the capitalist to end up with the same amount of money he first invested is madness. Thus this capitalist has to find a way to gain from the process of production. So his C' would be C added to a surplus value which this capitalist considers as being his own work invested in the process itself. For Marx, the capitalist's own work cannot be parachuted on this process since his part is of a very little portion.[12] The only rational way for this surplus value to appear on the other side of the equation is for Marx through accommodating the variable capital in a way that could achieve it. The mathematical equation is simple: $c + v = c + v + s$ where c is constant on both sides so it cancels out, we are left with $v = v + s$. So, since v is the only variable, then the value of v should be diminished so that to accommodate s in the result. This process of diminishing v is nothing but what Marx calls the exploitation of labor.

Let us see how the formula appears to us:

So if v is the variable capital that is the labor-power which is a use value that is being sold to the capital here we say that v= need value + commodious value or $v=nv+cv$. Hence the whole formula would be:

$$C'=c+nv+cv+s.$$

Notice that s does not come till after the production process, at first the formula does not involve any s. So if we start from the beginning we say the capitalist has in his mind this:

$$C=C'$$
$$c+nv+cv=c+nv+cv+s$$

Since the c is the constant capital involved that can be cancelled out then what we are left with is this : $nv+cv=nv+cv+s$

So in the process of selling labor power we would have from the side of the laborer:

Labor power = Money

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11 MARX, Karl. *The Capital Volume I.* p.118.

12 "For those of its (the capitalist mode of production) members who work acquire nothing, and those who acquire something, do not work", MARX, Karl, and ENGLES, Friedrich, *The Communist Manifesto*, Oxford University Press, Oxfor. 1998, p. 23.

Estimated use value + labor-time spent = estimated use value + labor time spent need value+commodious value+ labor time=need value+ commodious value+ labor time

On the side of the laborer who is selling his labor power he is selling it in an attempt to get money. The labor time spent on the commodity that he is providing for the owner of the money is in this case the level of education, training that this laborer has spent in creating the commodity that he is selling, namely his ability to do a certain work. On the side of the money owner, he is selling his money to get the labor power. The labor time spent in creating this money commodity would be the work that this money owner has performed to produce the money. As for the need value on both sides of the equation, this is the one that can be omitted since, as we mentioned before, when the commodity presented is, in a sort of way, satisfactory for my well-being, the need value, that is the rated that this commodity satisfies my survival can be easily equalized since it is the same rate with all people. So we are left out with two commodities to be equalized:

Laborer Money owner
commodious value + labor time = commodious value + labor time

Since the labor time spent is a quantified notion that can be deduced from social conventions, it will not be our point of interest since the surplus value can never reside in this quantified part of the formula. What is of interest though is the resulting surplus value for the money owner. Where did it come from?

We believe that, the laborer, while selling his labor, has in his mind a commodious desire that needs to be satisfied. He is expecting that at the end of the process of exchange this desire would be satisfied at a rate of x. What he knows also is that if he works harder (of course under the righteous regime) the revenue to the use value that he is providing for the money owner will also increase. So, to better satisfy his desire, he works more to have an x + 10 units of satisfaction. Remember that those units of satisfaction came only through the respective increase of the units of money and in proportion to it. With the extra work provided by the laborer there is the naissance of our surplus value of the money owner. But what is added on the formula up is something that is ignored by Marx; this is the satisfaction of the extra money this laborer is given for his extra work, the small s to symbolize the surplus value that this process of retail has provided for the laborer. Now of course the magnitude of this surplus value is not to be compared with the magnitude of the money owner's surplus value since, at the end of the day, the individual laborer's surplus value (that which is resulting from a surplus labor) we believe it to only be a building block of the money owner's surplus value. Since, the commodity that he is presenting for the laborer – the end of month wage – he is getting his surplus value in return in accordance to what he is offering the process of labor. In this case, when the money owner is buying the labor power, his estimated use value is the magnitude of the surplus value that he needs to have at the end of the process of exchange. So with his amount of money that he is paying to all the different laborers that he bought their powers, his surplus value thus accumulates accordingly.

It is in fact this small surplus value s that has resulted in the big surplus value S which is in turn an accumulation of small surplus values satisfying individual commodious desires at different rates that has created this surplus value of this capital. Notice that the relation that ties both surplus values is an ontological relation with necessary nature since the existence of each one of them implies the existence of the other and that the disappearance of one also necessitates the disappearance of the other. This is the natural course of events and if there is a form of capital that would grow "behind the back" of the workers as Marx puts it above, the natural desire of commodious living will employ a way to ensure that its surplus value will always be guaranteed.
So after the retail process occurs we have this formula:

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Laborer Money owner

commodious value + labor time+ s = commodious value + labor time+ S

So we say, the worker who does not have any target other than satisfying a survival need with his work, i.e. reaching his need value, can but very hardly be pushed to work beyond this target. Whereas, we believe that, when he has a commodious value to reach, his work will be self-induced.

It seems that we were right! Though it is true that with only part of his work the worker covers the expenses of his need value, but this value did not go into any metamorphose, it remained the same, it is rather the commodious value that changes and makes the worker work beyond his means of subsistence. But through the very nature of the dialectic relation that this commodious value of the worker has with commodious value of the capitalist, the oscillation results in the surplus value of the capital.

Brought to a more quotidian terms we say if in a capitalist institution workers had the choice of a part-time job that pays enough for their means of subsistence and a full-time job that pays beyond that, odds are no one - unless fettered by some kind of special social situation - would opt for the part time job. This would prove our point of base, that is, the surplus value results from the dialectic oscillation of the commodious values on both sides of the process of production (or of exchange). And this proof would also affirm our main idea of unequal natural distribution of faculties among people which would create differentiation in commodious values. Surplus would thus result as an effect to this differentiation of commodious value on both sides of the process of production (or exchange).

By this we would have proved that when we consider human nature with all the wide aspects of its composition without dissipating any aspect, we would succumb to the conclusions that contradict the Marxist system. In as much as the capitalist system can be the natural development of the human commodious desire, that which would guarantee its leashes and tame its wildness is also a natural development of this same desire, namely in the collective desire for commodious living, or in other words the governmental law over the market.

To the standpoint that we have reached, due to the nature of human beings - as this alloy of caprices and avarices- hoarding money in a form of capital seems to be the natural pathway for them to take. This is not to be misinterpreted though by the reader as anticipation for a free-market capitalist economy as the most natural outcome of the dialect. On the contrary, we are very far from that. Our task is to try to show how can a politico-economical system acknowledge the desirous nature of human beings and still be able to control the free-market monster that would hitherto succumb. The free-market capitalist society, we will try to prove, is not a natural outcome of those desires since in their collectivity those desires' first and sole aim is to tame the resulting monster. So to say that, on the economical level, the free-market economy is the natural result of acknowledging the natural desires of commodious living in human beings is a parallel to saying that anarchy, on the political level, is the natural result of acknowledging the natural desire for freedom in human beings.

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