

Capital

CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY
VOLUME 1

Karl Marx

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

Cooperation

CAPITALIST PRODUCTION doesn't truly begin, as we have seen, until a single mass of capital puts many workers to work at the same time, thus increasing the size of the labor process, which now supplies products on a larger (quantitative) scale. Both historically and conceptually, the starting point of capitalist production is a large number of workers working together, at the same time and in the same space (or, we might say, in the same field of labor), under the command of a single capitalist—all in order to produce a single type of commodity. The mode of production in the manufacturing system's early stages differed from that of craft labor guilds mostly in that the manufacturing mode involved an individual outlay of capital putting a greater number of workers to work concurrently. All that happened was that the guild master's workshop was enlarged.

Thus the difference was at first purely quantitative. We have seen that the total amount of surplus-value produced by a given mass of capital is equal to the surplus-value produced by each individual worker multiplied by the number of workers employed at the same time. The number of workers doesn't affect the rate of surplus-value, or the extent to which labor-power is exploited, and, moreover, qualitative changes in the labor-process appear not to have any effect on the production of commodity value as such, a fact that follows from the nature of value. If a twelve-hour workday is objectified in 6 shillings, then 1,200 such workdays would be objectified in 6 shillings \times 1,200. In one scenario, $12 \times 1,200$ hours of labor would be incorporated into the products; in the other, twelve hours would be. When it comes to the sheer production of value, many workers always contribute to the process as many individuals, so it doesn't matter whether 1,200 workers work separately or together under the command of the same mass of capital.

And yet, within certain limits, a change does occur in the latter case. The labor objectified into value is labor of socially average quality, and the

value of labor-power is the value of average labor-power. But the average magnitude of something is only the average of a number of separate varying magnitudes. Workers in every branch of industry, every individual Peter and Paul, deviate from the average worker to a greater or lesser degree. These deviations, which are called “errors” in mathematics, offset one another and disappear when we look at a large number of workers working together. The famous sophist and sycophant Edmund Burke even thinks he knows from his own practical experience as a farmer that in “so small a platoon” as five workers, all individual differences vanish. According to him, a random group of five English workers, however worn out or inexperienced its members, and five English workers operating at the peak of their abilities would carry out exactly the same amount of work in a given amount of time.¹ Be that as it may, it’s clear that the combined workday of a large group of workers employed at the same time is a day of socially average labor. Suppose the workday of an individual worker is twelve hours. The total labor performed by 12 workers put to work simultaneously would amount to 144 hours. The labor performed by each worker will deviate from socially average labor to a greater or lesser degree, and the workers will therefore need more or less time to complete the same task. But as one-twelfth of the total workday of 144 hours, the workday of each worker is of socially average quality. For the capitalist who employs these 12 workers, the workday exists as their combined workday. Each worker’s workday exists as a fractional part of the total workday, regardless of whether the workers actually work with one another or if all that connects them is that they work for the same capitalist. On the other hand, if six different “small masters” each employed two workers, these masters would produce the same amount of value—and thereby realize the general rate of surplus-value—only by chance. Deviations would occur in individual cases. If a worker needed much more time to produce a commodity than is socially necessary, if his individually necessary labor-time differed considerably from the socially necessary or average labor-time, his labor wouldn’t count as average labor, and his labor-power

1. “Unquestionably, there is a great deal of difference between the value of one man’s labour and that of another, from strength, dexterity and honest application. But I am quite sure, from my best observation, that any given five men will in their total, afford a proportion of labour equal to any other five within the periods of life I have stated; that is, that among such five men there will be one possessing all the qualifications of a good workman, one bad, and the other three middling, and approximating to the first and the last. So that in so small a platoon as that of even five, you will find the full complement of all that five men can earn” (E. Burke op. cit. pp. 15, 16). See Quételet on the average individual. [Editor’s note: Adolphe Quételet, *A Treatise on Man* (Edinburgh, 1842).]

