

IAH 231B: Moral Issues, The Humanities and the Arts

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Study Questions Marx - Brecht

Marx, pp.85-104, Alienated Labor

1. Why is the worker degraded to a commodity?
2. Why does the object of labor become an alien being to the working human being?
3. What is the role of nature in the labor process?
4. Why does the "act of production" become alien to the working human being?
5. Why is the worker's "species being" alienated?
6. What does Marx mean by the "alienation of man from man?"
7. How is the general human emancipation contained in the worker's emancipation?
8. What is "crude communism?"
9. Why is communism the "solution to the riddle of history?"
10. Why is the communist movement a *social* movement?
11. Why do humans become hostile to each other through private property?
12. Why does private property make us "stupid and narrow minded?"
13. How does Marx think of the natural sciences?
14. Why is communism *not* the goal of human development?

Marx, pp. 124-134, 175-198, On James Mill, The German Ideology (Preface-Communist Revolution)

1. What happens with humans once they are becoming subject to the credit system in our societies?
2. Why does the "communal nature" appear "in the form of alienation?"
3. How does Marx explain the emergence of "value" and "price?"
4. What are the 4 aspects contained in wage labour?
5. What is money an expression of?
6. Why are we unable to enjoy the products of others?
7. Why is in exchange "man himself" for us mutually worthless?
8. How would production and exchange in a "human manner" look like?
9. What are the three forms of ownership that were historically established?
10. What determines consciousness?
11. How does Marx propose to look at historical developments?
12. Why is a certain mode of production "always combined with a certain mode of co-operation?"
13. How do we have to study history?
14. Where can private property be found in the family?
15. What are the main effects of labour division?

16. How does Marx conceive the state?
17. What is the real substance of the "essence of man?"
18. Who determines the ruling ideas of every epoch?
19. Why do the "productive forces appear as a world for themselves?"
20. What is the communist revolution about?

Marx, 472-480; 492-508

1. Why is a commodity "mysterious?"
2. Why is labour power a commodity?
3. How is the value of labour power determined?
4. What is "surplus value?"
5. What is "exchange value?"

Brecht

1. Describe the Three Gods. Why do you think Brecht creates them in this fashion?
2. Is Wong a good man? Why have the Gods chosen him to be their intermediary?
3. Who is Shen Te? Why does Brecht choose such a woman to be the heroine of the play?
4. Why do the Gods proclaim such a woman to be good and reward her so richly?
5. What happens to Shen Te everytime she is good to people? Cite specific examples.
6. Why does Shen Te create Shui Ta? And more important, does she really create him or has he always been a part of her?
7. Is Shui Ta a bad person? Describe his actions and personality.
8. What does Shen Te see in Yang Sun? Why is she drawn to him at first? Why does she continue to be drawn to him despite his reprehensible behavior?
9. What is the meaning and the importance of "The Song of the Defenseless?"
10. What are Marxian aspects in the play? For example, how does economy determine social relations? Think especially of Marx's piece *On James Mill*: how does Brecht deal with the relation between morality and economy?