EDITED BY MICHELE DILLON

CONCISE READER IN SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

THEORISTS, CONCEPTS, AND CURRENT APPLICATIONS

WILEY Blackwell

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Concise Reader in Sociological Theory

Theorists, Concepts, and Current Applications

EDITED BY

Michele Dillon

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INTRODUCTION

Sociological theory offers a rich conceptual tool-kit with which to think about and analyze our contemporary society. As we reflect upon what it means to live and to understand others in today's complex world, the insights of sociological theorists provide us with concepts that greatly illuminate the array of social and institutional processes, group dynamics, and cultural motivations that drive the patterns of persistence and change variously evident across local, national, and global contexts. Sociology is a comparatively young discipline. It owes its origins to the principles and values established by eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophers, namely the core assumptions that human reason is the source of knowledge, and though of different orders, the source of moral truth and of scientific truth; and that, by virtue of being endowed with human reason, all people are created equal and thus should be free to govern themselves in all matters, including political governance – thus motivating the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century in America (1776) and in France (1789) and leading to the decline of monarchies and the establishment instead of democratic societies.

It was the French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857) who coined the term sociology in 1839. He was influenced by the Enlightenment emphasis on scientific principles and believed that a science of the social world was necessary to discover and illuminate based on rigorous empirical observation how society works, that is to identify, as he saw it, a "social physics" parallel to the laws of physics and other natural sciences, and to advance social progress as a result of the data yielded from the scientific study of society. In his view, because sociology could and should

study all aspects of social life, he argued that sociology would be *the* science of humanity, *the* science of society, and would outline "the most systematic theory of the human order" (Comte 1891/1973: 1). Harriet Martineau (1802–76), the English feminist and writer, commonly regarded as the first woman sociologist, translated Comte's writings into English in 1855 (Hoecker-Drysdale 1992). Additionally, in her own influential writing she emphasized both the breadth of topics that sociologists can/should study as well as the importance of studying them with rigor and objectivity. In her well-known book *How to Observe Morals and Manners* (1838), morals and manners referencing the substantive, wide-ranging content of sociology (and its encompassing of social class, religion, health, suicide, pop culture, crime, and the arts, among other topics), Martineau also argued that because social life is human-centered it is different to the natural world. Unlike atoms, for example, humans have emotions. Hence, Martineau pointed to the need for sociologists as scientists to develop the empathy necessary to the observation and understanding of the human condition and to how it manifests in the course of their inquiry. She wrote:

> The observer must have sympathy; and his sympathy must be untrammeled and unreserved. If a traveler be a geological inquirer he may have a heart as hard as the rocks he shivers, and yet succeed in his immediate objects … if he be a statistical investigator he may be as abstract as a column of figures, and yet learn what he wants to know: but an observer of morals and manners will be liable to deception at every turn, if he does not find his way to hearts and minds.
>
> (Martineau 1838: 52)

As sociology became further established in the mid-to-late nineteenth century it did so amid major societal changes,

propelled by industrial capitalism, factory production, the expansion of manufacturing and of railroads, increased urbanization, mass immigration of Irish, Italian, Swedish, German, Polish, and other European individuals and families to the US, the bolstering of democratic institutions and procedures (e.g. voting rights), nation-building, and mass-circulating newspapers. Living in a time swirling with change, sociology's founders were thus well situated to observe and to recognize how large-scale, macro societal forces take hold, interpenetrate, and structure institutional processes, community, and the organization of everyday life, as well as to ponder the relationship of the individual to society.

This *Reader* presents a selection of key excerpts from major writings in sociological theory, the classics from the foundations of the discipline to contemporary approaches. As with all disciplines, the classics are so defined not merely because they originated in a different time, but precisely because they contain the essential points or concepts that have endured through a long swath of time and have proven resilient in their explanatory relevance of the dynamic complexity of society even, or especially, amid its many ongoing patterns of change. Sociology, as a social science, is an empirical discipline; this means that sociologists are interested in and committed to knowing the truth about reality – how things actually are and why they are as they are, rather than how ideally they ought to be. Consequently, sociologists embrace scientific method as a way of studying the social world and accept the objective facticity of (properly gathered) data. Sociologists use both qualitative (e.g. ethnographic description, interview and blog transcripts, historical documents) and quantitative (e.g. surveys, census data) data-gathering methods, and in using data they tend to lean either toward investigating the relationship between a number of macro-level variables