wouldn't count as average labor-power. Either he wouldn't be able to sell his labor-power at all, or he would only be able to sell it below labor-power's average value. A certain minimum level of competence on the worker's part is therefore assumed, and we will see that capitalist production has found ways to measure this minimum. But that does nothing to make the minimum coincide with the average, and, meanwhile, the capitalist has to pay for labor-power's average value. So of the six small masters, one would get more than the general rate of surplus-value, whereas another would get less. The disparities would offset one another for society as a whole, but not for the individual masters. The law of valorization truly comes into effect for the individual producer only when he becomes a capitalist—when he employs a large number of workers at the same time, i.e., sets socially average labor in motion from the very start.²

Employing a large number of workers at the same time revolutionizes the objective factors used in the labor process regardless of whether or not the actual methods of labor change. Part of the means of production is now consumed collectively during the labor process: buildings in which many workers perform their labor, storage for raw materials, containers, and also tools and apparatuses that many workers use simultaneously or in turns, and so on. On the one hand, the exchange-value of commodities, and thus of the means of production, doesn't increase at all when their use-value is exploited more fully. On the other hand, where the means of production are consumed collectively, they are enlarged. A room that houses 20 weavers and their 20 looms has to be larger than one where a single independent weaver and two apprentices perform their labor. But it takes less labor to build a single workshop for 20 people than it does to build 10 separate workshops for 10 groups of two workers, and so when the means of production are concentrated on a large scale and used collectively, their value doesn't increase in proportion to their size and useful effects. The means of production that are consumed collectively transfer a smaller value component to each individual product, partly because the total value they give is spread among a larger amount of product, and partly because even though they enter the production process with an absolute magnitude of value that exceeds that of isolated means of production, when considered from the standpoint of their sphere of action,

2. Professor Roscher thinks he has discovered that a single seamstress whom his wife employs for two days will perform more labor than two seamstresses whom his wife employs on the same day. The professor shouldn't try to understand how capitalist production works by studying what happens in the nursery, where, moreover, the protagonist is missing—namely, the capitalist.

their magnitude of value is smaller in relative terms. The share of value contributed by constant capital thus decreases, causing the total value of the commodities produced to decrease proportionally. The effect is identical to what would happen if it cost less to produce the means of production. We find such economy in the use of the means of production only where many workers consume them together during the labor process. Furthermore, these shared means of production take on this character of being necessary conditions of social labor, or necessary social conditions of labor, even when workers perform their labor in the same space but don't work directly with one another. The scattered and relatively more expensive means of production of isolated independent workers or small masters lack such a social character, which some means of labor take on even before the actual labor process does.

This economy in the use of the means of production can be considered from two perspectives at once. First, it lowers the value of commodities and thus also of labor-power. Second, it alters the ratio of surplus-value to the total capital advanced—to the sum of capital's constant and variable components. We won't address the latter effect until volume 3 of the present work. The same holds for quite a few other issues that are already of immediate relevance but need to be discussed in the right context: the particular course of our analysis demands that we chop up our object, a process very much in keeping with the spirit of capitalist production. Here, in fact, the worker encounters the things he needs to perform his labor as things that exist independently of him, and economy in their use therefore appears as a particular operation that is of no concern to him and unconnected to the methods by which he increases his own personal productivity.

The form of labor that involves many people working together systematically, either in the same production process or in different but connected processes of production, is called cooperation.³

Just as there is an essential difference between a cavalry squadron's power to attack or an infantry regiment's power to defend and the sum of the respective powers to attack and defend that individual cavalry and infantry soldiers develop operating on their own, so the sum of the respective mechanical powers of isolated workers differs from the social power that develops when many hands work together in a single unified operation, such as lifting something heavy, turning a crank, or clearing away an obsta-

3. "Combination of forces" (Destrutt de Tracy op. cit. p. 80).

cle.⁴ In such cases, isolated labor either can't produce the effects of combined labor at all, or it can produce them only by taking much more time or reducing those effects to a miniature scale. In cooperation, individual productive power increases, but that's not all: a new, inherently collective productive power is created.⁵

Aside from the new power that arises when many powers are melded into a collective one, mere social contact sparks competition among those engaged in most forms of productive labor and excites "the animal spirits" that make individual workers perform more effectively.¹ Hence a dozen people working together during a workday, one amounting to a combined 144 man-hours, will produce much more than either the combined output of 12 isolated workers during a twelve-hour day or the output of one isolated worker over 12 twelve-hour days.⁶ The root cause is that, if human beings aren't by nature political animals, as Aristotle thought, they are certainly social animals.⁷

