

I. An Introductory Note:

At the heart of our discourse is the culture of capitalism: the origins and processes of those market societies which have comprised our human environment and determined our social relationships. We want to discover how the capitalist mode of production emerged; how it transformed traditional communities and shattered their values; and how the laboring poor resisted the process until the conquering bourgeoisie institutionalized repression and disciplined the "subversives". We want to recount the drama of alienated labor: the degradation of work and the policing of human sentiment. We want to traverse those earlier centuries when the ruling classes enshrined the inalienable right of private property; when commodity production swept all other values before it; when the laboring masses, both in Europe and the colonized world, came to serve no nobler master than the market; and when, finally and painfully, those masses groped toward a searing consciousness of that "great transformation".

We live in societies whose processes are neither inevitable nor eternal. In history we can uncover the sources of exploitation and alienation; behind the ideology of bourgeois liberalism we can discover those agencies of repression (courts, prisons, schools, asylums) which we have come to take for granted; in the evolution of the capitalist project we can trace the re-making of the human personality and the fissuring of the human community; in the classic bourgeois revolutions, when the aspirations of the popular classes yielded to the prerogatives of private property, we can de-mystify the modern ideology of freedom and equality. We are proposing nothing less than the deepening and sharpening of our historical consciousness: so that we understand how our social condition evolved; so that we realize why it can (and should) change; so that we can re-join that struggle for an authentically human society which, despite all odds, has persisted over long centuries.

II. Books for the Course

a) Required Paperbacks

- M. Dobb -- Studies in the Development of Capitalism
- K. Polanyi -- The Great Transformation
- C. Hill -- The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714
- ** C. Hill -- The World Turned Upside Down
- D. Hay (and others) -- Albion's Fatal Tree
- E.P. Thompson -- The Making of the English Working Class
- A. Soboul -- The French Revolution
- C.L.R. James -- The Black Jacobins
- Balzac -- Lost Illusions

**The bookstores haven't as yet received their stock of Hill's World Turned Upside Down; but the publisher has promised that they'll have an adequate supply on hand by the time we intend to use it. It's an exciting book: well worth waiting for.

b) Optional Paperbacks

We have asked the bookstores to stock a limited supply of two books which aren't listed among the required readings; but since they shed light on certain problems which we expect to address, we've thought it useful to have them on hand in case you have the time and interest to read beyond the required list:

- 1) One is George Rude's Paris and London in the 18th Century, which analyzes the modes and purposes of popular rebellion in the pre-industrial city.
- 2) The other is Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Women, written in 1792, which must stand as the most significant document in the early history of radical feminism. (If you eventually choose to write one of your essays on Wollstonecraft's tract, you might also include in your reading her short novel, available in paperback, called Maria, or the Wrongs of Women).

III. The Discussion Sections and Reading Assignments

The weekly discussion section is a vital and integral part of our course: a workshop in which you can relate the relevant past to your understanding of the present; a forum in which you can articulate your ideas about the readings and order them into a meaningful synthesis about the processes of modern market societies; a collective, formed out of a common commitment to de-mystification, in which you can analyze the ways of modern capitalism and uncover the deep-seated resistance to its values. We urge you to attend every meeting of your section; and to study the weekly reading assignment carefully enough so that you can make an active contribution to the discussion. For your own sake, you should take the section meetings very seriously; our Teaching Assistants, who are well-informed and sympathetic to your needs, can help you in countless ways -- but only if they see you regularly.

- a) Each discussion will gravitate around a problem raised by the weekly reading assignment. Since we have tried not to burden you with an excessive work load, heavier than your time and interest would permit you to shoulder, we have selected chapters or pages from the required paperbacks which, in our judgment, pose significant questions about the emergence of modern capitalism and its social impact. In so doing, we have tried to find passages in each book which can stand as a coherent whole. Needless to say, you will be better served if you can read more than just the assigned selections; but we are primarily concerned that you read whatever you can with care and understanding.

