

On Theory - Postliterate - Medium

By Postliterate

Source: <https://medium.com/@postliterate/the-point-is-not-to-understand-marx-2d041b8b1cc3>

1. The point is not to understand Marx. Millions have already attempted to do so in various ways, nothing has *necessarily* come of it.
2. The point is to *enact change*, to radically transform what appears to be an oppressive society — in a word, to do communism.
3. The point of theory is not inherently to comprehend the world, to grasp it for the sake of knowledge. This has hitherto only been a leisure granted by affluence at the expense of others.
4. The purpose of theory is to grasp the world in order to properly change it; to correctly articulate why society has taken the form that it does, so that it can be understood where and how it is possible to change it. It is obvious things are bad; it is not at all obvious how they can be transformed.
5. This is what it means to be a *communist* and not merely an intellectual or a careerist — to strive always to most perfectly grasp the nature of things in order to make it possible the understanding of how to more perfectly enact radical transformation in society. Otherwise, one can merely understand the world for its own sake, or attempt to enact change in complete blindness to the material conditions of the world.
6. Theory is not necessarily a personal affair conducted in private. As with even scientific theory, fleeing from the private can sometimes generate grand revelations in thought which would never have been visible had one remained inside. Of course, intellectual rigor always remains necessary.

7. The whole of the world does not need to be grasped. Moreover, if it does not need to be grasped, it *shouldn't* be. It is both impossible to complete such a task and unnecessary to even approximate it, and insofar as this is the case, effort expended on such tasks is merely intellectualism without substance.
8. Enough of the world must be grasped such that it is possible to see how it can be changed. This does not necessarily require the whole.