

Methodological foundations of a critical theory of capitalism

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1. Knowing the empirical facts does not suffice. This is because communism does not materialize merely at the level of the empirical, but as thought and movement it materializes in the realm of *social possibility*, which glides along the path of the historical.
2. A critique of capitalism requires learning what the social possibilities are; thus it requires knowing what the necessities and non-necessities of social ontology are (at the level of the transhistorical), and which of them are articulated in capitalism (at the level of the historically specific).
3. But this only tells us what is and what could be — it does not tell us *why*. To know *why*, beyond the mere empirical facts (but in relation to them), the necessities of capitalism itself must also be known. The question must be answered: what in the logic of capitalism is entirely inherent to it and completely inescapable so long as capitalism remains? Once this question is answered, a critique of this inherent logic to capitalism would thus constitute a critique of the whole of capitalism — a normative objection to the entire system.
4. To constitute a “logic of capitalism” numerous empirical categories must be shown to necessitate each other; this constitutes the latter as a system, and from here its empirical results can be demarcated as necessary or not truly necessary outcomes of its internal logic as a sys-

tem. If the really necessary empirical outcomes of the system are normatively objectionable, then the system itself also is.

5. The “internal logic” is what remains when capitalism is considered independently of the various ways in which it can be governed, altered, and regulated in general. Only a critique of this internal logic suffices as a genuine critique of capitalism. Such a critique has as its content the empirical results of this internal logic that are shown to be truly necessary and inescapable — a genuinely permanent mark of the system, regardless of its partial alterations — and the question of whether or not such empirical results are normatively objectionable or not.
6. An “alteration” of the system is such up until the point where it changes what was considered the core and unchangeable features of the system. The core features of the system must therefore be articulated in advance and agreed upon. It is then the task of the critic to genuinely construct the system: to demonstrate how these agreed upon features are not themselves accidental, but necessitate each other, demanding each other’s existence and reproducing it. Then, the essential internal logic of this system is articulated in order to be able to demarcate which empirical outcomes of the system are necessary to it, and which may be resolved with an “alteration” to it. It is only these empirical outcomes which can then be criticized on normative grounds — and if they are able to be, the critique is completed.
7. The empirical is dealt with at the level of *science*, the possible at the level of *theory*, and the objectionable at the level of the human and the *irrational*.