In all probability, the topics for each successive discussion will coincide no more than approximately with the material which we intend to present in our lectures: an almost inevitable disjuncture, since we expect, within our discourse, to analyze a wider range of evidence about the capitalist syndrome than any

short list of books can encompass. But we have organized the discussions around a certain number of problems which coincide with the important themes of our lectures: the emergence of modern capitalism; the subordination of social relationships to the "self-regulating market"; the pivotal impact of the English and French Revolutions; the ideological hegemony of bourgeois liberalism; the modalities of repression and alienation; the incipience of industrial capitalism; its psychological and cultural legacy; the beginnings of collective consciousness and resistance.

- b) The first discussion section will meet in the third week of the semester (February 7-11). It's especially important that you attend the initial session; for we base all of our records on your presence in the sections, and unless you're on hand for that first meeting, we won't have proper confirmation of your registration. But even more: you should, from the start, establish a good working relationship with your TA and your comrades in the collective: breaking down walls of formality, creating a climate of solidarity and common concern, transforming the historical discourse into an instrument of personal and social liberation.....
- c) For the first two weeks (January 24 to February 4), until the sections begin to meet, we're asking you to read Balzac's novel Lost Illusions: a penetrating commentary on the debasement of human ideals and the corrosion of social values in the capitalist market-place. Set in the post-Napoleonic decades of the early 19th century, Lost Illusions is a shattering social history about the new capitalist age: about the disappearance of those revolutionary principles, which the bourgeoisie had so boldly proclaimed in 1789, and the subservience of all values to the imperatives of wealth. Chronologically, Lost Illusions should, by all rights, stand at the end of our proposed course of study; but logically, it can and should serve as our point of departure. For in dissecting the processes of bourgeois society, Balzac turns us to those critical questions which, perforce, will command our attention: how the capitalist mode of production transformed the economy of modern societies; and no less, their ideological and cultural foundations. Lost Illusions is a long novel, but in this new excellent translation you should be able to read it quickly, for its essential meaning, over the first two weeks.
- d) Reading Assignments for the Discussion Sections
- I. The Conceptual Framework: the Advent of Modern Capitalism
- Section #1 (Feb. 7-11)
 Polanyi, pp. 33-102 (what we mean by a "market economy" and why Polanyi calls it the "great transformation")
- Section #2 (Feb. 14-18)
 Dobb, pp. 33-50; 83-122 (why the feudal mode of production declined, and how a mercantile bourgeoisie emerged to threaten it)

Section #3 (Feb. 21-25)

Dobb, pp. 123-198 (why industrial capitalism took root in early modern history, and how the bourgeoisie accumulated capital)

Note: If you have the time, you ought also to read the sixth chapter in Dobb on the growth of the proletariat.

II. The Seventeenth Century Pivot: the English Revolutions, 1640-89

Section #4 (Feb. 28-Mar 4)

Hill, Century of Revolution, pp. 9-74; 101-161 (why the contradictions of English society deepened to the breaking point in the first half of the 17th century; and how the revolution of the 1640's and 50's served the needs of capitalism)

Section #5 (Mar. 7-11)

Hill, Century, pp. 193-290; 307-11 (how the Revolution equated liberalism with the social and ideological hegemony of the propertied classes)

Section #6 (Mar. 14-18)

Hill, World Upside Down, pp. 16-58; 86-147; 261-291 (what the popular revolution might have been, and how it failed)

III. Resistance and Repression: the Sanctity of Private Property and the Law of the Market.

Section #7 (Mar. 21-25)

Hay (and others), pp. 17-119; Thompson, pp. 55-76 (why and how the propertied ruling classes imposed "law and order" on the laboring or uprooted poor)

Note: On the collective resistance of the lower classes, you can profitably consult Rude's Paris & London, Parts I and III.

Section #8 (Mar. 28-April 1)

Thompson, pp. 269-349; Polanyi, pp. 109-129 (how the laboring poor succumbed to the imperatives of the market-place)

IV. The Triumphant Bourgeoisie: the French Revolution, 1789-99

Note: During the spring break we're asking you to read the first part of Soboul's volume on the French Revolution (pp. 33-174), so that you understand the social crisis which matured in France during the eighteenth century.