(e.g. education, crime, income inequality, gender) or focusing on how individuals in a particular micro-context and small groups or communities carve meaning into and make sense of their lives. Regardless of the research method(s) chosen (a decision made based on the specific research question motivating the sociologist's empirical study), sociologists do not and cannot let the resulting data stand on their own. Data always need to be interpreted. And this is why sociological theory is so important. Theory provides the ideas or concepts that sensitize sociologists about what to think about – what questions to ask about the social world and how it is structured and with what consequences – and theory is equally fundamental in helping sociologists make sense of what they find in their actual research, both of what they might have (empirically or theoretically) expected to find but also of the unexpected. As such, sociological theory is the vocabulary sociologists use to anchor and interpret empirical data about any aspect of society, and to drive the ongoing, back-and-forth conversation between theory and data. This, necessarily, given the dynamic nature of social life, is always an energetic and dynamic dialogue. Sociological theory does not exist for the sake of theory, but for the sake of sociological understanding and explanation of the multilayered empirical reality in any given sociohistorical context.

This *Reader* is organized into five sections. Each section includes excerpts from a core set of theorists, and I provide a short commentary or introduction prior to each specific theorist or to a cluster of theorists in the given section. The *Reader* begins with a lengthy first section with excerpts from sociology's classical theorists: **Karl Marx** (chapter 1), **Emile Durkheim** (chapter 2), and **Max Weber** (chapter 3). These three dominant theorists largely comprise the foundational canon of sociology; their respective

conceptual contributions have well withstood the test of time despite, from the hindsight of our contemporary experience, some notable silences in their writings with respect to, for example, sexuality and a limited discussion of the significance of gender and race.

The classical tradition was largely introduced to English-speaking audiences by the towering American social theorist, Talcott Parsons. The excerpts in section II comprise an amalgam representing Parsons's theorizing, generally referred to as *structural functionalism*, and different theoretical perspectives that it, in turn, gave rise to based on specific critiques of some of Parsons's emphases. I briefly introduce Parsons's ideas (in chapter 4) but because much of his writing is quite dense I do not include an excerpt from him but instead an excerpt from his student and renowned fellow-theorist **Robert K. Merton**, exemplifying the structural functionalist perspective. Parsons was famously concerned with how values consensus translated into the social roles and social institutions functional to maintain social order. Countering this focus, conflict theory, exemplified by **Ralf Dahrendorf**, highlighted the normalcy and functionality of conflict (as opposed to consensus) in society. From a different context, critiquing Parsons's focus on American society as the paradigm of modernization, neo-Marxist dependency theorists including **Fernando Henrique Cardoso** and **Enzo Faletto** highlighted the conflicting power interests between the West and Latin America, and within Latin American countries dependent on the US (chapter 5). Still other theorists pushed back against Parsons's main focus on macro structures and what they saw as his diminishment of the individual (even though Parsons affirmed the relevance of the individual as a motivated social actor). With a micro focus on individuals and small groups (chapter 6), this line of critique was spearheaded by

another student of Parsons, George Homans. Contrary to Parsons, he emphasized the core centrality of the individual and of individual interpersonal interaction or exchange as the foundational basis of all institutional and societal life. Homans's student, **Peter M. Blau**, took a broader, more sociological view than Homans and elaborated on how power and status in particular interpersonal contexts are conveyed through, and result from, social exchange relations. Another theorist, **James S. Coleman**, adopted Parsons's focus on shared societal values to focus on the functionality of trust to the accumulation of human and social capital in interpersonal and small group settings. Decades later, writing with a focus on a different set of questions – sexuality and gender in contemporary American society – **Paula England** elaborates on the relation between personal characteristics (skills/human capital, values) and social identity or social position to show the dynamic interaction between individuals' personal characteristics and social position in accounting for variation in individual decision-making outcomes.

