

SOC755
GENERAL SOCIOLOGY

2017 Autumn

MARXISM AND CRITICAL THEORY







First, the fact that labor is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His labor therefore is not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labor. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it.

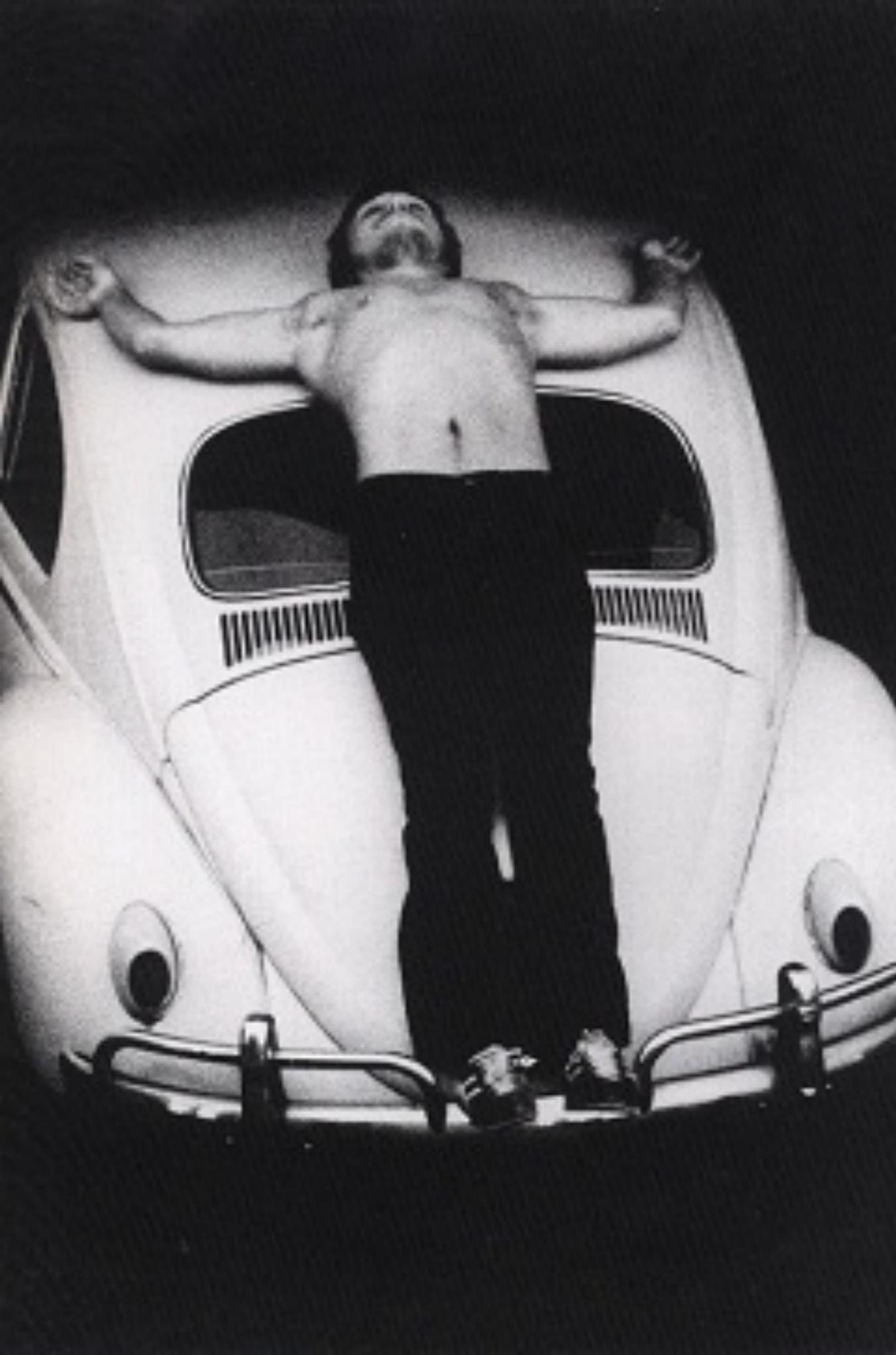
(Marx, 1850/1964:72)



ALIENATION

.....

