Objectively speaking, and without kissing the hand that hits me, there are bewildering things in Marx’s work! I even regret now that this doctrine will disappear by itself in the era of automations, with the disappearance of the workers from factories and of the miners. It was valid only for them for a moment (so for an era); for the others, for the peasant, the clerk, the freelancer, the intellectual, and the merchant, it only represented something in the line of “resentment,” as Max Scheler said, so in the line of irrepresible dissatisfaction of seeing someone else and entire classes better equipped than yourself for happiness and comfort.

There are pages where Marx shatters you. How troubling is his notion of “alienation” from the manuscripts of his youth — and I saw it later, because those pages were intentionally taken out from the edition I had received. Today everyone invokes them, but how many of us stand under their direct seduction and, after all, their ambiguity? He describes there the three or even four… no, a cascade of man’s alienations, all of them being impressive in the light of living conditions of modern man.

In the phase that capitalism reached, he says, work produces not only goods, but also the worker as a good. The object produced by work opposes it as something foreign, as a force that is independent from the producer. As he produces more, he falls further under the dominion of his own product.

One is tempted to ask, to whom does this happen? Only to the worker or also to the one who gave him work, poor guy? If everything happens as in religion, where, as Marx says, the more man puts into God, the less he keeps for himself, then you could say that the exploited puts into play here only his work, while the exploiter puts his soul. You should probably deplore both,
the slave and the master, as Hegel does; even more, since a “self-alienation in a product” takes place, as we are told, a worker could still shake away the deception if he started to run back into his poverty or wherever in the world. He could return to his dirt (if he is allowed to have it or if it has not been transformed into a golf course in the meantime). The other one has sold his soul completely, as it has been seen in so many cases, for example in so many rich families, where the father is not the only slave to his goods, but the son must also be modeled, rather mutilated, according to the requirements of possessions.

However, Marx has no mercy on the poor possessor. In the historical phase he was in, he had to denounce the exploitation and the alienation of the individual forced to work. Concerning him, Marx shows clearly that there are no less than four kinds of alienation, taking into consideration that the production activity is also at stake, not only the result of the production work. First, he says, the effort brought by the worker is something exterior to him, not having to do with his essence, and it represents the mortification brought about by forced work. Second, the type of work that industrial capitalism established is such that it does not allow any freedom to the worker, except the one for his animalistic functions, or eating, drinking, and procreating. On the other hand, and third, a common man is a universal being, a genus, who considers his entire nature to be his inorganic body; however, his work now alienated him from nature. Similarly, and this is the fourth point, it alienates him from the human genus. Thus, a worker, Marx says, is alienated: in relation to his nature and to his self, and then in relation to nature purely and simply, and finally in relation to other humans.

Perhaps we simplify things or we summarize them imperfectly, but how deep and open this investigation is! This is probably why it was not included from the beginning in this edition of the complete works, which I was given to read in translation. However, even in this version, you fall upon amazing things in the first volume. I would have never read — just as its own adherents don’t — the article titled “Debates on the Law of Thefts of Wood.” I find its psalmic beauty here, in prison.
chapter xiv

author says that you possess the tree, but you do not truly possess its dry branches, when he adds that the poor (who steal wood for winter from others’ woods everywhere, not only in Germany) have a certain kinship with the dry branches, which gives them a genuine right over them, then what will you say that is to be found on this page? Is it something economical, as an impulse to revolt, or is it rather the religious poetry of the psalmist?

Of course, his polemical books, like The Holy Family, The German Ideology, or The Poverty of Philosophy, filled with heavy German irony, can no longer be appealing to anyone, if they ever were. There are, however, thoughts and entire pages that remain imprinted in your mind. Today, how true seems to be the affirmation found in the first work cited, that the class of owners and the proletarian class represent man’s same alienation from the self; the former sees itself satisfied with alienation, while the latter is annihilated by it. In this thought, we almost have the pity for the possessors that I have mentioned. Similarly, from the same work, the idea that “all progress realized by the spirit has so far been to the detriment of humanity, which arrives at a situation that is more and more inhuman” is valid for those well established, but not for the multitudes, if it is about the progress realized by the European spirit in the line of well-being only.

I would not pass easily, as the official commentators do, over deeply significant thoughts, like the one (which, it is true, was deleted by the author) from The German Ideology in which he declares courageously, “We know only one science, the science of history, which comprises together the history of nature and that of humanity.” Isn’t this, after all, the novelty of Hegel and then of Marx, that they have placed everything within fluidity? Then, further in the work, if you are not satisfied with the cheap historical-materialist explanations, such as this, “the lack of sugar and of coffee (due to the blockade) raised the Germans against Napoleon,” you are impressed, instead, by a few pages long thought to propose that the separation between the city and the village represents the greatest division of labor. He believes it can be overcome by the new system, and that this divi-
ession exists only under the conditions of private property, which leads to the “urban animal” and to the “rural animal”! (But you wonder, hasn't the new doctrine actually increased the urban animality?) I would not just pass over all of these things — for the bad, but also for the good in Marx's intuitions — just as I would not easily go over the stunning, dark prophecy, so close to confirmation, “There will be a time when individuals (precisely the urban ones, my note) will take on themselves also this product of the species, language.” I don’t know how, but, of all philosophers, only Marx, as much as he can be called a philosopher, has something of a prophet in him — and this is a novelty. Plato looks too much into eternity, and Hegel too much into past history, which he actually integrates admirably. Nobody has opened the door to the future. Instead, this one, regardless of how modest of a philosopher he is...