Even when a number of workers are performing the same labor, or much the same labor, at the same time, the labor of each worker, being an individual part of a whole, doesn't necessarily belong to one and the same stage of the labor process, whose different stages the objects of labor move through faster as a result of cooperation. Take the case of masons who form a chain to transport stones from the base of a ladder to the top. They

4. "There are numerous operations of so simple a kind as not to admit a division into parts, which cannot be performed without the cooperation of many pairs of hands. For instance, the lifting of a large tree on a wain . . . every thing in short, which cannot be done unless a great many pairs of hands help each other in the same undivided employment, and at the same time" (E. G. Wakefield, "A View of the Art of Colonization. London, 1849," p. 168). [Editor's note: "On a wain" should be "on to a wain."]

5. "As one man cannot, and 10 men must strain, to lift a ton of weight, yet one hundred men can do it only by the strength of a finger of each of them" (John Bellers, "Proposals for raising a collodge of industry. Lond. 1696," p. 21).

6. "There is also [when the same number of workers are employed together on a single farm of 300 acres rather than distributed among 10 farms of 30 acres each] an advantage in the proportion of servants, which will not easily be understood but by practical men; for it is natural to say, as 1 is to 4, so are 3:12; but this will not hold good in practice; for in harvest-time and many other operations which require that kind of despatch, by throwing many hands together, the work is better, and more expeditiously done: f. i., in harvest, 2 drivers, 2 loaders, 2 pitchers, 2 rakers, and the rest at the rick, or in the barn, will despatch double the work, that the same number of hands would do if divided into different gangs, on different farms" ("An Inquiry into the Connection between the present price of provisions and the size of farms. By a Farmer. Lond. 1773," pp. 7, 8).

7. What Aristotle's definition really says is that human beings are by nature urban citizens. This is as characteristic of classical antiquity as Franklin's toolmaker definition of human beings is of Yankeedom.

are all doing the same thing, yet their individual acts of labor represent connected parts of a total act of labor: they are particular stages that each stone has to move through during the labor process, and the 24 hands of the combined worker ferry stones faster than the two hands of individual workers going up and down the ladder on their own could.⁸ The object of labor covers the same distance in less time. Labor is also combined when different sides of a building are being worked on simultaneously, even if the workers cooperating with one another are once again performing exactly the same labor, or much the same labor. That is, because the combined worker (or total worker) has eyes in the back of his head and multiple sets of hands, as well as a certain degree of omnipresence, he can work on multiple sides of his object at the same time. The combined workday of one hundred and forty-four hours accomplishes much more than 12 twelve-hour days of a more or less isolated worker, who can't approach his object in the same way. Separated by space, different parts of the product of the combined workday come to fruition at the same time.

We have emphasized that the many workers complementing one another perform the same labor, or much the same labor, because this most basic form of collective labor also plays a major role in the most advanced form of cooperation. When the labor process is complex, the sheer number of cooperating workers makes it possible to divide up the various operations among many different hands and thus to have them carried out simultaneously. This shortens the labor-time needed to produce the total product.⁹

Many branches of production feature critical moments—spans of time, determined by the nature of the labor process itself, within which labor must achieve specific results. When a flock of sheep needs to be shorn, or a field of wheat has to be cut and harvested, the quantity and the quality of

8. "It should also be noted that this partial division of labor can occur even when workers are engaged in the same task. Masons, for example, busy passing bricks from hand to hand to an upper scaffold, are all doing the same job, and yet there exists among them a kind of division of labor, whereby each one passes along the brick through a given space, and together they convey it to the marked spot much more quickly than they would if each of them carried his brick separately to the upper scaffold" (F. Skarbek, *"Théorie des richesses sociales*, 2nd edn. Paris, 1839," Vol. 1, pp. 97–98).

