

## K is for Krisis: A Short Introduction to *Marx from the Margins* Krisis

On the occasion of Karl Marx's 200th birthday this year, numerous conferences, edited volumes and special issues have celebrated his work by focusing on its main achievements – a radical critique of capitalist society and an alternative vocabulary for thinking about the social, economic and political tendencies and struggles of our age. Albeit often illuminating, this has also produced a certain amount of déjà vu. Providing an occasion to disrupt patterns of repetition and musealization, *Krisis* proposes a different way to pay tribute to Marx's revolutionary theorizing. We have invited authors from around the globe to craft short entries for an alternative ABC under the title "Marx from the Margins: A Collective Project, from A to Z" – taking up, and giving a twist to, Kevin Anderson's influential *Marx at the Margins* (2010). The chief motivation of this collaborative endeavour is to probe the power – including the generative failures – of Marx's thinking by starting from marginal concepts in his work or from social realities or theoretical challenges often considered to be marginal from a Marxist perspective. Rather than reproduce historically and theoretically inadequate differentiations between an ascribed or prescribed cultural, economic, geographic, intellectual, political, social, or spatial centre and its margins, the margins we have identified and inspected are epistemic vantage points that open up new theoretical and political vistas while keeping Marx's thought from becoming either an all-purpose intellectual token employed with little risk

from left or right, or a set of formulaic certitudes that force-feed dead dogma to ever-shrinking political circles.

We have welcomed short and succinct contributions that discuss how a wide variety of concepts – from acid communism and big data via extractivism and the Haitian Revolution to whiteness and the Zapatistas – can offer an unexpected key to the significance of Marx's thought today. The resulting ABC, far from a comprehensive compendium, is an open-ended and genuinely collective project that resonates between and amplifies through different voices speaking from different perspectives in different styles; we envisage it as a beginning rather than as an end. In this spirit, we invite readers to submit new entries to *Krisis*, where they will be subject to our usual editorial review process and added on a regular basis, thus making this issue of *Krisis* its first truly interactive one. The project is also an attempt to redeem, in part, the task that the name of this journal has set for its multiple generations of editors from the very beginning: a crisis/Krise/Krisis is always a moment in which certainties are suspended, things are at stake, and times are experienced as critical. A crisis, to which critique is internally linked, compels a critique that cannot consist simply of ready-made solutions pulled out of the lectern, but demand, in the words of Marx's "credo of our journal" in his letter to Ruge, "the self-clarification (critical philosophy) of the struggles and wishes of the age".

## Acid Communism

Matt Colquhoun

Like so many of his neologisms, Mark Fisher's 'Acid Communism' encapsulates a crisis of disambiguation, hurling a provocation into our midst. The phrase – which was to be the title of his next book, now unfinished following his death in January 2017 – has garnered considerable attention as many wonder what kind of variation on Marx's manifesto might be occasioned by this new corrosive qualifier.

In truth, Acid Communism resists definition. The word 'acid' in particular, by invoking industrial chemicals, psychedelics and various sub-genres of dance music, is promiscuous. With so many uses and instantiations in various contexts, it is as difficult to cleanly define as 'communism' is in the 21st century. This textual promiscuity is no doubt what attracted Fisher to the phrase, but this has not stopped recent attempts to concretely define it in his absence.

Jeremy Gilbert, a former collaborator of Fisher's, has led the way, writing a number of articles that turn Acid Communism into a one-dimensional and purely affirmative project, seeking the rehabilitation of the countercultural utopianism of the 1960s and '70s. In the *New Statesman*, Gilbert writes on 'acid' in particular and the way that the word still connotes "the liberation of human consciousness from the norms of capitalist society [as] a desirable, achievable and pleasurable objective."

(Gilbert, 2017). What is absent from Gilbert's summaries is made clear here. Is such a liberation of human consciousness desirable? Certainly. Achievable? Possibly. But pleasurable? Not always; not essentially.

Acid Communism is a project beyond the pleasure principle. It is not only a project for the recuperation of the counterculture's lost potentials but also the expression of a desire for an *experimental* (rather than prescriptively *utopian*) leftist politics. This is a maneuver present within so many expositions of communism. Marx and Engels themselves wrote how "communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things." (Marx & Engels 2017, 102). Acid Communism is, then, a project for seeking 'the outside' of sociopolitical hegemony. As Fisher acknowledged in so many of his writings, this requires an acknowledgement of the fact that to disturb normality is inherently *disturbing*, but "terrors are not all there is to the outside." (Fisher 2016, 9).