- Alienation is a perverted relation between labor and human nature. Labor has to be a being in itself and not a means to earn money.
- People feel free only in their animal functions (eating, drinking, procreating) which turned into ultimate ends (also in their cultivated forms)!
- The division of labour is the ground of alienation: i.e. capitalism recently.



FETISHISM OF COMMODITIES

- Producing figures and worshiping them.
- Our labour is separated from us and turned into an abstract thing.
- Commodities are the sources of alienation.
- Social relation between men assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of relation between things.



REIFICATION

.....

- ▶ The fetishism of commodities reveals the embeddedness of individual in the large-scale social structures, having an independent, external and coercive reality.
- ▶ Reification occurs when the belief in thing-character of relations becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: beyond control.
- ▶ Reification is present also in religious, political and organizational institutions.



Man in capitalist society confronts a reality “made” by himself (as a class) which appears to him to be a natural phenomenon alien to himself; he is wholly at the mercy of its “laws”; his activity is confined to the exploitation of the inexorable fulfillment of certain individual laws for his own (egoistic) interests. But even while “acting” he remains, in the nature of the case, the object and not the subject of events.

(Lukács, 1922/1968:135)



HEGELIAN MARXISM

.....

- People come to believe that things have a life of their own.
- Class consciousness is a belief system shared by a group in a same socio-economic position. But this is a **NORMATIVE** concept! To overcome false consciousness and achieve class consciousness.
- False consciousness: the illusion implicit in a socio-economic situation is not arbitrary. Class conditioned unconsciousness.

FURTHER READING

- David Gartman. 1991. "Culture as class symbolization or mass reification? Critique of Bourdieu's *Distinction*." *American Journal of Sociology*.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM





Symbolic interactionism rests in the last analysis on three simple premises. The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them... The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through by an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.

(Herbert Blumer)



MEANING

.....

- ▶ Things include trees and chairs; mothers and clerks; friends and enemies; schools and governments; individual independence and honesty; commands and requests of others; daily encounters.
- ▶ Meaning in explanative sociology disappears by being merged into the initiating factors of action or becomes a mere transmission link that can be ignored in favor of the causative factors.



THE SOURCE OF MEANING

.....

- Observational realism: there is no process involved in the formation of meaning, it is inherent in the thing that has it. A cow is a cow!
- Expressive psychologism: there is an internal formation process that includes perception, cognition, feelings.
- Interactive creation: meaning grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing.



INTERPRETATION

- The use of meaning by a person in his action is not an application of already established meanings.
- Interpretation is an instance of the person engaging in a process of communication with himself: indication.
- Interpretation is a process in which meanings are used and revised as instruments for the guidance of action: handling meanings.



The notion of socialization leads to theoretical formulations mirroring the adult view that children are incomplete beings. Investigators have been consequently distracted from the important area of study which is adult-child interaction and the underlying theoretically important problem of intersubjectivity implied in such interaction.

(Robert W. Mackay, 1973)



INTERPRETIVE COMPETENCE

- All interaction is based on interpretive competencies which are not innate: children have their own separate culture.
- Cultural assimilation requires a process of adequate translation: convergence.
- To remember, to find coherence, to participate in a reciprocity of perspectives: to understand and recognize descriptive features of the world taken for granted.

NATIONALISM MEMORY AND IDENTITY



“

In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.

