

# Marx, capitalism from the standpoint of communism - Postliterate - Medium

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Marx's social ontology of capitalism exists on the *edge of possibility*, and can *only* be understood from this standpoint. This is the primary entanglement of bourgeois economists — the entanglement of capitalism as *necessity* and as *possibility* — and this entanglement as such makes it impossible for them to comprehend Marx's position.

For the apologists, capitalism as a structural specificity is conceptually entangled with social production as a structural generality. The possibilities offered by social production in *general* — namely, metabolisms with nature for the reproduction of human life through the use of socialized tools, and the production of a social surplus — are confused for possibilities *uniquely* offered by capitalism. Capitalism's ability to create material wealth which society finds useful and its ability to generate a social surplus of sorts, are considered successes of capitalism *in particular*, i.e., proof of the *specific* success of capitalism apart from other possible structures of social production. That capitalism fulfills a transhistorical *bare minimum* is seen as a grand wonder.

This is much of the way the dominating mechanisms of capital are mystified. What capital does specific to itself and apart from other forms of social production is constitute a certain form of social domination interwoven into the dynamic of the human social metabolic process; *but*, what cap-

ital does additionally that most other forms of social production *also* do is create useful products and generate a social surplus. Bourgeois economics emphasizes the latter and mistakes it for a logic specific to capital.

Marx, crucially, does not make this entanglement, and separates conceptually the features of social production which are not specific to capital but which capital must fulfill anyway, and features specific to capital. This is the backdrop of Marx's theory of communism, and why he conceives of it in a way completely foreign to bourgeois economists. Moreover, the latter cannot even account for Marx's position, given their conceptual entanglement.

This is what is meant by the "edge of possibility": communism for Marx is not a problem to be worked out in the conceptual framework of capitalist logic, but a possibility offered by the necessary results of social production as such, and what can be done with it within its additional wide margin of possibility. It is not for Marx a question of how quasi-capitalist logic can be continued in the absence of capital, but simply how the already existent social production processes maintained by humanity can be utilized in a realm of possibility, once freed.