Section III includes what are generally seen as the three most prominent micro-level perspectives in sociological theory: (1) symbolic interactionism which, building on **George H. Mead**'s theorizing on the self and elaborated by **Erving Goffman**, focuses on the micro-dynamics of face-to-face or interpersonal interaction (chapter 7); (2) phenomenology which establishes credibility for the relevance of the individual's subjective experiences of the social world and for the individual's intra-subjective reality, a perspective outlined by Alfred Schutz and elaborated by **Peter L. Berger** and **Thomas Luckmann** in their widely influential book, *The Social Construction of Reality* (chapter 8); and (3) ethnomethodology which focuses on how individuals actually do the work of being members of a society in particular localized settings; its framing is

indebted to **Harold Garfinkel** and subsequently further applied to gender issues by **Sarah Fenstermaker** and **Candace West** (chapter 9). It is important to note here, however, that though largely micro in their focus, each of these theories (and especially phenomenology) also variously point to the significance of macro structures, the dynamic interrelation of macro and micro social processes, and to the fact that the self is always necessarily in conversation with society, and is so at once both at a micro- and macro-level.

Section IV returns us to the influence of European theorists on the development of sociology, especially as the discipline both emerged from the influence of Parsons in the late 1970s, and also attempted to take stock of the social changes of the post-World War II era, an era that for all of its progress – increased affluence, the expansion of university education, the growth of the middle classes, and the expansion of mass media – did not eliminate social inequality. This section includes excerpts from theorists associated with the Frankfurt School (chapter 10), most notably **Max Horkheimer** and **Theodor W. Adorno** who wrote extensively and in a withering manner critiquing the strategic manipulation and manipulating effects of politics and consumer culture by economic interests. The Frankfurt School's second generation, and undoubtedly the most renowned social theorist alive today, **Jürgen Habermas**, outlines a way forward from the contemporary debasement of reason, one that returns attention to the possibility of using reason to discuss societal problems and to craft solutions that serve the common good. This section also includes excerpts from the extensive work of **Pierre Bourdieu** (chapter 11) who has been highly impactful in getting sociologists to think differently and to conduct innovative research (e.g. Lareau 1987) about how social inequality is reproduced, especially through the informal

cultures of school and in the ordinary everyday habits and tastes prevalent in family life. **Michel Foucault** is perhaps the most intellectually radical of all social theorists (chapter 12). His originality is especially seen in his construal of biopower and how he frames and analyzes the birth of sexuality and of other body-controlling structures (clinics, prisons). Widely read beyond sociology, his analysis of the fluidity of sexuality and power underpins much of queer theory, elaborated for sociologists by **Steven Seidman** (chapter 12).

The fifth and final section continues the emancipatory spirit of the post-1970s critique. This vibrant body of work includes (in chapter 13) selections from the early feminist theorist **Charlotte Perkins Gilman,** the ground-breaking focus by **Arlie Hochschild** on emotion work and its gendered structure, and leading contemporary feminist theorist **Dorothy E. Smith** articulating the necessity of standpoints that seek to understand from within the experiences of outsiders (e.g. women, members of minority racial and ethnic groups, LGBTQ+). Additionally, **Patricia Hill Collins** gives sustained attention to a Black women's standpoint as well as the complex intersectionality of individuals' identities and experiences, and to what this requires of scholars who seek to study intersectionality. Important here also is the construal and reassessment of hegemonic and nonhegemonic masculinities by **R.W. Connell** and **James W. Messerschmidt**.

In a parallel vein, postcolonial theories (chapter 14) draw attention to the structured dehumanization of racial and ethnic outsiders, and to the enduring legacies of slavery and colonial domination on the delegitimation of postcolonial identities and cultures. The pioneering Black sociologist **W.E. Burghardt Du Bois** was the first to forcefully articulate the bifurcating effect of slavery on the consciousness and identity of enslaved people and its

legacy on postslavery generations of Black people. **Edward W. Said** focuses on the West's construal of the (inferior) Otherness of the Orient, while **Frantz Fanon** evocatively conveys the everyday reality and experience of being a Black man in a racist society. **Stuart Hall** underscores the plurality and diversity of postcolonial histories, cultures, and identities and offers an emancipatory vision of cultural identity as an ongoing project that can dynamically integrate past and present into a new authentic synthesis. Contemporary scholars also increasingly point to the colonial and Northern/Western biases in what is regarded as legitimate knowledge, including biases in sociological knowledge, as elaborated by **Raewyn Connell** and colleagues. Others, such as **Alondra Nelson**, draw out the somewhat unexpected progressive social consequences of DNA testing and the use of genetic data by universities engaged in initiatives to make reparations to the descendants of freed slaves.