In the unpublished introduction to *Acid Communism*, Fisher quotes Michel Foucault explaining that the challenge now is "not to recover our 'lost' identity, to free our imprisoned nature, our deepest truth; but instead [...] to move towards something radically Other." (Foucault 1991, 120). This Other is the spectre that Marx and Engels first conjured out of European history; for Herbert Marcuse, it was "the spectre of a world that could be free." (Marcuse 1998, 93). What haunted Fisher was a similar notion: a collective subject that has long been desired but still resists instantiation. As he wrote in his 2009 book *Capitalist Realism*, the "required subject – a collective subject – does not exist, yet the crisis, like all the other global crises we're now facing, demands that it be constructed." (Fisher 2009, 66). Here a spectre is not what is left of something dead and lost. It is atemporal; an "eerie entity", as Fisher would say, representing both a failure of absence and a failure of presence. It is desire without absolute lack.

For Marx, "desire" is so often inseparable from the commodity. It is never without object. On the very first page of *Capital*, quoting Nicholas Barbon, Marx defines it in a footnote: "Desire implies want; it is the appetite of the mind, and as natural as hunger to the body." (Barbon 1696, 2-3). In *The Communist Manifesto*, however,

desire becomes insatiable and speculative: “In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes.” (Marx & Engels 2017, 55). The production of politics has had much the same effect, eroticising desire, launching it into unknown and forbidden lands; beyond borders, boundaries and limits. Pleasure becomes, in contrast, fatally associated with the familiar.

Acid, in its promiscuity, allows this speculative desire to flow back through communism in both new and forgotten ways. Writing in 1977, Gilles Deleuze offers the most succinct summary of how such a desire functions, explicitly in contrast to Foucauldian “pleasure”:

[T]here is no subject of desire, and no object either. The objectivity of desire itself is only its flows. There is never enough desire. Desire is the system of a-signifying signs out of which unconscious flows are produced in a social-historical field. Every unfolding of desire, in whatever place it may occur, such as a family or a school in the neighbourhood, tests the established order and sends shock waves through the social field as a whole. Desire is revolutionary because it is always seeking more connections. (Deleuze 2006, 81).

In this way ‘Acid’ is desire, as corrosive and denaturalising multiplicity, flowing through the multiplicities of communism itself to create alinguistic feedback loops; an ideological accelerator through which the new and previously unknown might be found in the politics we mistakenly think we already know, reinstantiating a politics to come.

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## Anarchism

Harriet Bergman

Every New Year's Eve, the Dutch anarchist scene gathers to celebrate the upcoming year at a detention center. Detention Center Schiphol, near Amsterdam Airport, is the place where 'illegal' refugees are kept before they are deported back to the country they've fled. The people on the other side of the wall not only hear new year's wishes in several languages, and music to dance to, but also slogans like "No borders, no nations, stop deportations" and "tout le monde déteste la police." The anarchists demand the abolition of the prison system and scream at the top of their lungs to communicate their dislike of borders and the nation-state. The new year ritual, however, is more than a symbolic protest, it is an act of solidarity and a way of interacting with, and caring for, each other right now.

Marx's name justified some of the most horrific regimes because it takes time and strong leaders to bring the perfect communist socialist society into existence. But also in the rare cases when fighting for communism didn't result in an authoritarian leader taking over, the primacy of one specific struggle – class struggle – over others has caused many movements to neglect important hierarchies and power relations within the group and society at large. Most anarchists agree with large parts of the problem analysis developed by Marxists: capitalism is a problem because it exploits workers. We should strive to eliminate the division of labor, and the unjust

valuation of capital in respect to labor, rather than leading a life dictated by capital. Anarcho-capitalists aside – who aren't considered anarchists by the other currents of anarchism anyway – anarchists of all kinds share a large part of the Marxist analysis. Bakunin and Marx agreed on a lot of things, but fell out over the question of how to accomplish the society in which those problems were not present. "Freedom without socialism is privilege and injustice, but socialism without freedom is slavery and brutality", wrote Bakunin. Marx gave an analysis of the problems with capitalism, but how to proceed was less clear, as underlined by the results of the different attempts of implementing Marx's thought in different countries. As Peter Hudis reminds us, Marx did not mention the state in the first chapter of volume 1 of *Das Kapital*, nor does it come up in the discussions on a post-capitalist society in Friedrich Engels' third volume (2012, 175). At Marx's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday we've seen attempts to, in Marx's name, establish communism, and the result of the so-called 'end of history' under global capitalism. What we're left with is freedom without socialism: there is privilege and injustice, but we are afraid to act because of socialism's history of slavery and brutality.