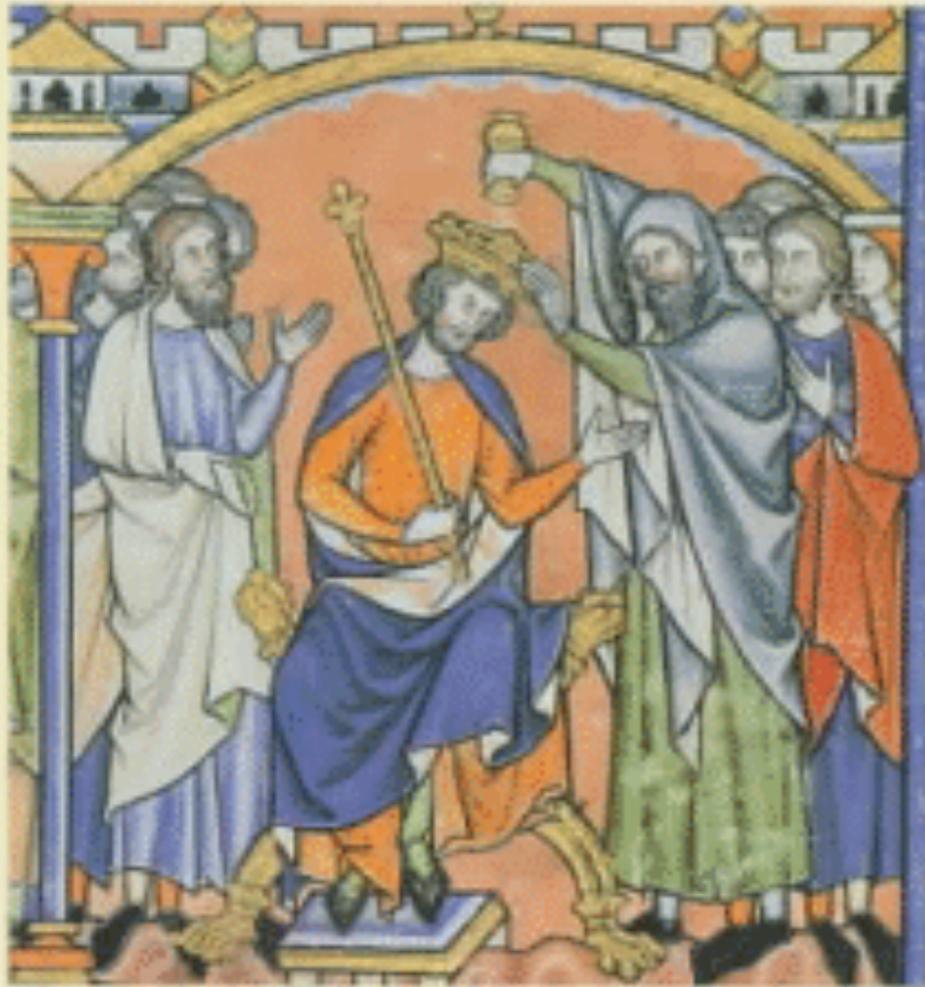
(Benedict Anderson 1983: 5-6)

LONDON CZECHS GREET
THE FUTURE KING OF JUGOSLAVIA
AUSTRIA HAS NO RIGHT TO EXIST!!!!



gettyimages®
Culture Club

The KING'S TWO BODIES



A STUDY IN MEDIAEVAL
POLITICAL THEOLOGY

ERNST H. KANTOROWICZ

With a new preface by William Chester Jordan

CULTURAL ROOTS

.....

- ▶ Nationalism is a taken for granted frame of reference.
- ▶ Other cultures of self-evidence:
 - ▶ The sacral culture of religious communities
 - ▶ The political culture of dynastic realms



CLASS AND NATION

- Critical theory:
 - Capitalist culture legitimates class structure by obscuring classes.
 - Mass culture makes classes unrecognizable
- Critical sociology:
 - Culture legitimates class structure by misrecognition.
 - Masking its origin in group power by instances of individual worthiness

behave (be-hāv'), *v.t.* to conduct, comport, or acquit: *v.i.* to act; conduct one's self in a proper manner.

behavior (bē-hāv'yēr), *n.* manner of behaving, whether good or bad; conduct; deportment; manners.

behead (be-hed'), *v.t.* to cut off the head of.

beheld (bē-held'), *p.t.* & *p.p.* of behold.

behemoth (bē-hē'moth), *n.* an animal described in Job xl. 15-24, and probably intended for the hippopotamus. [Hebrew.]

