

An importance of self identification

Life



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Social Control, Education, and the Economy

“ They don’t want people who are smart enough to sit around a kitchen table and think about how badly they’re getting [expletive] by a system that threw them overboard 30 [expletive] years ago. They don’t want that. You know what they want? They want obedient workers. Obedient workers–people who are just smart enough to run the machines and do the paperwork. And just dumb enough to passively accept all these increasingly [expletive] jobs with the lower pay, the longer hours, the reduced benefits, the end of overtime and vanishing pension that disappears the minute you go to collect it.” - George Carlin (1937-2008).

As a philosophy major, this quote resonates with me on theories and ideas that have to do with social control, education, and the economy. Particularly the theorist Karl Marx. His theories mainly have to do with the dynamic of the western culture that came about and how blind we are to see the control that others have over us. How the people in power use our ignorance, and devotion towards them and the western culture brought upon us (of labor and work) towards their own advantage. How the everyday person works just to keep the powerful and wealthy individuals, in their same position, while others physically devote their time and energy into someone else’s product. It is the consumer culture in which this has prevailed over time, and which Marx addresses multiple times.

Starting off with the term Social Control: “ a group’s (e. g., society, nation-state, clique, etc.) formal and informal means of enforcing its norms” (Lect. Notes). But who is the one who decides what is “ normal” or how someone

should act in this diverse nation of the United States? It is those who are in power, the wealthy whom become in charge of the government. They started off at the top, and they stay at the top, using their wealth to dictate the way society works, how individuals act, and the “ appropriate” culture in which we live in today.

Everybody wants to fit in, everybody wants to be accepted in society, and this is the reinforcement of norms. Norms which were established by the people who continuously manipulate and take advantage of the poor and middle class. The people who tell us we need to work forty hours a week in order to pay for our mortgage, car payments, phone bills, etc. The people who look over us while we do all the work for them. They distract us by the idea of money, the idea of movement within classes. Hoping if we work enough and do what they say that we will one day be rich, or at least future generations may benefit from our endless hard work. But no, our endless hard work is going unseen and taken for granted for the most part.

The government tells us from day one how to live. You must go to school and learn what they want you to learn without questioning it. Then if you want to further yourself, your economic status, you must attend an expensive college that will take years and years to pay off, furthering yourself in debt while working a minimum wage job for long hours just to keep the already wealthy people in their same position. After you graduate how likely is it that you will make over even one hundred thousand dollars a year? Now we are being told we need graduate school, we need are masters or even doctorates to get jobs worth spending the money on college in this competitive society. Further drowning the average person in debt, while not

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even allowing the lower class or poor to accel due to high standards, and high costs.

We think all of this is benefiting us, but we are just being told what to do. What is “ normal”, what will advance us to become what America cares about the most, becoming rich. By adhering to these norms, and these rules, we are just further empowering the already powerful. Putting money in their pockets for our hard work and labor. Putting ourselves in debt to ensure no possibility of ever becoming wealthy due to the high expectations and reality, as well as impossibility of ever paying off the debt we just put ourselves in to get to a nearly impossible position. A position that everybody dreams of, everybody wants to become reality, while we are further harming ourselves in the process.

In the quote from George Carlin, he states that they need obedient workers. They need us, the lower class, the working class in order to maintain their positions. While we respect the power of authority, the authority that tells us what is normal and how to behave, we blindly look past the fact that without us, they are nothing. They are powerless to a society that does not attend to their needs. A society that doesn't put their hardworking money right back into the pocket of the rich and powerful. They are worthless without us in many aspects.

Marx had seen this from the beginning. He knew the manipulation and the advantage state and politics had over the people. People in America primarily care about money, their future, and their goals. Everyone thinks they can advance and acell among others by obeying the powerful ones who

tell them what's normal. This is not the way an individual OR society can move up the social class. Obeying these economic/social norms of society just keeps yourself in the same place and even makes leaders more powerful. This is especially relevant in our consumer culture today, where we are obsessed with buying products (that laborers make) in order to fit in to a certain crowd. People would rather spend their money going broke to look like a certain class, rather than accel in different ways. Marx saw this, and it has gotten worse as society has gone on.

We are in a position where we seem like we are advancing as a lower/middle class, when in fact we are staying in the same place while doing all the work and even advancing the powerful. They do not want us to know this, but many are either blind to this fact, or cannot do anything about it because society is already to far gone. So we maintain our lifestyles that we are use to, the lifestyle we were told to live, as we are manipulated and further empowering the powerful leaders who dictate our society as a whole, even aspects we would not expect. While further allowing them more power, more wealth, more manipulation, as we go in debt for things and institutions we are told we need. Things that we need to become rich and successful. The reason our ancestors came to America in the first place. The reason we do not question what we are told or how we should act. In a society where money is a necessity of life, we work endless hours for people already in power and rich, in order to maintain a lifestyle we are told to have. An impossible lifestyle which puts an illusion over the reality of America. The reality of the slim chance of if you do what they say, if you obey the rules and act normal, that one day you will be like them. Rich, and powerful.