The final chapter (chapter 15) features excerpts highlighting what is distinctive about global society, our contemporary moment of late modernity, characterized by an array of transnational actors and processes. **Zygmunt Bauman** highlights what he sees as the diminishing role of the nation state and of its protective function toward its citizens and their well-being. **Anthony Giddens** discusses the disembeddedness of time and space and its consequences for individual selves and social processes. **Ulrich Beck** elaborates on the globalization of risk society and highlights its encompassing nature. Additionally, he and **Edgar Grande** highlight the variations in modernity and suggest the need for a cosmopolitanism that would more fully recognize the mutuality of all peoples and societies across the world. Focusing primarily on the post-secular West, and the political and cultural divisions between moderate religious and secular impulses, **Jürgen**

Habermas articulates how we might go about crafting more respectful and enriching discourses with those whose beliefs, ideas and experiences are different to ours.

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PART I
CLASSICAL THEORISTS

CHAPTER ONE
KARL MARX

CHAPTER MENU

1A Wage Labour and Capital (Karl Marx)

II

1B Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels)

Profit of Capital

- Capital
- The Profit of Capital

1C The German Ideology(Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels)

Karl Marx who was born in Germany in 1818 and died in London, England, in 1883, remains the foremost theorist in explaining the deep structural inequalities within capitalism. Despite the rapid pace of ongoing social change today – just think of the use and impact of the iPhone alone – and the many transformative changes in society since Marx's lifetime, which was the epoch of expanding industrialization, factory production, and urbanization – his understanding of how capitalism works, and why it expands and endures, exposes the economic, political, and cultural logics that enable capitalism to thrive despite the many personal and societal ills it simultaneously causes. In the popular imagination – among those who have not studied Marx – Marx is frequently thought of as someone who is opposed to work and for this reason postulated *The Communist Manifesto* (not included) as a vision of a world in which work would not be necessary. This, however, is a

gross mischaracterization and misunderstanding of Marx and his theorizing. Yes, Marx envisioned the revolutionary downfall of capitalism as part of a long historical process and its replacement with a society built on a utopian equality in which, with each person working or contributing based on their particular skills and talents, the individual and collective needs of the community would be satisfied. Clearly this vision has not been realized, and in fact capitalism has grown exponentially such that today we live in a truly global capitalist society, with capitalist processes and consequences apparent in every country in the world (including those that are nominally communist, such as Cuba and North Korea). However, the explanatory power of much of Marx's theorizing (notwithstanding its frequent polemical tone and some erroneous assumptions and predictions) is such that it sharply illuminates why and how capitalism has so successfully endured.

It's not that Marx was opposed to work or to labor. Rather, what he critiqued was the empirical fact that across history – from slavery through feudal times and in capitalist society – work and inequality were two sides of the same coin. He emphasizes a materialist conception of history wherein the way in which wealth is produced and distributed is based on a system of unequal social classes (Engels1878/1978: 700–1). Workers – the producers or makers of things or of ideas – do not get to fully own or fully enjoy the fruits of their labor. Rather, their creative work and its products are extracted from them by others for their own advancement. The ancient slave-master, the feudal lord, and the capitalist, though occupying quite distinct positions in historical formation, share in common the fact that their material and social well-being relies on the labor of others. Focusing on capitalism in particular, Marx, along with his frequent coauthor Friedrich Engels (1820–95), drew attention to and analyzed the inherent inequality structured into the

relation between capitalists or the bourgeois class and wage-workers or the proletariat, and how such inequality is structured into and is sustained within capitalism. Moreover, in Marx's analysis, the economic logic of capitalism (anchored in the capitalist motive to make profit and accumulate economic capital), extends beyond the purely economic sector and economic relationships to underlie and motivate all social, political, and cultural activity. The excerpts I include here illuminate the lived material processes involved in the production and maintenance of capitalist inequalities, and also convey a far more searing analysis of capitalism – and of how it is talked about and understood – than is typically found in the discourse of economists or indeed in the everyday conversations of ordinary people. Thus Marx compels us to critique the principles, processes, and vocabulary of our everyday existence in what is today a global capitalist society.