9. "Is it a question of executing a complicated task? Several things must be done simultaneously. One does one while another does another, and all cooperate to achieve a result that one man could not produce alone. One man rows the boat while another steers, and a third casts the net or harpoons the fish, and the success of the catch is impossible without this cooperation" (Destutt de Tracy op. cit. p. 78).

the product depend on whether those operations are begun and also completed at particular times. The amount of time in which a labor process can take place is established in advance here, as it is, say, for herring fishermen. A worker can get only a single workday out of the twenty-four-hour day—for example, a twelve-hour one—but when 100 workers cooperate, a single twelve-hour workday becomes a workday of 1,200 hours. The short time frame is offset by the amount of labor set in motion at the decisive moment. The timeliness of labor's useful effects thus turns on the simultaneous application of many combined workdays, while the extent of its useful effects turns on the number of workers employed, which will always be smaller than the number of isolated workers needed to accomplish the same amount of work in the same amount of time.¹⁰ It is due to the lack of such cooperation that large quantities of grain go to waste in the western part of the United States and the same thing happens with large quantities of cotton in the parts of East India where English rule destroyed the old communal way of life.¹¹

On the one hand, cooperation makes it possible for labor to be performed over a larger area, and the size or spatial constitution of certain objects of labor thus calls as it were for cooperation: draining wetlands; building dykes, irrigation systems, railroad tracks; and so on. On the other hand, cooperation makes it possible for the space of production to become smaller relative to the scale of production. How does the capitalist manage to compress the space required by labor even as he extends labor's productive reach, thereby sparing himself a host of unnecessary costs (*faux frais*)?¹² He conglomerates workers, brings together different labor processes, and also concentrates the means of production.¹²

10. "The doing of it [the labor of agriculture] at the critical juncture, is of so much the greater consequence" ("An Inquiry into the Connection between the present price etc." p. 7). "In agriculture, no factor is more important than that of time" (Liebig, "Ueber Theorie und Praxis in der Landwirthschaft. 1856," p. 23).

11. "The next evil is one which one would scarcely expect to find in a country which exports more labour than any other in the world, with the exception perhaps of China and England—the impossibility of procuring a sufficient number of hands to clean the cotton. The consequence of this is that large quantities of the crop are left unpicked, while another portion is gathered from the ground, when it has fallen, and is of course discoloured and partially rotted, so that for want of labour at the proper season the cultivator is actually forced to submit to the loss of a large part of that crop for which England is so anxiously looking" (Bengal Hurkaru, Bi-Monthly Overland Summary of the News. 22nd July 1861). [Editor's note: Source text reads: "the next evil in India is one."]

12. "In the progress of culture all, and perhaps more than all the capital and labour which once loosely occupied 500 acres, are now concentrated for the more complete tillage of 100." Although "relatively to the amount of capital and labour employed, space is con-

A combined workday produces use-value more efficiently than the same number of isolated workdays added together: it shortens the amount of labor-time needed to produce a given useful effect. Whatever a combined workday does to enhance labor's productive power—whether it improves labor's mechanical capabilities; or enlarges the spatial sphere in which labor is active; or makes the spatial field of production smaller relative to the scale of production; or, at critical junctures, activates a great deal of labor in a small amount of time; or kindles the competitive fire of the individual worker and excites his animal spirits; or lends the similar labor being performed by many workers continuity while allowing it to work on multiple sides of an object at the same time; or allows different operations to be carried out simultaneously; or creates greater economy in the use of means of production through sharing; or gives individual labor the character of socially average labor—in any and all of these cases, the specific productive power of the combined workday is labor's social productive power, that is, the productive power of social labor. This power arises from cooperation itself. When a worker works together with others systematically, he breaks through his limitations as an individual and develops the productive capacities of his species.¹³

If workers can't directly work together without being together, if their cooperation requires that they be brought together in the same space, then wage laborers can't cooperate if the same mass of capital, or the same capitalist, doesn't use them simultaneously—in other words, buy the labor-power of each worker at the same time. Hence the total value of their labor-power—the sum of the workers' wages for a day, a week, etc.—has to come together in the capitalist's pocket before the bearers of labor-power can come together in the production process. It takes a greater outlay of capital to pay 300 workers all at once, even for just one workday, than it does to pay a few workers weekly over the course of an entire year. In the first place, then, the number of workers cooperating with one another, or the scale of cooperation, depends on the amount of capital that the individual capitalist can spend when he buys labor-power—i.e., the extent to which a capitalist has the means of subsistence of many workers at his disposal.

centrated, it is an enlarged sphere of production, as compared to the sphere of production formerly occupied or worked upon by one single, independent agent of production" (R. Jones, "On Rent, Lond. 1831," pp. 191, 199).

