I. Social Construction of American Capitalism

A. American Exceptionalism

1. equal opportunity for all

a. education

b. hard work

c. entrepreneurial spirit

2. infinite possibilities for the individual

3. progress for all

4. “rugged individualism”

B. Reality Today

1. state subsidized monopoly capitalism

a. concentration of ownership

b. shared monopolies

c. shared ownership

d. interlocking boards of directors

e. subsidies

i. direct

ii. indirect

iii. bailouts

2. Unequal Opportunity

a. inequality in wealth and income

b. vital needs

c. upward mobility

d. American Dream

II. Social Construction of American “Capitalism”: Four Phases

1. Early Colonialism to Civil War

1. Primitive Accumulation

a. Marx: Foundation for the development of capitalsim

b. "natural world" created by indigenous practices

i. forests and their ecosystems preserved through traditional environmental practices defined by cultural beliefs regarding

living things

ii. huge varieties of species

iii. land itself, not depleted, overgrazed

c. natural resources

i. gold and silver

ii. oil, coal, uranium

d. Examples

i. gold and silver in Latin America (Open Veins of Latin America)

ii. Africa: "the magnificent African cake"

diamonds in South Africa

ivory and rubber in the Congo (King Leopold's Ghost)

iii. land in Algeria turned into grape plantations by French (Peasant Revolutions of the Twentieth Century

e. North America (one area)

i. multiple species of whales in bays and lagoons and staggering assortment of sport fish and

marine mammals - sea otters

ii. beavers in creeks and streams

iii. antelope, deer, badgers, bighorn sheep

iv. spotted and red lynx, mountain lions, and jaguar

v. gray wolves and "the best grizzly bear range on earth"

vi. golden and bald eagles, flocks of migrating birds (83 separate species) that blacken the sky

vii. "one of the greatest natural habitats for wildlife and game birds in the world"

viii. 22 million acres of finest virgin grassland left in

the world

2. European Culture and "other living things"

a. by 17th century had degraded the environment in most of

Europe

b. deforested and overgrazed

i. England deforested by eleventh

ii. Europe deforested by 16th

iii. Spain overgrazed by 15th

c. polluted rivers and streams and siltation

d. loss of arable soil

i. overgrazing

ii. agriculture by ignorance

e. overhunting and overfishing

i. depleted much of Med and Baltic

ii. exterminated right whales by nineteenth

iii. hunting for sport

f. animal torture sports thrived in church controlled

Europe

i. bearbaiting

ii. cockfighting

iii. bull fighting

g. live vivisection

h. killed cats because they were the devil

i. afraid of forests: evil creatures

j. mountains ugly

k. Churches "defense" of animals

i. St. Augustine: animals are beyond the scheme of salvation

ii. St. Thomas Aquinas who thought the world was God's creation, thought that meant everything was for man "Differences Between Rational and Other Creatures"

creation is hierarchy

mankind qualitatively unique, reason and intellect in image of God

animals are like **slaves**, they can be

used for the sake of the creatures with an intellect **"Therefore every other creature is naturally under slavery, the intellectual nature alone is free."**

Hereby is refuted the error of those who said it is sinful for a man to kill dumb animals . . . Hence it is not wrong for man to make use of them, either by killing or in any other way whatever."

l. capitalism and living things

i. natural resource to be transformed into commodity

ii. natural resource to produce energy to transform

resources into commodities

iii. land as a commodity, to own, profit from

iv. land and the commodification of aesthetic and leisure experience

m. Nature and the other are in the way

i. eliminate and transform nature into a garden

ii. eliminate, remove, eliminate

3. Nature: Colonial "America"

a. largest deforestation in human history

b. extermination of most fur bearing herbivores for the

fur trade

c. began growing tobacco and cotton and depleting the soil

4. Nature: Southern California

a. 1803-1813 killed 50,000 sea otters for fur

b. same period trapped most beaver, mink, and

river otter to extinction

c. cattle destroyed the grasslands

i. quintiple erosion rates

ii. scarred the land with arroyos

d. 1812 killed 30,000 wild horses

e. antelope and wolf pushed out of environment

f. grizzly bear hunts

i. grizzly meat a delicacy

ii. one posse alone killed 22 bears

g. between 1865 and 1890 50%- 90% of "game birds"

i. one million ducks

ii. quail, doves, rabbits, deer

h. native bird: "lassoed and dragged and

strangled when full of food and clumsy, or

shot just for sport

i. big game hunters spent up to $3500 in 1920s to shoot mountain lions, imported tigers, leopards, and jaguars from zoos that were chained to poles

j. 1914-15 federalized extermination of wolves,

coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats, raptors

i. predators were cruel, they murdered

innocent deer and songbirds, wanton killers

ii. "large predatory mammals destructive to

livestock and game no longer have a place

in our advancing civilization"