For example, wages for Marx (see excerpt *1a Wage Labour and Capital*) are not merely a worker's take-home pay or salary determined by a formula that pays attention to a worker's skills and education, the cost of living, and the scarcity of particular kinds of workers. Rather, as he elaborates, wages are a function of the exploitation of workers by the owners of capital (whether corporations or landowners) and result from the system of commodity production that is distinctive to capitalism and which in essence requires that workers, too, be considered as, and used and exploited, in ways similar to other commodities. As Marx also elaborates, profit, that motivating engine of capital accumulation (and of capitalist greed) cannot be seen simply as the reward to capitalists for their entrepreneurialism and hard work. To the contrary, profit for Marx is only possible because the capital and investments required to maintain the capitalist production

system are inherently tied to the work produced by workers on a daily basis and whose wages (whether they are relatively low or impressively high) are always going to be less than the actual amount of products or value they produce for their employers (whether factory owners or the owners of a sports team franchise or a hospital). The difference between the cost of maintaining a worker (the costs of wages, raw materials, infrastructure, etc.) and the value the worker produces is the surplus the employer receives and takes as profit. And this profit is assured by the structured organization of the production process (which includes the specialized division of labor) and the fact that profit can never be sacrificed for the betterment of workers. Moreover, it is the whole class of workers which is exploited and alienated within capitalism; a worker is free to leave any given employer and go work for another; but is never free to not work – because in capitalism, workers are reliant on the class of employers for the wages (the livelihood) that allows them to live. In capitalist society, if a worker can't earn a wage (a wage that is invariably less than capitalist profit), they can't have much of a life; hence for Marx, the relationship between workers and capitalists/employers is inherently antagonistic and this is necessarily and objectively the case owing to the structural inequality built into the organization and workings of capitalism, no matter how benign the employer and how subjectively happy or fulfilled the worker.

Marx elaborates on the objective alienation or estrangement of the worker (see excerpt *1b Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*) and shows how this alienation inheres in the capitalist production process. Importantly, too, alienation results in private property being appropriated by the capitalists as rightfully theirs (though it is the product of alienated labor) and used by them as an object (such as money) in furthering their own

ends. Therefore, while humans have, as Marx notes, a higher consciousness than animals and a great capacity for much creativity (see excerpt *1c The German Ideology*), the capitalist production process diminishes them of their creativity and reduces them (as commodities) to cogs in the profit–production process.

Marx's insights about the labor process – what's entailed in the actual production and commodification of work – extend beyond work/labor to the whole lifeworld of the worker (and of the capitalist). A critical and enduring insight of Marx is that people's being, their everyday material existence, determines what they think about and how they think about or evaluate the things they think about (see excerpt *1c The German Ideology*). For Marx, ideas do not come from nowhere or from a mind abstracted from material existence. Ideas, rather, emerge from individuals' lived everyday experiences. The economic or material activity of individuals and the actual circumstances (of structured inequality and objective alienation) in which they do these activities determine and circumscribe their whole consciousness and, by extension, their personal relationships, social lives, and political ideas. Marx notes that people have a certain freedom to make or to remake their lives but they must necessarily do so in circumstances which are not of their own choosing. As he states: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances…transmitted from the past"; *Eighteenth Brumaire*, p. 103; excerpt not included). As Marx conveys, individuals and social and political protest movements must always operate within the actual material circumstances they have inherited, and in a capitalist society, these circumstances are always inherently unequal and determined by the ruling capitalist class. Hence, for Marx,

ideology, i.e. the dominating or ruling ideas in society – everyday ideas about the nature of capitalism, hard work, money, consumerism, the law, politics, relationships, etc. – is derived from and controlled by the dominance of the standpoint of the capitalist class, a standpoint which marginalizes the objective human and social interests of the workers (who are invariably exploited by capitalism) even as the ruling class (capitalists) insists that capitalism advances not only the interest of capital (e.g. profit) but simultaneously the interests of workers.

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1A Karl Marx from Wage Labour and Capital

Original publication details: Karl Marx, from Wage Labour and Capital **(1891/1978). Lawrence & Wishart, 2010, pp. 17–18, 19–21, 27–29, 29–30, 41. Reproduced with permission of Lawrence & Wishart via PLS Clear.**

What are wages? How are they determined?

If workers were asked: “What are your wages?” one would reply: “I get a franc[1] a day from my bourgeois”; another, “I

get two francs," and so on. According to the different trades to which they belong, they would mention different sums of money which they receive from their respective bourgeios for a particular labour time[2] or for the performance of a particular piece of work, for example, weaving a yard of linen or type-setting a printed sheet. In spite of the variety of their statements, they would all agree on one point: wages are the sum of money paid by the bourgeois[3] for a particular labour time or for a particular output of labour.