13. "The strength of each man is tiny, but the union of tiny forces forms a total force greater even than their sum, so that by means of their union the forces can reduce the time and increase the space of their action" (G. R. Carli, note on P. Verri op. cit. Vol. 15, p. 196).

What holds for variable capital holds also for constant capital. The individual capitalist who employs 300 workers has to spend thirty times as much on raw material as each of the 30 capitalists who employ 10 workers. And while it's true that the value and sheer mass of shared means of labor don't increase in proportion to the number of workers employed, they do increase substantially. The concentration of large quantities of the means of production in the hands of an individual capitalist is thus a material condition that has to be met before wage laborers can cooperate, and the dimensions of their cooperation—in other words, the scale of production—depends on the scale of that concentration.

Earlier, we saw that an individual mass of capital has to reach a certain minimum magnitude in order for the number of workers being exploited simultaneously, and thus the amount of surplus-value being produced, to suffice to free an employer from manual labor—only then can the small master become a capitalist and the capital relation be formally established. This minimum magnitude now appears as the material prerequisite for transforming many scattered labor processes operating independently of one another into a combined social labor process.

At first, similarly, capital's command over labor appeared merely as a formal consequence of the fact that the worker works for the capitalist rather than himself, i.e., he works under the capitalist. But as many wage laborers are brought together to cooperate, capital's control becomes necessary for carrying out the labor process—it becomes an actual precondition for production. A capitalist's orders on the field of production are now as indispensable as a general's on the field of battle.

All directly social or collective labor performed on a large scale needs leaders who both mediate things so that individual acts of labor complement one another, and carry out general functions that arise from the movement of the total productive organism, rather than the movement of its individual organs. A single violin player is his own conductor but an orchestra can't conduct itself. This function of leadership—supervising and mediation—counts among capital's functions the moment the labor under it becomes cooperative. The leadership role changes when it becomes a specific function of capital, taking on certain specific characteristics.

The driving motivation and defining goal of capitalist production is, first of all, the largest possible self-valorization of capital,¹⁴ or to produce as much surplus-value as possible and thus to exploit labor-power as much

14. "Profits . . . is the sole end of trade" (J. Vanderlint *op. cit.* p. 11).

as possible. As the number of workers used simultaneously increases, so does the resistance they bring forth, and the pressure that capital applies to overcome their resistance necessarily grows as well. The capitalist's leadership role isn't simply a particular function arising from and belonging to the nature of the social labor process: it is also a function stemming from the exploitation of a social labor process. It is thus conditioned by the unavoidable antagonism between the exploiter and the raw material he exploits. Similarly, as the means of production are enlarged, and wage laborers work with greater amounts of property owned by someone else, the need to supervise the use of this property, to make sure that it is being used correctly, becomes greater as well.¹⁵ Wage laborers cooperate, moreover, only because a mass of capital puts them to work simultaneously. The cohesiveness of their functions and their unity as a total productive organism reside outside them in the capital that brings them together and holds them together. On the level of ideas, then, the workers encounter the cohesiveness of their own individual acts of labor in the form of a plan for labor, and on the practical level, they encounter it in the form of the capitalist's authority—i.e., the power of a foreign will that subordinates their activity to its own ends. The capitalist's leadership is double-sided, owing to the double-sidedness of the production process he directs, which is both a social labor process whose purpose is to make a product and, at the same time, capital's valorization process. But in terms of its form, capitalist leadership is despotic. This despotism develops its own peculiar forms as cooperation starts to take place on a large scale. Just as the capitalist is freed from manual labor the moment his capital reaches the minimum magnitude that capitalist production needs in order to truly begin, so he now delegates the direct and continuous supervision of individual workers and groups of workers to a particular type of wage laborer. As an army needs

