• Alienation from Product
  • Ownership over the product a laborer creates is lost
  • No more connection to the finished product
• Alienation from nature
  • i.e. kids not being able to identify actual food but they could identify the food products
  • Natural products altered by human labor
  • i.e. restrooms in nature preserves
• Homo sapiens- “wise human”

1/27/14

Karl Marx 1818-1883

• Capital & Value
  o Use-value: the utility of something; how much use you can get out of something; how long does it take to extract all possible value out of a commodity (hammer example)
    ▪ The extraction of use-value is always destructive
    o Translates value from 1 commodity to another
      ▪ Cumulative process; builds over time
    ▪ Value- relative to a time period/culture/within a society; highly porous/highly fluid/ very susceptible to change
    • Price- symbolically represents value, not a statement of value itself
  o Exchange value- most relative; the value of any given thing is compared with the value of all other commodities in the market place
    ▪ Price is a symbolic representation of exchange value (also relative); [bottle example]
    • In changing social context; price changes but the use-value does not change
      ▪ All commodities are ultimately connected with other commodities in an economy
        i.e. if the power of a dollar falls, then values go up (even if the price tag itself has not changed)
    o Surplus value- (can be compared to profits) how much value has been put into a commodity through labor, then exchanged on the open market, and the exchange fees add value to the commodity
      ▪ All value comes from labor; surplus value=anything over the cost of labor + tools of labor
    o Commodities- (for Marx) everything is ultimately a commodity; everything has a use-value; items that can be used as tools for the desires/needs of humans
      ▪ All commodities are ultimately created/recreated in terms of social products [dirt example]
        • For something to be a commodity, it has to be a social product
          ▪ Everything in nature is prior. Value & the notion of what a commodity is, is all in our heads
            ▪ Money is the universal commodity b/c it’s already an abstract commodity that can be exchanged for actual commodities; therefore no use-value except as a social product
• Price & Labor
  o How prices are determined
    ▪ According to the cost of production
      • The cost of production does not dictate price; price is oriented around the cost of production
        ▪ Price goes above or below the cost of production based on the cost of transportation, labor, & other stuff
Based on an understanding of bourgeoisie classes as feudal lords

1. Bourgeoisie classes have no such honor

II. Social Contract (i.e. John Locke, Rousseau,)
   a. State of Nature/War
      i. Largely written in 17th/18th century, idea that a state of nature will always desolve into a state of war
         1. Everyone vs. everyone, strong vs. weak
            a. The weak will band together to give up freedom in order to increase security
            b. Bonding together against the strong creates civilization
            c. Life in a state of nature is “cruel, brutish, & short”
      ii. Marx rejects this: The very notion of individuality comes from society itself; but the very idea that an individual creating language & society in the middle of nothing is absurd
         1. Organization of society is based on the family unit
         2. An individual cannot exist before the idea of society exists
         3. Unbroken chain in the process of production—all revolutions of technology are based on other revolutions of technology
            a. Each new thesis contains its own antithesis—each revolution of the means of production contains the seeds of its own destruction leading to new revolutions

III. Political Economy
   a. Historical Movement
      i. Politics & economics are intimately connected
         1. Politics are a way of formally organizing social relationships, orientated around the process of production itself
            a. minimum wage laws, laws against loitering, laws against panhandling—have to work, don’t have a choice
            b. Bonding together against the strong creates civilization
            c. Life in a state of nature is “cruel, brutish, & short”
      1. Is now in volume, currency was based on something material; now money has value b/c we say so; it now has value as social product itself b/c all believe in it
         a. Alienation from nature is increasing
         b. Capital is an amount of money used to invest in other things
            i. The compounding of wealth occurs b/c of the movement of wealth across hands, no extra value is added except by the workers who move the wealth around (labor-based theory of value)
         b. Private Property- the appropriation of nature (fundamentally economic)
            i. Generates as a concept in terms of feudal-social relationships
               1. “Capital”—The very word itself is a reference to a feudal king
            ii. Coming across things & claiming ownership (?)
               1. Labor creates ownership—it’s the proletariat who should own the products of labor
            iii. Private property is a legal relationship; purchased through reified labor
               1. Private property w/ the labor of others
               2. Typically comes w/ inheritance rights
                  a. Maintain & consecrate property into smaller & smaller hands—increases the static nature of class structures
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   iv. Relationship b/tween state power & economic power

IV. Social Relations