k. war on cougars Oct 1907 $20 bounty

l. one decade

i. 674 cougars, 3,000 coyotes, 120 bobcats

ii. consequences, deer population 3,000 to

100,000 between 1906 and 1924

iii. Nov 1926 one hundred million mice overran

the town of Taft, reason killed all the predators coyotes, skunks, red tail hawks

m. The comprehensive looting and destruction of this

extraordinary biological endowment was the basis for

the social construction of America –Primitive Accumulation

5. Dispossess indigenous peoples of their land

Washington: "the gradual extension of our settlements will as certainly cause the savage, as the wolf, to retire; both being beasts of prey, tho' they differ in shape."

a. justification

i. cultural understanding of nature: “waste” unless. ..

ii. capitalism

b. legitimation

i. terra nullius

ii. private property

iii. "savages" and land

"felling trees and Indians and rounding out their natural boundaries"

6. The “Other” and Removal

a.Andrew Jackson, Indian Removal

b. Removal of the Cherokee

i. 1834 An Act to Regulate Trade and Intercourse with Indian Tribes and to Preserve Peace on the Frontiers

ii. Treaty of Enchota $9 million for land but

iii. Five Army regiments and 4000 militia

iv. 1838 Trail of Tears

v. Oklahoma

vi. Just Cherokee, Five Civilized Tribes, tribes in Midwest.

7. The "Other": Plains Indians

a. Lakota, Blackfoot, Cheyenne lived on land referred to as the "plains"

b. South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas

c. In the way of manifest destiny expansion and occupied land that

need to be "transformed"

d. war

i. Hugo Grotius: "most just war is against savage beasts, the next against men who are like beasts."

ii.Teddy Roosevelt: "the most ultimately righteous of all wars is a war with savages" "establishing the rule of the dominant races."

iii. He referred to the Sand Creek Massacre " as a righteous and beneficial deed as ever took place." Colorado 1864 (scary)

iv. attack villages

"Sheridan's innovation of attacking Indian encampments during the winter, when their supplies and mobility were both severely limited."

e. buffalo

i. General's William Tecumseh Sherman and Philip Sheridan

ii. kill the buffalo, the sources of their livelihood

"Kill every buffalo you can, every buffalo dead is an Indian Gone"

iii. U.S. government subsidized slaughter of buffalo, not even for

hides 40 to 100 million

<https://www.google.com/search?q=shooting+buffalo+from+trains&tbm=isch&rlz=1C1GMIN_enUS697US697&hl=en&ved=2ahUKEwjZrJP_qMjnAhVP2KwKHeoDBhUQrNwCegQIARAw&biw=1349&bih=663#imgrc=yd2RjcG2UJfIcM>

d. The tribes were never conquered but signed peace treaties.

e. Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 guaranteed them huge amounts of

land for granting access to railroads and trails through the land

f. U.S. Supreme Court 1980 ruled that the U.S. has violated the treaty

and illegally occupies their land, including Black Hills

g. Gold discovered in Black Hills, and Custer came to Black Hills

as he went he built road that thousands of miners followed

h. Removed Indians to "reservations"

i. Lakota to the Badlands, Pine Ridge and Rosebud

ii. Massacre at Wounded Knee

i. Gold in California: State has recognized and apologized for genocide

against indigenous tribes in California.

8. create labor force: forced and slave

a. “ white trash” and "waste people"

i. capitalism, industrialization in England

ii. Acts of Enclosure and Poor Laws

iii. Rich in England: colonies should be the place

to dispose of their waste "Offscouring", and can generate a financial return

iv. criminals as debt slaves, children of poor, indentured

servants, children and wives of indenture servants if, poor women

and breeding

v. class society as the "City upon a Hill": John Winthrop Governor in his "A Model of Christian Charity"

"God Almightie in his most holey and wise providence hath soe disposed the Condition of mankind, as in all times some must be rich some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignity; others meane and in subjection."

As for democracy:

"The meanest and worst of all forms of government."

b. slave labor

i. Columbus: genocide and the beginning of slavery

ii. system

-Africans were kidnapped, primarily from

West Africa

-transported to other countries, means of transportation beyond cruel

- slaves for life with no rights, political, legal, moral, economic

-worked transforming land into tobacco and cotton plantations, **early source of wealth creation in "America**"

-women slaves worked plus produced children "a woman's breeding capacity was a calculable natural resource”

- children of slaves were slaves by birth 1662 Virginia Law, listed in planter's wills as "breedings"

-no constraints on violence directed against slaves except

self-interested economic reasons

-slave patrols, bounties to return slaves, 1850 Fugitive Slave Act

iii. justification and legitimation

-religion

-racial inferiority

-uncivilized