Species-Being and Capitalism Marxist Analysis

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Species-Being and Human Nature

Species-being is the essence of a species, which includes its needs and desires. Most of the species are content with the fulfilment of their primal needs, such as food, intercourse and sleep, because only these basic activities are essential for the survival of their species. In contrast, human beings are more complex, so it is understandable that their needs and desires will be complex as well. The concept of species being was introduced by Karl Marx as he believed that the complexity of human beings made them superior to the other species (Paulsantilli, 1973). Their need for more placed them on top of the food chain, and their search for answers made them the most intelligent of the species. The intricacy of human needs led to technological advancement and the rise of capitalism. This essay will explore the role of species in capitalism and the way one affects the other.

Industrial Revolution and Capitalist Alienation

The world saw the rise of the Industrial Revolution during the years 1760, 1820, and 1840. This has been the world's biggest technological advancement as it paved the way for the technologies we own today. Before the Industrial Revolution, there was a clear line between the upper class and the lower class. However, this line was blurred with the emergence of a new class: the middle class. This class was important as it became the backbone of capitalism that emerged due to the Industrial Revolution. Many sociologists were against capitalism, and many advocated it. It was during this time that many dissected the idea of capitalism and provided future sociologists with the factors that led to capitalism. Before capitalism, everything belonged to the state, and while the royalty was lavished with riches, the common people suffered as the things they toiled for did not belong to them. With capitalism, there was hope for them to make their situations better, as in capitalism, trade and industry are privately owned. However, there was a downside to this because previously, people used to be masters of their crafts, but after capitalism, there was no need for it. Specialization in a certain field was appreciated more as it meant better job opportunities (Mcintosh, 1997).

Social Alienation and Competitive Individualism

Capitalism also meant that people were alienated from society as they were running after better opportunities, and this competition separated them from their peers, who were also seen as opponents. Then, there was alienation from labour as the products they helped produce once again

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did not belong to them. Before, their fruits of labour were taken by the state, and now, these are taken by the owners of the industry. Nothing changed in that aspect, and just like before, the rich lined their pockets with the money made by the common people who lived wage to wage. Lastly, the working class was alienated from themselves as they ran after the high-paying jobs and worked themselves to the bone, leaving no time for their well-being (Marx, 2015). Capitalism was a ray of hope for many, but it failed to provide them with that escape that they were looking for. However, the question remains: how does species play into the concept of capitalism?

Division of Labour and Social Development

The answer lies in the "division of labour" (Durkheim, 1984). Long before man became the sophisticated and well-educated being he is today, he was a caveman. These cavemen divided up the tasks of hunting, foraging, and looking for shelter among themselves to make their survival easier. Humans have been depending on each other for a long time, dividing up tasks to improve their chances of survival and needing to be in a community to have a strong sense of self. Even during the Stone Age, humans had complex needs and desires. Capitalism is a more sophisticated version of the cavemen's division of labour as it employs technology along with manpower to bring about a more cultured way of living. It is, in short, the result of human beings' complex needs and desires. For example, there was no need for wallpapers, but the desire of human beings to adorn the interiors of their homes led to its invention. Species encourage capitalism and rely on it for their survival, and the same can be applied to capitalism.

Capitalism Consumerism and Manufactured Desire

Although capitalism has failed society many times, the reason it still stands is that it fulfils our needs and desires. It brings us products that we did not know we needed, but when these products are presented to us, we can no longer live without them. "Know your customers' needs and wants" is a phrase that is used to identify gaps in the market and bring people more innovations, keeping them in a never-ending loop of capitalism. The way capitalism works is that the owners hire the workers to work in their industry; they take away the major profits and pay a minimum amount to the workers. Then, people are bombarded with advertisements for products that they clearly cannot afford, but that problem is solved by introducing credit cards. Now, people can buy products that they cannot afford and incur debt in the process. To pay off the debt, they keep on working mundane jobs, buying products, and so on. It is a never-ending loop of capitalism that relies on consumerism.

Modernity and the Expansion of Human Needs

Species being led to modernity; in turn, modernity led to the Industrial Revolution and capitalism. Human desires had become so multifaceted that they needed to break free from the old values and

needed a new way of thinking that would propel them forward. They paid no mind to the consequences of this modernity as long as their needs were met. Today, this modernity, which Anthony Giddens described as “Juggernaut,” is slowly getting out of control and its consequences are immeasurable and destructive (Giddens, 2013). Today, due to rapid technological advancements, the world is facing a crisis in the form of global warming. The world is becoming uninhabitable with each passing day, and for what? The rich need to become richer and keep accumulating wealth that they do not need, but their greed cannot be satisfied as it is their need to become the most powerful people in the world while the rest of the world is on fire.

Environmental Consequences and Future Change

Species gave rise to modernity, capitalism and consumerism without regard for the environment and the future of our descendants. However, the younger generations are realizing the mess caused by the greed of the capitalists, and they are trying to break free of these constraints. There are social actions to protect the environment, like the zero waste movement, boycotting fast fashion and the use of plastic, in the hope of protecting the world from further damage. People are trying to be accountable and hold others accountable for the damage that is being caused to others and the environment. They are also breaking free of the nine-to-five jobs and learning to make their lives better by using their skills to earn a living that would help them sustain themselves easily. Species have ruined our lives as they keep on getting trapped in the senseless world of capitalism. It is true that species are being brought out of our primitive way of living, but they also trap us in a life that keeps us from our true potential. Species gave rise to capitalism, and now it is also slowly trying to end it as humans today want to live a more sustainable life.

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