Species-Beings: Young Marx in the Post-Anthropocene

Description:

This course gives a broad view of Marxism, but from a very specific starting point, that of the discussion of alienation and species-being in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, concepts that then appear to vanish from his later work. Written at the start of Marx’s revolutionary career, the *Manuscripts* were unpublished until the 1930s. Subsequently, “alienation” and “species-being” have had a tumultuous history: embraced by Lukacs and the Frankfort School, dismissed by Althusser, both implied and rejected in Deleuze and Guattari, they are now again being revised in the light of climate catastrophe, artificial intelligence, and other current capitalist cataclysms. We will take these categories as keys to Marx and Marxism, examining both how they are transmuted in Marx’s major works, such as *Grundrisse* and *Capital*, and revived by critical theorists staging a twenty first century encounter between Marxism and ecology, biopower, black lives, feminisms, accelerationism and de-accelerationism, animal rights, and the so-called Anthropocene. Or, perhaps better, post-Anthropocene; for as Donna Haraway remarks, the *Manuscripts* show Marx “both at his most humanist and at the edge of something else.” This, then, is a course on Marx from beginning to end, in at least three senses: it is ‘all Marx, all the time’; it runs from the young Marx to the Marx who dies writing *Capital*; and from the start of Marxism as a nineteenth century revolutionary project to a moment when its canonical forms end, starting something new.

Requirements:

1 in class presentation plus written summary (5-10pp): 25%

1 major research paper (20-30pp): 60%

Seminar participation: 15%

requirements may be adjusted depending on the number of seminar participants

Schedule:

Week 1 Problematic: Species-Being & Alienation
Week 2 Sources: Hegel and Feuerbach

Week 3 1844: The Young Marx

Week 4 Metamorphosis: Grundrisse & Capital

Week 5 Rediscovery: Lukacs & the Frankfort School

Week 5 The Break: Althusser

Week 7 Becomings: Deleuze & Guattari

Week 8 Metabo:isms: Eco-Marxisms

Week 9 Architects & Bees: Animals

Week 10 Feminist Appropriations

Week 11 Inhuman Power: Machines

Week 12 Posthuman? Accelerate, Decelerate, Swerve

Week 13 Conclusions

Readings:

Readings will be drawn from some of the following sources:


Feuerbach, Ludwig (1881) *The Essence of Christianity* https://libcom.org/files/The%20Essence%20of%20Christianity.pdf