The term 'state illusion' refers to the idea that a radical transformation of society is best accomplished through winning state power. Anarchist Gustav Landauer wrote that "The State is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behavior; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another" (2010, 214). We thus don't have to win over state power – where possible we can already start behaving differently today.

The term anarchism comes from the Greek prefix 'an' and the verb 'archein.' It means no beginning, no leadership, no rule: no government. Besides 'no government,' it can also mean 'no beginning': we can start right now, we don't have to wait for any radical revolution or overthrow of government before we start battling privilege and injustice and creating a more just world. When we look for an answer to the problems we are facing today – be it climate destruction, racism, sexism, or increased inequality and poverty – it seems clear that focusing on winning state power is just as ineffective as waiting for government intervention by those already

in power. We have to act now and do whatever we can, rather than wait for the revolution.

Anarchists cannot provide a blueprint of what the world should look like. Change should be tried through experimenting. And people should experiment for themselves – no central committee can implement anarchism from above, and no revolutionaries can force the abstinence of government and centralization upon people. If we want to see what the value of Marxism is, we can look at its economic theories and problem analyses. For solutions, we have to experiment, look, prefigure and try on our own. There is no blueprint for utopia. Ana Cecilia Dinerstein argues that in autonomous organizing, value is confronted with hope (2015, 211). Autonomous organizing, in which the anarchist principles of nonhierarchical, anti-capitalist, horizontal organizing are applied, prefigures what a post-revolutionary society should look like, but also already brings it into being right now. Ignoring the walls that divide the refugees from the privileged citizens, singing and dancing, wishing each other a happy new year: it is a first prefiguration, an act of solidarity, an attempt at creating the society we want to see. The anarchist emphasis on doing what is possible now, their way of organizing and interacting, is providing the blueprint for the society that is to come without falling into the trap of the state illusion.

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## Animals

Eva Meijer

Nonhuman animals are not often considered a factor of importance in Marxist thought, and insights from Marxist thought are not often considered to be relevant to animal studies (Cochrane 2010). Marx himself did not write about nonhuman animals in much detail and saw humans as distinct from all other animals. Even though he had read Darwin (Benton 1993), who famously argued that differences between humans and other animals are of degree and not kind, and recognized the capacities of nonhuman animals to produce, as well as the animal nature of humans (Cochrane 2010), he saw humans as special animals and his theory is anthropocentric in different ways. His historical account for example focuses solely on human history and teleology, not recognizing animal agency or the importance of nonhuman animal- (or interspecies-) labor in capitalism. He also explicitly addresses the human capacity for transcending their animal nature, in contrast to other animals (*ibid.*). The focus is on human liberation, and the idea of justice for nonhuman animals seems irrelevant from this perspective.

However, as several authors have pointed out (Benton 2003, Noske 1989, Painter 2016, Perlo 2002), Marxist concepts can shed light on specific characteristics of the position of nonhuman animals in capitalist societies, and a focus on nonhuman animals can bring to light dimensions of capitalism that are otherwise obscured. I

will first briefly focus on the latter point, the relevance of thinking about animals for Marxism, and then turn to the first in more detail. Our economic, cultural, and social structures are in large part built on nonhuman animal labor and matter. The rise of capitalism is interconnected with the exploitation of nonhuman animals, and the remnants of their bodies are omnipresent in most of the objects and artifacts humans produce. The book *PIG 05049* (2007), by Dutch artist Christien Meindersma, illustrates this by documenting what happens to the body of one pig after slaughter. Some body parts are made into food for humans, but her bones, skin, and whatever else is left, are used to make all kinds of objects and materials, ranging from aspirin to gasoline to porcelain. If one would take animal matter out of these products without replacing them, our physical world would collapse. This material use is furthermore interconnected with the production of cultural symbols in capitalism (Shukin 2009).

