

Karl Marx's Writings on Alienation

Edited and introduced by Marcello Musto



Marx, Engels, and Marxisms

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1. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, translated by Martin Milligan, in Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto*, New York: Prometheus Books, 1988. Reprinted with permission from the publisher.
2. “Comments on James Mill, *Éléments d’économie politique*”, translated by Clemens Dutt, in Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, edited by V. V. Adoratsky, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1942. Reprinted with permission from original publisher, who has deemed this work to be in the public domain.
3. *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism*, translated by Richard Dixon, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956. Reprinted with permission from the publisher.
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5. *Wage-Labour and Capital*, translated by Friedrich Engels, in Karl Marx, *Wage-Labour and Capital & Value, Price and Profit*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970. Reprinted with permission from the publisher.

6. “Speech at the anniversary of *The People’s Paper* (1856)”, in *The People’s Paper*, April 19, 1856. This text was originally published in English and is in the public domain.
7. *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, translated by Martin Nicolaus, London: Penguin, 1973. Reprinted with permission from the translator.
8. “The Original Text of the Second and the Beginning of the Third Chapter of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*”, translated by Yuri Sdobnikow, in *Marx Engels Collected Works*, vol. 29, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1987. Reprinted with permission from the publisher.
9. *Economic Manuscript of 1861–63*, translated by Ben Fowkes and Emile Burns, in *Marx Engels Collected Works*, vol. 30, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988. Reprinted with permission from the publisher.
10. *Theories of Surplus-Value. Volume Four of Capital. Part III*, translated by Jack Cohen and S. W. Ryazanskaya, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971. Reprinted with permission from the publisher.
11. *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA²), vol. II/4.1, *Ökonomische Manuskripte 1863–1867*, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1988. This excerpt has been translated from German into English for the first time, specifically for this anthology, by Patrick Camiller.
12. “Appendix: Results of the Immediate Process of Production”, translated by Ben Fowkes, in Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume One*, London: Penguin, 1990. Reprinted with permission from the translator.
13. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume One*, translated by Ben Fowkes, London: Penguin, 1990. Reprinted with permission from the translator.
14. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume Three*, translated by David Fernbach, London: Penguin, 1991. Reprinted with permission from the translator.

The short introductions, indicated in italics, provided at the beginning of each section of Marx’s writings have been written by the editor.



CHAPTER 4

Capital and Its Preparatory Manuscripts

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I ECONOMIC MANUSCRIPTS (1863–1865)

Scattered among the preparatory manuscripts for Capital, Volume one, are a number of pages in which Marx returned to the theme of alienation. The separation between the workers and the means of production—a prerequisite for the buying and selling of labour-power—reaches the point where “the conditions of labour appear before the worker as autonomous persons”. In capitalism not only is living labour transformed into objectified labour but living labour itself is thereby transformed into capital.

* * *

First, purchase and sale of labour-power, an act that occurs in the sphere of circulation, but the capitalist production process as a whole not only concerns one aspect and precondition but is also its constant result. This purchase and sale of labour-power assumes the separation of the objective conditions of labour—means of subsistence and means of production—from the living labour-power itself, so that the latter [is] the only property of which the worker disposes, and the only commodity he has to sell. The separation goes so far that the conditions of labour confront the worker as autonomous persons, since the capitalist as owner of them is only their personification, in opposition to the worker as the mere owner of labour-power. This separation and autonomisation is a prerequisite for the purchase and sale of labour-power to go ahead, and hence in general for living labour to be assimilated to dead labour as its self-perpetuation and self-reproduction, its self-valorisation therefore. Without the exchange of variable capital for labour-power there is no self-valorisation of the total capital and therefore no formation of capital or no metamorphosis of means of production and means of subsistence into capital. The second aspect is now the actual process of production, that is, the actual consumption of the labour-power purchased by the owner of the money or the commodities.

In the actual process of production, the objective conditions of labour—the material and means of labour—serve not only for the objectification of living labour but for the objectification of more labour than was contained in the variable capital. Thus, they serve as means of absorption and extortion of the surplus labour that presents itself in the surplus value (and surplus product). If we look more closely at the two aspects—first, the exchange of labour-power for variable capital, and second, the actual

process of production (in which living labour is incorporated qua agent into capital)—then the whole process appears as one in which (1) less objectified labour is exchanged for more living labour, insofar as what the capitalist actually obtains for the wage is living labour; and (2) the objective forms in which capital directly appears in the labour process [are] the means of production (so, again objectified labour) as means for the extortion and absorption of that living labour—the whole being a process that unfolds between objectified and living labour, a process that not only transforms living into objectified labour, but at the same time transforms the objectified labour into capital, hence also living labour into capital. It is therefore a process in which not only the commodity but surplus value—and therefore capital—is produced.

The means of production appear here not only as means for the realisation of labour but just as much as means of exploiting another's labour.

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