

Marx: commodity fetishism

In capitalism it is unclear how surplus is produced - it is ideologically mystified

value is ambiguous: use (Gebrauchswert) and exchange (Tauschwert)

use value: ability of an object to satisfy a human need (non-comparative "apples and oranges") I can't use a cat for the same purpose as a pen.  
qualitatively specific and distinct.

exchange value: aptness of objects relative to its ability to be exchanged.  
Inherently different from use value — quantitative not qualitative  
to exchange is to compare, to make two different things equal. But for things to be equal they must be the same relative to some standard of unity.  
It's the same vis a vis this (abstract) standard. So exchange value is to compare two different things to some abstract standard.

Marx says Aristotle got it wrong for interesting reasons

Aristotle: justice = fair exchange of equals. How can 1 house be the same as 10 chairs (in exchange) they have different ousiai

Marx: Aristotle had no answer to this — what ousia do they share in order to be exchanged? Aristotle couldn't understand exchange in his own society. In Aristotle's time there was no single abstract conception of labor. Slave and Free labor were qualitatively different. Roman law can have no unified definition of human (homo) - their society/legal system was dependent on two types of humanity slave and free. It is unjust to treat one like the other.

In order to understand exchange we need a unified ousia of labor. Unit of labor understood in terms of rate of production

Aristotle's time didn't have this conception of labor. Different types of labor were performed by different types of people. All had their own ousia.

The work of a potter and a farmer are qualitatively different kinds of work. Only with abstract value of labor is a theory of exchange possible.

step 1 construe your time in homogenous units (labor units)

step 2 compare abstract units to rate of production (socially necessary labor)

labor becomes a commodity, a thing you can sell

in ancient world labor was not generally construed to be a commodity

how much is labor worth in exchange value? (the amount of time/work necessary

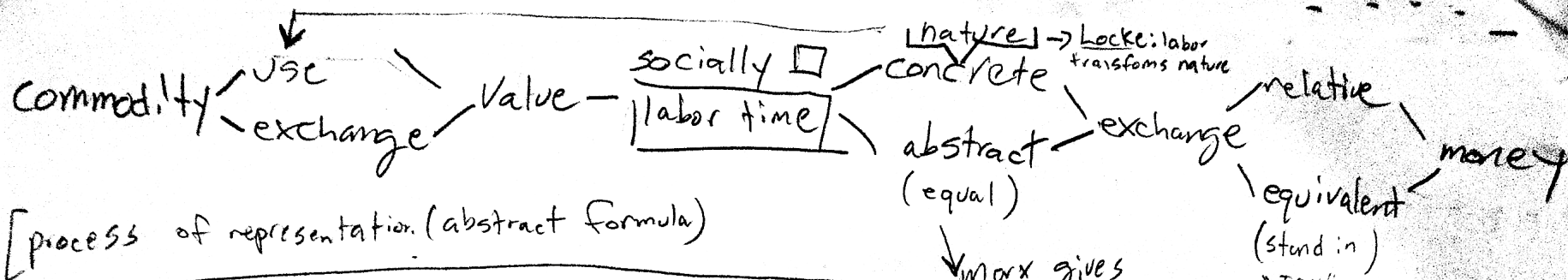
to produce what I produce — i.e., subsistence)

use value of labor: amount that can be produced in a day (\$12)

exchange value of labor: amount of work needed to pay for basic subsistence (\$6)

so if capitalist pays worker \$6 that is fair because it balances out in exchange  
fairness and justice only makes sense in comparative context, justice has nothing  
to do with use value because it cannot be compared.

so ein Glücksfall für den Kapitalisten aber keine Ungerechtigkeit für den Arbeiter



Money commodity conceals social relationships btw things

material relationships btw people

Marx gives no arg. for this —> based on Judeo-Chr equality

What experience reveals this?

Max Weber: exchange is refl of Judeo-Chr.

Marx: Judeo-Chr is refl. of rising exchange (base)

(super-structure)

Value is not material —> they are purely social

objective but immaterial —> reification of a process

money arises out of exchange

it is a commodity whose sole use

value is exchange value

~~want to exchange their commodities for it~~

—> generalized standin for exchange

Gold is both a particular and the universal commodity

i.e., tension

equivalent (I don't want your stuff, but if you give me money, I can exchange it for other stuff later)

Aristotle couldn't have a labor theory of value [because Gr. economy was built on slavery]

exchange only if equality

equality only if commensurability

# 1) Fetishism

thing → transcends sensibility  
processes become things

Art — product of labor  
|  
object of  
aesthetic experience

↓  
path are descriptive  
of human agency

But we tend to attribute  
these properties to the objects  
themselves

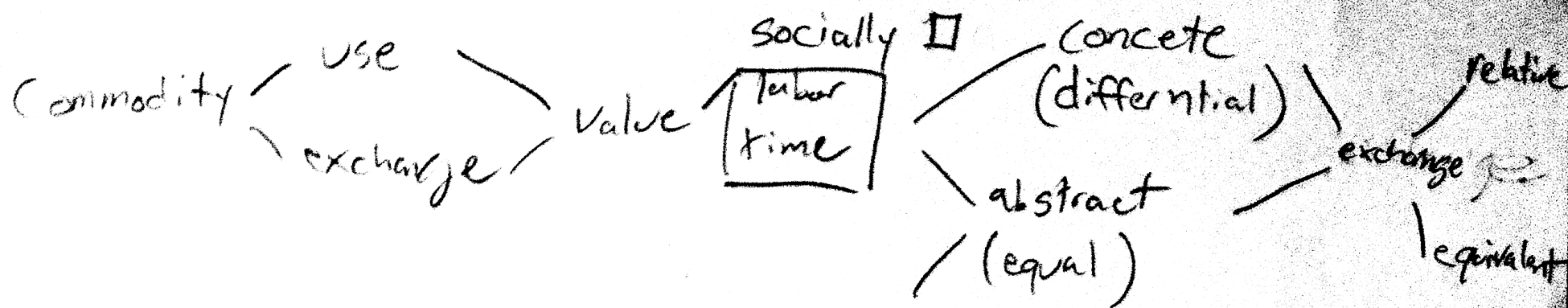
(~~labor~~ → naturalism → the way things are  
~~aesthetic reflection~~ → mystical quality of the  
object

↓  
conceals ideology makes the unreal seem real  
↳ mysticism conceals (more real than real)  
ideology by placing it in  
an ideal world

people interact  
through commodities/  
market

money conceals the  
vast system of labor  
that "puts breakfast on the table"





Marx gives  
no arg. for this  
assumes as axiom

↓  
based on Judeo-Chr  
notion of equality before  
God → Enlightenment/post  
magna carta  
equality before  
the LAW