15. An English philistine paper, the *Spectator* of 26th May 1866, reports that when a kind of capitalist-worker partnership was introduced in the "wirework company of Manchester," "The first result was a sudden decrease of waste, the men not seeing why they should waste their own property any more than any other masters, and waste is perhaps, next to bad debts, the greatest source of manufacturing loss." The same paper identified the following as the fundamental cause of the Rochdale cooperative experiments: "They showed that associations of workmen could manage shops, mills, and almost all forms of industry with success, and they immensely improved the condition of the men, but then they did not leave a clear place for masters." *Quelle horreur!* [Editor's note: In 1844, the workers of Rochdale established the first cooperative society—The Society of Equitable Pioneers. It began as a society of consumers but evolved into one of producers as well, providing a model for the application of socialist ideas that workers emulated elsewhere in Great Britain.]

officers, a large group of workers cooperating under the command of a single mass of capital requires industrial high officers (directors, managers), and also lower officers (supervisors, foremen, overseers, *contre-mâîtres*), all of whom issue orders during the labor process in the name of capital. This work of supervision becomes established as their specialized and exclusive function. When a political economist compares the organization of production among scattered peasants or independent artisans to the plantation economy based on slavery, he includes such supervisory work among the *faux frais* of production.¹⁶ But when he examines the capitalist mode of production, he does something very different. He equates the leadership function arising from the nature of the collective labor process with the one that arises from its capitalist and thus antagonistic nature.¹⁷ The capitalist isn't a capitalist because he is an industrial leader; rather, he becomes an industrial commander because he is a capitalist. A position of high command in industry is an attribute of capital in the same way that, during feudal times, a position of high command in the military and the courts was an attribute of landed property.¹⁸

A worker owns his labor-power as long as he still acts as its seller in the market and can negotiate its sale with a capitalist, and he can sell only what he owns: his individual, isolated labor-power. This relation won't be affected at all if the capitalist buys the labor-power of 100 workers instead of just one, or if he enters into contracts with 100 unconnected workers instead of with just one—he can still put the 100 workers to work without having them cooperate. The capitalist pays for the value of the labor-power of 100 independent workers, but not for their combined labor-power. As independent persons, the workers are isolated persons. They enter into a relation with the capitalist but not with one another. They begin to cooperate only in the labor process,

16. Having presented the “superintendence of labour” as a main characteristic of slave production in the southern states of North America, Prof. Cairnes continues, “The peasant proprietor [of the North] appropriating the whole produce for his toil, needs no other stimulus to exertion. Superintendence is here completely dispensed with” (Cairnes op. cit. pp. 48, 49).

17. Sir James Steuart, who had an uncommonly keen eye for the important social distinctions between different modes of production, once remarked, “Why do large undertakings in the manufacturing way ruin private industry, but by coming nearer to the simplicity of slaves?” (“Princ. of Polit. Econ.” Fr. Trans. Paris 1789, Vol. 1, pp. 308, 309). [Editor's note: Marx took this quote from a French translation. We present the English original, found in Sir James Steuart, *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy* (London: Millar and Cadell, 1767) pp. 167–68.]

18. So, Auguste Comte and his school could have demonstrated the eternal necessity of feudal lords in the same way that they demonstrated the eternal necessity of the lords of capital.

but by then, they have already ceased to belong to themselves. The moment they enter that process, they are incorporated into capital. As cooperating people, as parts of a laboring organism, they are merely one of capital's particular modes of existence. The productive power that a worker develops when he performs social labor is therefore capital's productive power. Labor's social productive power develops without additional pay wherever workers are made to operate under the right conditions, and it is capital that has them operate under those conditions. Because labor's social productive power doesn't cost capital a thing, and also because the worker doesn't start to develop such productive power until capital owns his labor, this power presents itself as belonging to capital by nature, as inherent in capital.