behest (be-hest'), *n.* a command; precept.

behind (be-hīnd'), *prep.* at the back of; in the rear of; remaining after; inferior to: *adv.* at the back; in the rear; toward the back; out of sight; past in point of time.

behindhand (be-hīnd'hand), *adv.* or *adj.* in a state of backwardness; late; in arrear.

behold (be-hōld'), *v.t.* [*p.t.* & *p.p.* beheld, *p.pr.* beholding], to fix the eyes upon; have in sight; look at; observe with care: *v.i.* to look; direct or fix the mind.

beholden (be-hōl'dn), *p.adj.* indebted; obliged; bound in gratitude.

behoof (be-hōōf'), *n.* advantage; interest; profit; use; behalf.

behoove or **behave** (be-hōōv'), *v.t.* to be meet, necessary, or fit for.

beige (bāzh), *adj.* having its natural color, as a fabric of undyed wool.

being, *p.pr.* of be.

being (bē'ing), *n.* existence, as opposed to non-existence; that which exists in any form, whether actual or ideal.

bejewel (be-jū'el), *v.t.* [*p.t.* & *p.p.* -ed, *p.pr.* -ing], to ornament or furnish with jewels.

bekko-ware (bek'ō-wār), *n.* an ancient kind of Japanese pottery in imitation of tortoise-shell.

belabor (bē-lā'bēr), *v.t.* to beat soundly.

belate (bē-lāt'), *v.t.* to make late, or retard.

belated (bē-lā'ted), *p.adj.* delayed; too late; overtaken by darkness; benighted.

belay (be-lā'), *v.t.* make fast, as a rope, by winding round a pin, cleat, &c.

belaying-pin (be-lā'ing-pin), *n.* a stout pin of wood or metal used to

fasten a rope by keeping it from running out.

belch (belch), *v.t.* to eject with force or violence: *v.i.* to eject wind from the stomach: *n.* the act of ejecting wind forcibly.

beldam (bel'dam) or **beldame** (bel'dām), *n.* a grandmother; an ugly old woman.

beleaguer (bē-lē'gēr), *v.t.* to besiege; surround with an army so as to preclude escape; blockade.

belemnite (bel'em-nīt), *n.* the fossil internal bone, or shell, of an extinct family of cuttle-fish.

belfry (bel'fri), *n.* a bell tower; that part of a steeple or tower in which a bell is hung.

Belgravian (bel-grā'vi-an), *adj.* belonging to Belgravia, a fashionable quarter of London: hence, aristocratic; fashionable: *n.* an inhabitant of Belgravia; a member of the upper classes.

belie (bē-lī'), *v.t.* to calumniate; slander by lies; give the lie to; show to be false.

belief (be-lēf'), *n.* assent to anything proposed or declared, and its acceptance as fact, by reason of the authority whence it proceeds, apart from personal knowledge; faith; the thing believed; the whole body of tenets held by the professors of any faith; a creed; a conviction.

believability (be-lē-va-bil'i-ti), *n.* credibility; credence; believableness.

believable (be-lē'va-bl), *adj.* capable of being accepted as truth; credible.

believe (be-lēv'), *v.t.* to place credence in and accept as true, upon the ground of authority, testimony, or logical inference apart from personal knowledge; place confidence in; expect or hope: *v.i.* to have faith; be more or less firmly persuaded of the truth of anything; think or suppose.

