

Karl Marx: Early Philosophical Writings

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- Marx is interested in the human condition in industrialized society and how it is different from earlier society.
- One of the central notions in early Marx is the idea of alienation.
- One of his central concerns is with emancipation. How to free ourselves from some of the conditions of industrialized society.
- **"On the Jewish Question"**
- - the question that Marx was asking was whether or not Jews should be allowed to vote.
- "...Once Jew and Christian..." (pg.3)
- "emancipation and religion..." (pg.3)
- What type of emancipation? What is the relationship of complete emancipation to religion?
- "... we no longer take religion to be the basis..." (pg.6) - Jews aren't oppressed because of religion.
- Political emancipation: about the extension of liberal rights.
- Human Emancipation:
- You can have a free state, but that doesn't mean you'll have a free people.
- Rights of man. Marx subjects them to critique. He sees the constitutions that codify these rights as in fact symptomatic of a society that is not yet free, not yet equal; they expose a lack of emancipation.
- **Liberty**: "Liberty, therefore, is the right to do everything that harms no one else." The right to do anything for yourself without hurting anyone else, this notion of liberty is devoid of all sociality—liberty is freedom from one another, atomistic. "An isolate monad."
- Marx says that there is a cost to liberty: when you understand liberty in the sense that you want as long as you don't hurt anyone, suggests a view of humans as egotistical. (pg.16) "The right to do..."
- **Property**: "The right of man to private property is, therefore, the right to enjoy one's property at one's discretion (*à son gré*), without regard to other men, independently of society, to his own interest." Through liberty and property people begin to see others as the source of the limitation of their rights, leading to a recoil from the social.
- "...the political annulment of private property..." (pg. 8)
- **Equality**: Has no political significance. All it is is the equal right before the law to have a property interest. Not shared power or anything else, not substantive, just the right to be selfish.
- **Security**: "Security is the highest social concept of civil society, the concept of *police*, except that the whole of society exists only in order to guarantee to each of its members the preservation of his rights, and his property. It is in this sense that Hegel calls civil society 'the state of need and fear'." Security reinforces the atomistic notion of an individual separated from others, and wholly self-interested in their own individual well-being. The state only serves to secure individual security.

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- Material wealth then continues to operate as social power—thus perpetuating inequality in power, which is reinforced through an atavistic, competitive civil society. Civil society is entirely depoliticized, or at least obscured.
- “The political revolution which overthrew this sovereign power and raised state affairs to people, which constituted the political state as a matter of *general* concern, that is, as a real smashed all estates, corporations, guilds, and privileges, since they were all manifestation of the people from the community. The political revolution thereby *abolished* the *political civil society*. It broke up civil society into its simple component parts; on the one hand, the *individual*, on the other hand, the *material* and *spiritual* elements constituting the content of the life and social powers of individuals.”
- As individuals, we’re not yet in control of our existence, we’re still controlled and overpowered by social powers. We have an affirmative political nomenclature, but we’re still not emancipated, we’re still under the thumb of economic social power. - “All emancipation is a *reduction* of the human social relationships to *man himself*. Political emancipation is the reduction of man, on the one hand from the *political civil society*, to an *egoistic, independent* individual, and, on the other hand, to a *citizen*, a *bourgeois*, when the real, individual man re-absorbs in himself the abstract citizen, and as an individual becomes a *species-being* in his everyday life, in his particular work, and in his particular social relations. Only when man has recognized and organized his ‘own powers’ as *social* powers, and, consequently, only when he has taken social power from himself in the shape of *political* power, only then will human emancipation be accomplished.” This requires a revolution in material relations. This is not an individual will that emerges from certain conditions.
- Religion is the spirit of civil society
- Essentially, we are communal human beings.
- "...the political revolution dissolves civil life..." (pg.20) - you get this picture of alienation. Our individuality is located somehow in this abstract concept of citizenship. And what we really are in the world, is individual people away from the communal beings we're supposed to be. This is political emancipation. Marx believes will happen if we have all these liberal rights.
- Marx plays with Jewish stereotypes at the end of the essay. He's saying that if you want to change the world, you change the conditions in the world that make ideas possible, or concepts possible, because you change the person. He's a character. What it is, is a set of ideas that people oppose themselves to. If you don't have private property, you're not going to have bargaining.
- The key for Marx is that if you want to change things, you have to change the conditions of the world.
- **"Toward a Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*"**
- - Marx believes that "man makes religion, religion does not make man" - he believes that human nature is bad because it creates some kinds of alienation.
- Criticism: the essential task of this is denunciation. - check spark notes for better info.
- Emancipation needs radical revolution. Revolutionary change will - check spark notes
- "...the only emancipation of Germany..." - the only way we get there, is by radically changing the conditions of life and overcoming (check speak notes)
- **Alienated Labor:**