The massive creations of the ancient Asians, Egyptians, and Etruscans show us the colossal effects of simple cooperation. "It has happened in times past that these Oriental States, after supplying the expenses of their civil and military establishments, have found themselves in possession of a surprise which they could apply to works of magnificence or utility, and in the construction of these their command over the hands and arms of almost the entire non-agricultural population has produced stupendous monuments which filled the land. . . . In moving the colossal statues and vast masses, of which the transport creates wonder, human labour almost done alone was prodigally used. The number of the labourers, and the concentration of their efforts sufficed. We see mighty coral reefs rising from the depths of the ocean into islands and firm land, yet each individual depositor is puny, weak, and contemptible. The non-agricultural labourers of an Asiatic monarchy have little but their individual bodily exertions to bring to the task, but their number is their strength, and the power of directing these masses gave rise to the palaces and temples, the pyramids, and the armies of gigantic statues. It is that confinement of the revenues which feed the workers, to one or a few hands, which makes such undertakings possible."¹⁹ In modern society, the power formerly enjoyed by Asian and Egyptian kings or the Etruscan theocrat goes to the capitalist, whether he operates on his own or as a combined capitalist, as he does in joint-stock companies.

Cooperation in the labor process of the kind that we see at beginning of human culture or in early hunting societies,²⁰ or that predominates in

19. R. Jones, *Textbook of Lectures*, etc. pp. 77–8. The ancient Assyrian and Egyptian collections, and similar collections in London and other European capitals, enable us to observe those cooperative labor processes for ourselves.

20. Linguet's "*Théorie des Lois civiles*" might not be wrong where it proclaims the hunt to be the first form of cooperation and the hunt for human beings (war) to be one of the first forms of the hunt.

the agricultural production of Indian communes today, is based partly on communal ownership of the conditions of production and partly on the fact that individuals haven't managed to tear the umbilical cord tying them to their clan any more than individual bees tear the bond to the hive. Capitalist cooperation is based on neither of these circumstances. The sporadic use of large-scale cooperation in the ancient world, the Middle Ages, and modern colonies rests on direct relations of servitude or, most often, slavery. The capitalist form, in contrast, presupposes the wage laborer who sells his labor-power to capital. And yet historically, this form develops in opposition to peasant economies and the industry of independent craftsmen, whether or not they belong to guilds.²¹ Emerging opposite those things, capitalist cooperation doesn't appear as a particular historical form of cooperation, but, instead, cooperation appears as a historical form that is peculiar to the capitalist process of production and distinguishes it from other production processes.

Just as the social productive power of labor developed through cooperation appears as capital's productive power, so, too, cooperation appears as a specific form of the capitalist production process—as something unlike the production process of isolated independent workers and small masters. Its emergence is the first change that takes place in the actual labor process after that process is subsumed under capital. This change happens spontaneously. Its precondition—a large number of wage laborers being employed concurrently in a single labor process—is the point where capitalist production begins, where capital itself begins to exist. So if, on the one hand, the capitalist production process appears as a historical necessity with regard to transforming the labor process into a social process, on the other hand, this social form of the labor process appears as a method capital uses to make the labor process more productive and thus to exploit it more profitably.

In its simple shape, the shape we have examined so far, cooperation goes with large-scale production but isn't a fixed form characteristic of a particular epoch in the development of capitalist production. At most it appears to be roughly such a form in the still-artisanal early stages of

21. Small-scale peasant agriculture and production by independent craftsmen constituted part of the foundation of the feudal mode of production, yet they also appeared alongside capitalist production after the feudal mode had dissolved. At the same time, they constituted the economic foundation of the classical commune at its highest moment—after the original Oriental form of communal property had disappeared but before slavery had truly taken control of production.

the manufacturing system²² and also in the large-scale agriculture of the manufacturing period, which differs from the peasant type mainly in the numbers of workers it employs simultaneously and the size of the means of production it concentrates. Simple cooperation has always been the predominant form of cooperation in branches of industry where capital operates on a large scale but machinery and the division of labor don't yet play an important role in production.

Cooperation remains the fundamental form of the capitalist mode of production, even if the simple shape of cooperation now appears as one particular form alongside more advanced forms.

22. "Whether the united skill, industry and emulation of many together on the same work be not the way to advance it? And whether it had been otherwise possible for England, to have carried on her Woollen Manufacture to so great a perfection?" (Berkeley, "The Querist." Lond. 1750, p. 56, § 521).