Nonhuman animal labor is also an important economic force in our societies (Hribal 2003). Barns are filled with chickens laboring for our eggs, cows who are impregnated to keep creating milk, and so on. While many nonhuman animals are used as objects, this does not mean they have no agency. Historian Jason Hribal (2003, 2007) claims that nonhuman animals are part of the working class. He argues they partly instigated the industrial revolution by being unreliable workers and were a driving force in the rise of capitalism. Their cooperation and resistance also shaped human labor and instruments. Rethinking production and labor thus also asks for rethinking relations with other animals. Here it is also important to recognize that the lives of nonhuman and human animal workers are often closely interconnected (see for example Hovorka and Geiger 2015). Human workers in slaughterhouses often suffer from large welfare issues (Pachirat 2011). For poor families, using animal workers is sometimes their only way of surviving. Vulnerable human and nonhuman groups are also often collectively affected by capitalism. Western habits of consumption may hurt animals in industrial farming, together with the non-western human and nonhuman animals whose habitats are destroyed in growing soy for these farmed animals. To analyze or improve the position of one of these groups an intersectional approach is needed. More attention to how

different groups are collectively affected might also lead to greater solidarity, which can help bring forward social change.

This brings us to the second point, the relevance of Marxist criticism for theorizing the social and political position of nonhuman animals. First, while capitalism is not necessary for animal oppression – human oppression and use of nonhuman animals seems the standard in most if not all social, political and religious settings – the Marxist focus on material conditions and economic structures can help to criticize the specific forms of oppression nonhuman animals in capitalist societies suffer from. The scale of their oppression is unprecedented and the strong focus on profit in capitalism is interconnected with the lack of progress in bringing about social change. Philosopher Dinesh Wadiwel (2016) shows that under capitalism animals are objectified and commodified for human consumption, for example in undergoing material transformations in order to become meat. They no longer only have use value for humans; they also have exchange value. This benefits humans economically and symbolically, because through using other animals human value is reified.

Second, a focus on nonhuman animal labor is important because, contrary to what Marx thought, other animals work. They work for and with humans, for example in entertainment, experiments, the police force, the army, and health care. They work for themselves, for example to build nests, bridges, houses and gardens, for food, and for artistic reasons (Bekoff 2002): they also work collectively, for example in hunting or building. Some species of nonhuman animals make other animals work for them; certain species of ants for example farm aphids, keeping them close-by through using chemicals on their feet (Oliver et al. 2007). Nonhuman animals cannot perform certain tasks humans can, but animals of many species can do things humans cannot, such as weaving webs. Theorizing labor relations between humans and other animals under capitalism is important for reasons of justice, and in order to work towards new interspecies communities (Meijer 2017).

This aspect of their lives has not been given much attention in animal philosophy so far (Cochrane 2016, Kymlicka 2017). The focus in this field has long been on

suffering and/or liberation, instead of formulating new relations. Recent approaches that focus on nonhuman animal agency, politics, and subjectivity, however, point precisely to the importance of forming new relations and communities with other animals, arguing that relations with other animals are unavoidable and that better relations are possible. A focus on nonhuman animal labor can help bring forward animal studies in different ways. From recognizing that other animals work it may follow that humans understand them more fully as co-beings in shared communities (see Kymlicka 2017 for examples). Those thinking about fair interspecies relations need to take into account that work for many other animals is part of living a fulfilled life. This means something different for different species, but boredom is one of the biggest problems for zoo animals and domesticated animals living under the conditions of factory farming, together with loneliness. These animals also very often suffer from alienation (Noske 1989). Finally, it is important to recognize that the conditions under which nonhuman animals live can certainly be improved under capitalism, but that that is not enough to bring about actual change for them. It does not suffice to give nonhuman animals bigger cages or better food: we need to challenge the conditions that enable their large-scale exploitation, beginning with the fact that many of them, as sentient beings, are considered human property, and the fact that humans think they own the planet that we all live on.

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**Association**  
Johan F. Hartle

The concept of association has its own history, which clearly informs the Marxian use of the term. With Rousseau the term “association” first enters the terminology of social philosophy; he uses the term to positively describe the linking between free and equal citizens. In the *Second Discourse* Rousseau speaks of “free association, which obliged none of its members,” (Rousseau 2002, 116) as a form of societal organization. In the *Contrat Social* it will be the contract itself that constitutes the association of a free society. In both cases association appears as self-determined connectivity of the members of a free and equal society.