The bourgeois,[4] therefore, *buys* their labour with money. They *sell* him their labour for money.[5] For the same sum with which the bourgeois has bought their labour,[6] for example, two francs, he could have bought two pounds of sugar or a definite amount of any other commodity. The two francs, with which he bought two pounds of sugar, are the *price* of the two pounds of sugar. The two francs, with which he bought twelve hours' labour,[7] are the price of twelve hours' labour. Labour,[8] therefore, is a commodity, neither more nor less than sugar. The former is measured by the clock, the latter by the scales.

[...]

Wages are, therefore, not the worker's share in the commodity produced by him. Wages are the part of already existing commodities with which the capitalist buys a definite amount of productive labour as such.[9]

Labour[10] is, therefore, a commodity which its possessor, the wage-worker, sells to capital. Why does he sell it? In order to live.

But,[11] labour is the worker's own life-activity, the manifestation of his own life. And this *life-activity* he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary *means of subsistence*. Thus his life-activity is for him only a means

to enable him to exist. He works in order to live. He does not even reckon labour as part of his life, it is rather a sacrifice of his life. It is a commodity which he has made over to another. Hence, also, the product of his activity is not the object of his activity. What he produces for himself is not the silk that he weaves, not the gold that he draws from the mine, not the palace that he builds. What he produces for himself is *wages*, and silk, gold, palace resolve themselves for him into a definite quantity of the means of subsistence, perhaps into a cotton jacket, some copper coins and a lodging in a cellar. And the worker, who for twelve hours weaves, spins, drills, turns, builds, shovels, breaks stones, carries loads, etc. – does he consider this twelve hours' weaving, spinning, drilling, turning, building, shovelling, stone-breaking as a manifestation of his life, as life? On the contrary, life begins for him where this activity ceases, at table, in the public house, in bed. The twelve hours' labour, on the other hand, has no meaning for him as weaving, spinning, drilling, etc., but as *earnings*, which bring him to the table, to the public house, into bed. If the silkworm were to spin in order to continue its existence as a caterpillar, it would be a complete wage-worker.

Labour[12] was not always a *commodity*. Labour was not always wage labour, that is, *free* labour. The *slave* did not sell his labour[13] to the slave owner, any more than the ox sells its services to the peasant. The slave, together with his labour,[14] is sold once and for all to his owner. He is a commodity which can pass from the hand of one owner to that of another. He *is himself* a commodity, but the labour[15] is not *his* commodity. The *serf* sells only a part of his labour.[16] He does not receive a wage from the owner of the land; rather the owner of the land receives a tribute from him. The serf belongs to the land and turns over to the owner of the land the fruits thereof. The *free labourer*, on the other hand, sells himself and, indeed, sells himself

piecemeal. He auctions off eight, ten, twelve, fifteen hours of his life, day after day, to the highest bidder, to the owner of the raw materials, instruments of labour and means of subsistence, that is, to the capitalist. The worker belongs neither to an owner nor to the land, but eight, ten, twelve, fifteen hours of his daily life belong to him who buys them. The worker leaves the capitalist to whom he hires himself whenever he likes, and the capitalist discharges him whenever he thinks fit, as soon as he no longer gets any profit out of him, or not the anticipated profit. But the worker, whose sole source of livelihood is the sale of his labour,[17] cannot leave the *whole class of purchasers, that is, the capitalist class*, without renouncing his existence. *He belongs not to this or that capitalist but to the capitalist class*,[18] and, moreover, it is his business to dispose of himself, that is, to find a purchaser within this bourgeois class.[19]

[…]

II

Now, the same general laws that regulate the price of commodities in general of course also regulate *wages*, the *price of labour*.

Wages will rise and fall according to the relation of demand and supply, according to the turn taken by the competition between the buyers of labour, the capitalists, and the sellers of labour,[20] the workers. The fluctuations in wages correspond in general to the fluctuations in prices and commodities. *Within the fluctuations, however, the price of labour will be determined by the cost of production, by the labour time necessary to produce this commodity – labour.*[21]

What, then, is the cost of production of labour? [22]