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- What distinguishes human beings from animals is that we can be creative. We make things in the world that are for eating, sleeping etc... it's through labor that we express ourselves as human beings.
- **3 aspects to alienated labor:**
 - Alienation from product of labor - the more the worker produces, the less the worker enjoys his own labor itself in that sense, turns around and oppresses you, becomes an enemy. Everything he makes contributes to a world outside of him to which he does not belong. He shrinks in comparison to this world of objects that he helps create but does not control.
 - Alienation from process of labor - (pg.61) - this is how you express yourself. The worker's labor itself, the worker performs does not belong to the worker but is a means of survival that he is forced to perform for someone else. As such, his working activity does not spring from within as a natural act of creativity but rather exists outside of him and signifies his estrangement from himself to perform for someone else.
 - Alienation from species or human identity - For human beings, work amounts to the realization of the identity of the human being. The process of acting on and transforming inorganic matter to create things constitutes the identity of the human being. A person is what he or she does in transforming nature through practical activity. But in the modern system of private ownership and production, the worker is estranged from this essential source of identity and life purpose as a human species.
 - Alienation from man to man - Since the worker's product is owned by someone else, the capitalist regards this person, the capitalist, as alien and hostile. The worker feels alienated and antagonistic toward the entire system of private property through which the capitalist exploits both the objects of production for his own enrichment at the expense of the worker's sense of identity and wholeness as a human being.
- Private property rises through externalized labor.
- The emancipation of society from private property.
- **2 forces in society:**
 - Proletariat: Working class - property-less owners. A class that appears as a result of the expansion of production it appears because of the disintegration of the middle class. Under industrialization, production and exchange that drive this process of expansion and change have created a new urban class whose fate is vitally tied to that of the bourgeoisie. This class is the industrial modern working class. These workers have been uprooted by the expansion of capitalism. They must sell their labor to the bourgeoisie, a fact that offends them to the core of their existence. Unlike those workers of earlier ages who owned and sold what they created. Modern industrial workers are exploited by the bourgeoisie and forced to compete with one another for ever-shrinking wages as the means of production grow more sophisticated.
 - Bourgeoisie: Upper class - property owners. The modern industrialized world has brought about a new such subordinate class—the bourgeoisie, or merchant class—in its struggle against the remnants of feudal society. Through world exploration, the discovery of raw materials and markets, and the opening of commercial markets across the globe, the bourgeoisie, whose livelihood is accumulated through trade, grew wealthier and politically emboldened against the feudal order, which it eventually managed to overthrow away through struggle and revolution. The bourgeoisie have risen to the status of dominant class in the modern industrial world, shaping political institutions and society according to its own interests. Instead of from doing away with class struggle, this once subordinate class, now dominant, has

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- The bourgeoisie is the most spectacular force in history to date. The merchants' zeal for accumulation to conquer the globe, forcing everyone everywhere to adopt the capitalist mode of production.
- The bourgeois view, which sees the world as one big market for exchange, has fundamentally altered society, even the family, destroying traditional ways of life and rural civilizations and creating a new place for their place.
- The factory is the arena for the formation of a class struggle that will spill over into society at large. Industrial workers will come to recognize their exploitation at the hands of the bourgeoisie.
- Although the economic system forces them to compete with one another for ever shrinking wages, their association on the factory floor will overcome the divisions between themselves, realize their common interests, and begin to engage in a collective effort to protect their economic interests against the bourgeoisie.
- The workers will form collectivities and gradually take their demands to the political sphere as they are reckoned with. Meanwhile, the workers will be joined by an ever-increasing number of the lower middle class as entrepreneurial livelihoods are being destroyed by the growth of huge factories owned by a shrinking number of super-rich industrial elites.
- Gradually, all of society will be drawn to one or the other side of the struggle. Like the bourgeoisie, the proletariat and their allies will act together in the interests of realizing their economic aims.
- They will move to sweep aside the bourgeoisie and its institutions, which stand in the way of their aims. The bourgeoisie, through its established mode of production, produces the seeds of its own destruction.
- No institution in communism - you have to do what you have to do for the people and for society.

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