With this tradition, the term association slowly gains specific connotations. They are linked to the idea of an emancipated society. After Rousseau, Claude Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier specified egalitarian forms of organization as “associations.” Saint-Simon reflected on associations as the form of organization of the *classe productive*, a professional organization for scientists, artists, and workers that should, in the end, reorganize society. Beyond social atomism, and beyond the market and the state, associations were considered as extrinsic systems of social organization which would not adequately represent the productive classes of society. The idea of an association of producers who would “work together and market their goods in common” (Beecher & Bienvenu 1971, 66) was the central idea of

Fourier’s utopianism. Association, for Fourier, Saint-Simon, and their followers, stood for an alternative form of organization. Such associations were meant to connect with the separate field of social production directly, independently of market mediation.

In part related to the theoretical efforts of early socialists, so-called associations became the central element in the working class’s actual self-organization on the ground. Strikes during the French Revolution of 1830, for example, engendered a movement committed to the ideals of associationism. In 1848, Paris alone hosted around 300 of such associations with an approximate collective membership of some 50,000 people. The idea of common labor in self-organized associations, an idea that Charles Fourier had originally conceived for agricultural contexts, will become the leading slogan for urban craftsmen and the organizing industrial working-classes in the early and decisive years of struggle.

In this way, Marx, too, refers to these historical connotations in his use of the term “association,” famously so in the *Communist Manifesto*: “In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms,” Marx and Engels write, “we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.” (Marx & Engels 1976, 506). In *The Poverty of Philosophy* Marx writes: “The working class, in the course of its development, will substitute for the old civil society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power properly so-called...” (Marx 1976a, 182). It will do so by spreading the idea and political form of the self-organization of producers, beginning with every productive unit, as broadly as possible.

Marx and Engels emphasize in the *Communist Manifesto* that within the bourgeois order a relation between the laborers emerges as its immanent product, something that is already present in a latent form. “The advance of industry,” they write, somewhat teleologically, “whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by the revolutionary combination, due to association.” (Marx & Engels 1976, 496). Time and again “association”



describes a form of social organization which functions as means and end for the egalitarian organization of society. From *The German Ideology* and the *Communist Manifesto* to *Capital* (the “Verein freier Menschen” mentioned in the chapter on fetishism is presented to the English-speaking world as the “association of free men”, (see Marx 1976b, 171), this use of the term association can be found as a description of socialist politics and the working class’s self-organization, which transgresses the repressive and alienated organizational forms of state and capital.

Wherever Marx speaks about the organization of a future society, the term association is used to characterize the free and non-coercive form of social organization, through which goods are collectively produced and freely distributed. What Marx finds in the loose and voluntary structure of association is a representation of a collective potential of workers to communally manage the production and distribution of material wealth on both a small and large scale. That which is normally concealed by the socially necessary illusion generated by the commodity form, which is to say, labor, itself gains visibility and autonomy in and through associations.

When sketching outlines of a future society, Marx confronts the institutionalized spheres of state and capital with this self-organizing capacity of the material producers.

Association is a free form of coordination – it helps organize an intrinsic link between the social producers that might otherwise remain invisible. In and through associations the sphere of symbolic representation (the sphere of distribution, the state) is thus confronted with the hidden dynamic of production. In labor-struggles production articulates itself in a way that is normally excluded from an apparent logic of representation.

At least three layers that are crucial for any Marxian version of a future society are implied in the conception of association. *First*, the model of politics: associations help in articulating labor directly without separating the logics of material production from the sphere of politics (without separating, as in the terminology of

Arendt or Habermas, work or labor from action or interaction, and thus, from politics). *Second*, the organization of social producers who, through the lens of the sphere of circulation, otherwise appear as isolated individuals, as mere owners of commodities. It is the method of free association that lays bare the inner connectivity of the various parts of social production. The particular dynamic and quality of labor associations is, in other words, to organize social elements that in the manifest structure of representation appear as isolated. *Third*, associations open up new dimensions of social life by re-arranging the conditions for social production. The satisfaction of social needs can directly be addressed in and through their collective articulation. By addressing the field of social production directly, associations help to imagine and produce new forms and conditions of social life. In other words, labor associations are means of *poietic production* which articulate the forces of a latent structure.