But the most surprising thing — leaving aside so many pages and places of first order, starting with the Manifesto, which has not been surpassed by any other — is that people easily ignore, almost with compassion and indulgence, the ten years of journalism at the Tribune in the United States. It’s true that his articles are not directly edifying for the proposed ideology, but they are fascinating as cultural and historical documents. There is something so complete in them, between 1853 and 1863, as they were written weekly, as a report about the situation in Europe for the American reader. Also, there is something so tumultuous and alive in them that you could say that they are about the Intimate Journal of Europe, of a Europe that could spread its “imperialist” maneuvers over the body of other continents. Beginning with the Gladstones and the Russells of England, with Napoleon III or the Crimean War, passing on to the poverty and lethargy of India, to the Taiping Rebellion in China, Russia’s absolutism, reactionary Switzerland and the revolutionary United States, deepening then the struggle of Europe to have something unique on Terra, with the industrial revolution, but also bringing great risks together with great hopes — what is the dramatic conscience that this minuscule and incomparable Europe does not have, as if it were a fiery man overwhelmed by the spirit of
adventure! But if continents also have a conscience, then Marx was, at least for ten years, the devilish chronicler and spokes-
person of this conscience. Whoever does not read the *Intimate Journal* of the middle of the last century ignores himself as Eu-
ropean.

I don’t plan on emphasizing everything that I liked in his pre-classical work, from before *Capital*, or on trying to encour-
age experiencing it with joy, especially in the case of those who study it because they are commanded to do so. I would only 
mention that the gold in this author is rather found in his small works, in simple manifests, portraits, or clarifications, gold that 
he himself wastes in the sand of action.

When multiplied, as he liked to be, beyond specialties, but 
with the vocation of the expert, a fighter for all, but in the name of his ideas about all, suffocated in an England which is the only 
one that stands him and which was, in fact, the only bearable one for him, how could he be gathered together in a well cali-
brated work? After all, he did not have time to write works and, 
as Nietzsche later, he wanted to be a fatality, not an author.

But one can see in him great thoughts and formulations even 
in a trifle of a speech!

In “Speech at the anniversary of *People’s Paper*” from 1856, he 
says, “It seems that the more humanity subjects nature, the more 
man becomes the slave of another man or of his own vileness.” 
And then, “All of our inventions seem to take us to only one 
result: to endow material forces with spiritual life and to reduce 
human life to a simple material force.” Hasn’t this happened in 
Marxist states, but also in the consumer society, exactly after 
a century? And here is, finally, Marx’s verdict in this speech-
manifest: “The new forces of the society need only one thing: 
new people, who know how to master them, and these are the 
workers. Just like the machines, the workers are an invention 
of our times…. History is the judge, and the proletariat is the 
executioner of the verdict.”

It was not this way, or it was this way — I no longer care now, 
as I am behind bars. But I wonder one more time, faced with the 
intellectual emotion that his work awakes in me at certain mo-
ments: am I not actually kissing the hand that hits me? But no, I am clearly interested only in something completely unexpected, the prophet in Marx, the prophet as upside-down philosopher, and his monotheism, the man of only one idea, who can still see with it far in the concreteness of history, and who could say to someone like Chekhov, it seems (see the article “Herr Vogt”): “After all, it does not matter whether this pathetic Europe disappears — which will actually take place soon, unless there will be a social revolution — and whether America will exploit, then, the old system on account of Europe.”

Actually, there is something else that interests me. It is the fact that I see in him, in this victorious man for a moment, a true brother Alexander, another one. Pitié pour les forts! I feel like shouting one more time, from here, where I am. Have mercy on a thinker so great that, in those parts of the world where he is invoked too often and too incorrectly, he has become the laughter of children. Have mercy on the way in which his victory turns against him. Give up cheap mockery, those who feel you are his victims; give up describing him, according to the stories of his neighbors in London, as a poor common man in his relations with his wife of noble origin, or mocking him because he grew a beard in old age (and what a beard), after he had laughed in a letter to Engels of the German prophets from the exile after 1848, who had grown beards. Have mercy because of the curses that will accumulate one day over his head, the unhappy victor.

The Russians will curse him because he blocked their historical affirmation for so many decades, as no absolutist czar had succeeded in the 19th century. The Jews will curse him, his co-religionists, about whom he declared more infernal things than any anti-Semitic man. The workers will curse him because he deceived them for a moment that they are a unitary and supra-national class, that they have a complete human identity, and that they are the only ones who can be the salt of the earth and of history. Even the communists will curse him, because, with his claim of speaking “scientifically,” he forbade them the ac-

* “Mercy for the powerful,” in French in the original.
tive idealism, the power of creation, and the access to novelty. Nature will curse him, because he has ravished it with his furor of industrialization, in the first hour of heavy machinism. The machines will curse him, as refined as they will become and as prepared, as brides, to marry the being of man, instead of being maneuvered by the rough hands of the workers. The gods with their religions will curse him, because he disdained them by portraying them as simple opium for the people, when they were aspiring, and at times succeeding, to bring to the world everything that he had desired, plus something of which he no longer knew or no longer wanted to know.

Then someone will come to say, “Forgive him, he also lived under the folly of the Good. Pray for the soul of brother Karl. Pray for the Big Brother.”

* “The Big Brother” appears in English and in italics in the Romanian original.