

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q4(a)

According to Marx, how are human beings alienated from their human potential and what does he suggest to change this?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · Sociology GS 1 · 20 marks · Sociology

Sociology - The Discipline: Modernity and social changes in Europe and emergence of sociology; Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences; Sociology and common sense.

Core demand of the question

- According to **Marx**, how are human beings alienated from their human potential and what does he suggest to change this?
- Keep the answer within a 20-mark length

Revision summary

Human potential for **Marx** is free, social, creative labour.

Capitalism alienates workers from product, process, species-being, and others.

Wage labour and fetishism produce that split.

Change is practical transformation of property, not moral advice.

Shorter hours and associated production are the direction, not a full blueprint.

Introduction

For **Karl Marx**, human potential is conscious, social, creative labour that makes a world. Under capitalism that activity is alienated. Change requires transforming property in the means of production, not a moral pep talk to the worker.

Body

Species-being and potential

- In the **1844 Manuscripts**, humans are **species-beings**: they produce freely, in society, and can treat the product as their own objectification.
- Potential is not a hidden soul. It is uncrippled productive life.

Four moments of alienation

- **From the product**: the object belongs to another and confronts the worker as capital.
- **From the labour process**: work is external, commanded, often deskilled later as Harry Braverman showed.
- **From species-being**: labour becomes a means to wages, not a free life-activity.
- **From other humans**: class relation replaces cooperative production.

How capitalism produces this

- Wage labour and private ownership split conception from the worker's control.
- **Commodity fetishism** in Capital hides social relations behind things.

- The more productive the worker, the more capital faces her as a foreign power.

What **Marx** suggests

- Practical, revolutionary transformation of property, not only interpretation, as the **Theses on Feuerbach** insist.
- **Association of producers:** abolish the wage-capital relation that makes alienation routine.
- Shorter **working day** and collective control as preconditions of free time, already political in Capital.
- He did not offer a detailed factory blueprint. He offered a change of social relations.

Indian echo

- Informal and gig work extend alienation without a classic mill. The product and the app still confront the worker as another's.

Flow diagram

Species-being creative labour -> Alienation
Alienation -> Product
Alienation -> Process
Alienation -> Species-being
Alienation -> Others
Change property association -> Species-being creative labour

Conclusion

Marx's humans are alienated from product, process, species-being, and others when labour is sold to capital. He proposes changing that property relation through collective practice. Potential returns only when production is again a social, self-directed activity.

Facts & figures

1844 Manuscripts

Classic statement of fourfold alienation and species-being.

Theses on Feuerbach

The point is to change the world, not only to interpret it.

Commodity fetishism

Social relations appear as relations between things.

Working day

A political limit that also opens time beyond alienated labour.