If you wish, you can call these three dynamics of associations (which sketch outlines of a Marxian version of a future society) *aesthetic*: they integrate muted elements of material practice (and thus, materiality) into the orders of representation, they form new meanings by bringing latent connections to the fore, and they open up new horizons of social practice. Politics can be beautiful.

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## Beauty Industry

Nora Ruck

The notion “beauty industry” is employed in various fields and from manifold angles, including everyday language. In order to make a critical interrogation of the beauty industry fruitful for Marxist thought, and vice versa, both the beauty industry and the ‘hidden labor of beauty’ (Black 2004, 66-91) must be situated within an analysis of the capitalist gendered division of labor. Marxist feminists have furthered Marxist thought by emphasizing and analyzing the fundamental necessity of house and care work (‘reproductive labor’) in capitalism. Attending to the beauty industry from a Marxist feminist perspective allows for extending the analysis of the capitalist gendered division of labor beyond these domains of ‘care work’ or ‘emotional labor’.

In line with Euromonitor, the beauty industry can be defined as including fragrances, hair and skin care products, sun care, color cosmetics, men’s grooming products, bath and shower products, as well as oral and baby care, and as overlapping with other industries and services such as fashion, hairdressers and beauty salons, and plastic surgery and other more medical services (Jones 2010, 9). The use of products to increase attractiveness and alter one’s scent goes way back in history to ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, as well as medieval Chinese, Arabs, and Europeans (ibid., 4). The development of the beauty industry, however,

was initiated by a number of female and male entrepreneurs during the nineteenth century. The mid-nineteenth century saw the rise of beauty salons and of businesses that marketed beauty products, workplaces which in industrialized countries such as the UK or the US provided some of only a few employment opportunities for White (mostly working-class and some middle-class) women as well as for US Black women and men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Black 2004, 15-21). The history of the beauty industry is by-and-large a history of “large numbers of small and medium-sized entrepreneurial firms” rather than of “capital-intensive, mass marketing and mass production industries” (Jones 2010, 15). It would become a mass-industry and increasingly globalized only by the 1920s and 1930s, a trend that intensified massively after World War II (Black 2004, 20-26). Currently, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the beauty industry is a multi-billion-dollar global industry, with consumers having each spent on average more than 330 dollars on cosmetics around the world in 2008 (Jones 2010, 1).

The gendered division of labor in capitalism is of at least twofold significance when it comes to the beauty industry. First, in many industrializing countries, a gendered division of labor started to unfold in the White bourgeoisie in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (e.g., Sieder 1987) and generalized to the White (e.g., Rendall 1993) and only partly to people of color and black working classes throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (e.g., Collins 2000, 53f.). This division of labor assigned the wife to reproductive labor in the private sphere of the home and the husband to productive labor in the public sphere. Reproductive labor includes all activities that are needed in order to reproduce the workers’ ability to work, e.g., cleaning, cooking, having and raising children, and many other chores. For the middle-class wife of bourgeois societies in particular, domestic duties increasingly went along with representational as well as consumption responsibilities since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Penz 2010, 14). The woman then became and has, to some extent, remained “the index of [the husband’s] economic situation, the prestige-object of a household, who is ceaselessly occupied in the task of creating fine distinctions” (Vinken 2005, 5), while the husbands’ attire grew more and more homogenized and plain. Beautification practices, in turn, became more and more inextricably linked with femininity.

Second, services and products of the beauty industry, as well as a considerable amount of beauty labor carried out by employees, are increasingly required by a continuously expanding service sector. Furthering discussions about the significance of 'emotional labor', especially in the care work occupations, Witz, Warhurst, and Nickson (2003) have examined the rising importance of aesthetics in contemporary organizations as 'aesthetic labor'. Bourdieu (1984) already hinted at the fact that this form of labor is both fundamentally classed and gendered when he pointed out that it was mainly women of the petit-bourgeoisie who "devote such great investments, of self-denial and especially of time, to improving their appearance and are such unconditional believers in all forms of cosmetic voluntarism" (ibid., 206). What is more, he differentiated between professions with traditionally male representational functions (e.g., diplomacy) and rather new "representational and 'hosting' functions" (ibid., 152) which rely on traditional notions of femininity and had led to a market for certain physical attributes where "beauty thus acquires a value on the labour market" (ibid., 153). Following this train of thought, Black (2004) has hinted at the necessity of situating aesthetic labor within a gendered and classed analysis of changes in late capitalist labor markets. Especially for the working classes, traditionally masculine skills valued in the manufacturing sector are becoming increasingly obsolete while the service sector, which relies on skills and features that are traditionally coded as feminine, is ever-expanding. In this sense, Lovell considers femininity as – albeit limited – embodied cultural capital that "may begin to have a competitive market advantage compared with the attributes of traditional working-class masculinity" (Lovell 2000, 25). However, Black (2004, 126) points to the hidden aesthetic labor behind supposedly natural femininity as it requires considerable skills which need to be learned as well as continuous extensive labor, both of which "remain unrecognised when they are viewed as an immanent characteristic of femininity". Thus, in a sense, aesthetic labor is a form of reproductive labor required in the service sector.