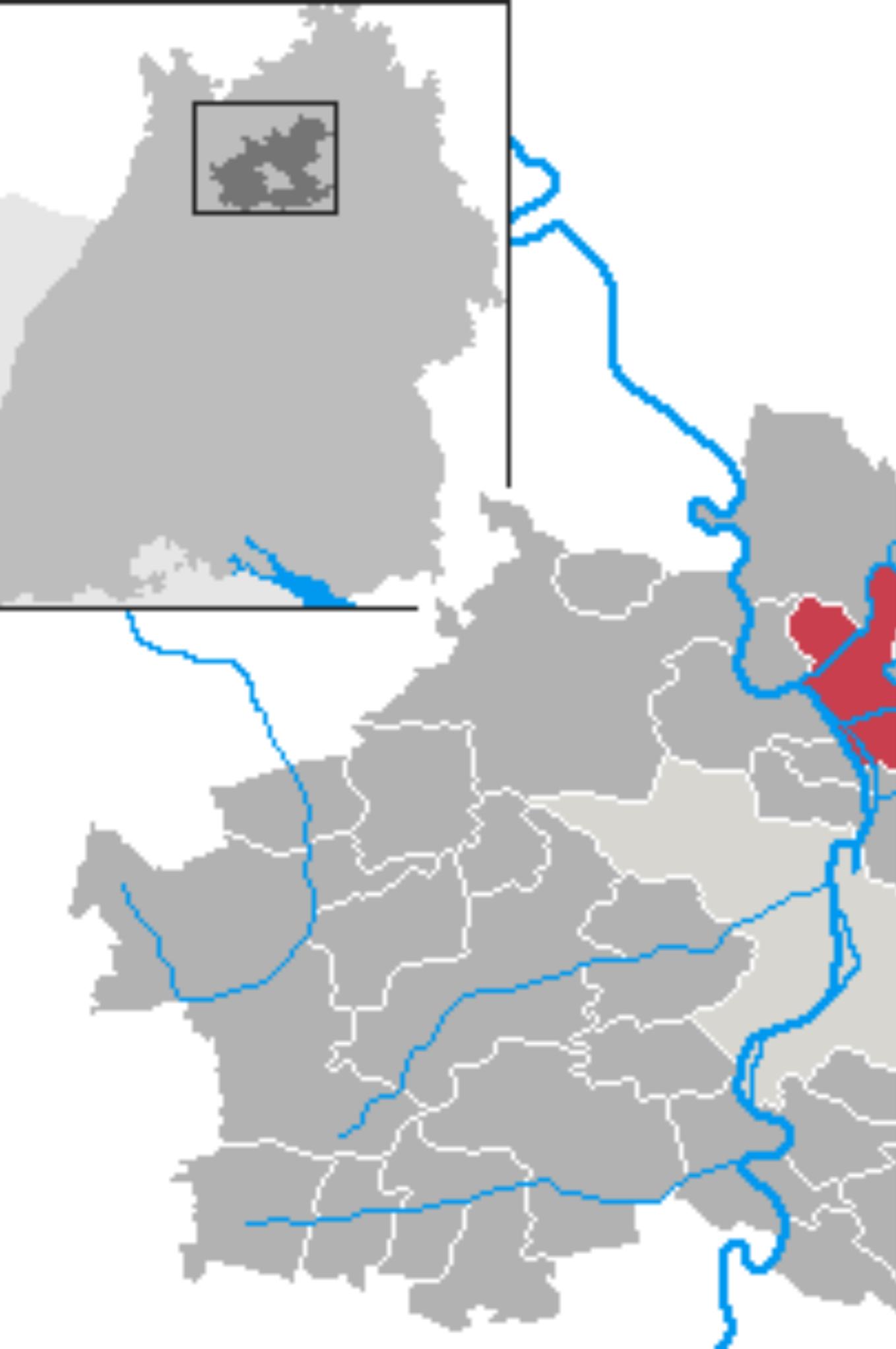
believer (be-lē'vēr), *n.* one who accepts as truth something not actually demonstrated; one who adheres to a religious faith; a professor of Christianity.

belike (be-līk'), *adv.* probably.

belittle (be-lit'l), *v.t.* to lower or depreciate; run down by speaking slightly of.

THE VERNACULARIZATION

- Discovery and conquest also caused a revolution in European ideas about language
- Grammars, dictionaries and histories
- A rapid increase in state expenditures and the size of state bureaucracies.
- Linguistic unification



CLASSIFICATION STRUGGLE

- Representation and reality
- The reality of representations
- The reality of struggle over representation
 - Mental images
 - Social demonstrations