Section #9 (Apr. 11-15)

Soboul, pp. 175-290 (how liberalism triumphed, and why the Revolution then veered to the Left)

Section #10 (Apr. 18-22)

Soboul, pp. 291-416 (what revolutionary Jacobinism meant, and why the popular revolution failed)

Note: On the social practice and ideology of the sans-culottes, you can fruitfully consult Rude, Part II.

Section #11 (Apr. 25-29)

James, chapters 1 through 8 (how property and race defined the limits of bourgeois liberalism)

Section #12 (May 2-6)

James, chapters 9 through 13 (why the San Domingo revolution failed, but what it revealed about the contradictions of world capitalism)

V. The Emergent Proletariat: the Seeds of Working-Class Consciousness

Section #13 (May 9-13)

Thompson, pp. 484-602 (how artisans combined against the new industrialization and resisted the "self-regulating market")

Section #14 (May 16-20)

Thompson, pp. 711-46; 779-832 (how the laboring poor groped toward a collective class consciousness)

VI. The Required Work

- a) The only written test which we'll set during the semester is the final exam. We'll draw the test of that examination from a short list of study questions, related either to the readings or the lectures, which we'll distribute some two weeks before the end of the semester; and among the questions which we pose for the final, we'll offer you a reasonable choice.
- b) You will also be responsible for two short written papers during the semester. We're not thinking about elaborate research projects but rather about concise essays, each of which will address a question raised by one of the required readings. We don't want a summary of the book; instead, we're asking you to elaborate on a theme which you consider relevant in understanding the culture of modern capitalism and the resistance to it.
 1. If you're taking the course for three credits, each essay should be no longer than five typewritten pages; if you're taking the course for four credits, each essay should run no longer than eight typewritten pages. (Be sure to indicate clearly on each paper whether you're enrolled for three or four credits).
 2. If you're registered for three credits, you can base your essays on the one required book which deals with the question you've chosen to write about. If you're registered for four credits, you should consult one other book in addition to the required reading, as the basis of each essay. Since a very great number of significant works have been written about the topics under consideration, you shouldn't have any difficulty in finding a useful supplementary reading; but in order to facilitate your search, we'll distribute in a few days a bibliography which lists, by category, some of the best and most accessible studies.
 3. You must submit your first essay to your Teaching Assistant no later than the week of March 21-25. You can choose one of the following readings as the basis of your essay:
 - a) Polanyi, The Great Transformation, Part II (i.e., about the dominion and effects of market societies)

- b) Dobb, Studies in the Development of Capitalism, chapters 2 through 7 (i.e., about the ways in which the capitalist mode of production emerged)
 - c) Hill, The Century of Revolution (i.e., about the revolution of the propertied victors)
 - d) Hill, The World Turned Upside Down (i.e., about the other revolution: of the property-less vanquished)
 - e) Hay (and others), Albion's Fatal Tree (i.e., about popular subversion and the strategy of social control)
 - f) Rude, Paris and London in the 18th Century (i.e., about pre-industrial social revolt)
4. You must submit the second essay to your Teaching Assistant no later than the week of May 9-13. You can choose one of the following books as the basis of your essay:
- a) Balzac, Lost Illusions (i.e., about the sovereignty of the market-place over literature and life)
 - b) Soboul, The French Revolution (i.e., about the limits of bourgeois liberalism and the aspirations of the popular masses)
 - c) James, The Black Jacobins (i.e., about the function of colonialism, and the making of the Third World Revolution)
 - d) Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Parts I and II (i.e., about repression and alienation; or, the subordination of the laboring poor to the imperatives of industrial capitalism)
 - e) Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Part III (i.e., about the sources and awakening of working-class consciousness)
 - f) Wollstonecraft, Vindication of the Rights of Women (i.e., about the demands and limitations of radical feminism)

Note: You might fruitfully consult Wollstonecraft's novel, Maria, or the Wrongs of Women: as well as the chapter on Vindication in Rowbotham's Women, Resistance, & Revolution.