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## Big Data

Raimund Minichbauer and Gerald Raunig

The reality of today's dividual data sets – enormous accumulations of data that can be divided, recomposed and valorized in endless ways – is one of worldwide streams, of deterritorialization and of machinic expansion, most succinctly expressed as Big Data. Social media such as Facebook need the self-division of individual users just as intelligence agencies continue to retain individual identities. Big Data, on the other hand, is less interested in individuals and just as little interested in a totalization of data, but is all the more so in data sets that are freely floating and as detailed as possible, which it can dividentally traverse – as an open field of immanence with a potentially endless extension. These enormous multitudes of data want to form a horizon of knowledge that governs the entire past and present, and so is also able to capture the future.

The collection of data by economic and state actors, especially secret services, insurance, and banking industries, has a long tradition, but it has acquired a completely new quality with machine-readability and the machinic processing of the data material. This quality applies not only to credit-rating agencies or intelligence agencies, but also to all areas of networked everyday life, all partial data of individual lives, about children, divorces, debts, properties, consumption habits, communication behaviors, travelling habits, internet activities, movements in real space,

whereabouts, health, fitness, eating habits, calorie consumption, dental care, credit card charges, cash-machine use, to name only a few. Refrigerators, ovens, thermostats, smart-guide toothbrushes, intelligent toilet bowls, networked offices, networked kitchens, networked bedrooms, networked bathrooms, networked toilet facilities – all controllable via smartphone, all accessible via cloud. This machinic data can potentially be combined, for instance for the logistics of individual thing-movements, and made accessible according to dividual logics.

In order to traverse, divide and recombine these data, cooperation is needed from those who were previously called consumers. Participation means the most comprehensible free (especially in the sense of unpaid) data exchange possible, not only sharing existing data, but also producing new data. Data valorization plays out in the terrain of externalizing production processes and activating consumers, as it has been intensified since the 1990s in all economic areas. Crowds, multitudes, dispersed masses – their modes of existence and living are captured, stretched, appropriated and exploited beyond the realm of paid labor. Scoring, rating, ranking, profiling. Consumers who are activated and generate value with their activity do not have to be paid. The open source model of program development by the crowd has meanwhile become established as a business model and spread to all economic sectors. Free labor in free association (as Marx once wrote), but to the advantage of the enterprises of the New Economy.

Everything is free, but one who does not pay is not a consumer but a product. The fact that this is now widely known hardly seems to open up opportunities for change in the modes of subjectivation. The daily work of the 'users' in the social network consists of adding more and more details to the image of themselves and their social environment and thus – posting after posting and like after like – creating an increasingly identifiable target for advertising messages. In the context of accelerated technological developments under conditions of monopolized access to data for a few corporations, and an increasingly exclusive focus on valorisation, new communication structures have emerged. Meanwhile, the bourgeois public has taken note of this with some horror, and under the slogan of 'fake news', as it became clear that the usual agnostics of valorization – be it advertising for

billionaires with political ambitions, for soft drinks or EU-exits – becomes much more effective in highly efficient and at the same time less regulated and opaque structures.

Under similar auspices of intensified valorization, machine learning is developing, a recent trend that has led to a quantum leap in the development of statistical approaches to artificial intelligence, not least through the opportunities created by big data. The ‘intelligence’ of the software is no longer implemented according to abstract categories and/or sample data; the algorithms themselves (although at the moment still mostly ‘supervised’) generate their logical structures using patterns that they recognize in huge data sets. The advances in artificial intelligence usually accompanying debates on human and machine intelligence have now receded into the background in the face of the massive labor market problems that these technologies will cause in the given economic system.

All of this calls for a reappropriation of the present that carries us to the other side of dividual economy. How, then, can economy be envisioned as not based on individual property, on the dis/possession of each and every individual, but as using the abstract-dividual line to compose new forms of sociality? An economy that implies forms of distribution other than dividends as claims of shareholders: a dividend beyond the realm of measures and metrics, of modularizing and modulating, of number and code, where that which is to be distributed is not well-ordered by “common sense,” as the “best distribution,” but rather as an ever broader and wider distribution, spread, dispersion, proliferation of social wealth?

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## Biocapitalism

Susanne Lettow

The concept of biocapitalism emerged within debates on global bio-industries, including reproduction industries, and the political project of a ‘bioeconomy’ that the OECD advocates since the mid-2000s. ‘Biocapitalism’ refers to processes of the primary valorization of materials derived from human bodies and nonhuman living beings, to the meaning of these processes for capitalist accumulation strategies and to related transformations of modes of labour, exploitation and subjectivation. Although the realities and prospects of biocapitalism make it necessary to go beyond Marx’ critique of political economy and to include analyses of gender relations, the (post)colonial situation, 21<sup>st</sup>-century biopolitics, and human-nature relations, Marx’ theory of capitalism provides crucial insights on which a critical theory of biocapitalism can build. In particular, Marx’ analysis of the commodity-form, his concept of labour, the theory of primitive accumulation, and his analysis of the ground-rent are widely discussed with respect to biocapitalism. Basically, a critical theory of biocapitalism needs to explain how it is possible that materials such as egg-cells, sperm or organic tissue circulate as disposable things. Although these ‘things’ must, to a large extent, be conceived of as proto-commodities rather than as commodities proper because their exchange is rarely fully monetized, Marx’ critique of commodity fetishism is instructive. It reveals that an analysis and critique of biocapitalism should not focus on the ‘things’ in question – their specific

biological properties, respectively their naturalness or artificiality. In contrast, what needs to be scrutinized are the social practices and relations through which body materials come to function as commodities or proto-commodities, and that constitute subjects as proprietors of their bodies and body materials. To a large extent the difficulties that a critical theory of biocapitalism faces result from the fact that primary valorization refers to materials and processes which do not exist in unmediated ways but which are made accessible or generated only through techno-scientific procedures, and thus knowledge production and technological intervention. Because biocapitalism refers to organic or sub-organic materials and processes, analyses of biocapitalism are frequently shaped by a vitalist vocabulary. In order to translate this vocabulary into a critical social theory, and to make clear that what is at stake is not 'life itself' but historically specific practices and relations, it is helpful to refer to Marx' vocabulary of political economy. According to Christian Zeller, Kean Birch and David Tyfield, Marx' analysis of ground-rent provides a model for understanding how, in biocapitalism, rent is derived from knowledge which is enclosed as intellectual property. Other scholars draw a comparison between biocapitalist primary valorization and Marx' analysis of the process of primitive accumulation. Following Marx and Rosa Luxemburg, the constitution of new biocapitalist resources and (proto-)commodities can be understood as new enclosures and as another extension of capitalist accumulation to its non-capitalist milieu. Melinda Cooper and Catherine Waldby stress that this extension entails qualitative modifications, namely an "experimental intervention into the temporality of living matter" and an "active shaping of the body through scientific technologies" (Cooper & Waldby 2015, 94). Indeed, the enclosure of common land in 17<sup>th</sup>-century England, too, not only constituted private property but transformed society at large and modes of existence, including body and nature relations. Not least, primitive accumulation, broadly conceived, included the shaping of the labouring subject, or of individuals that conceive of themselves as proprietors of a potential called 'labour power'. Neither 'labour' nor 'labour power' are thus universal concepts, as Marx highlights in the Introduction to the *Grundrisse* from 1857, but belong to bourgeois society. This insight should be kept in mind if the concept of labour is used to politically articulate biocapitalist relations of exchange as exploitation. Although it certainly makes sense to argue that monetized or semi-monetized

practices such as surrogacy, egg cell and tissue 'donation', or participation in clinical trials should be regulated through labour legislation in order to guarantee some legal protection, Marx' analysis of wage labour opens up another perspective: the transformation of social relations that rely on the appropriation of foreign labour power. A critique of biocapitalism thus has to do more than claim legal protection of labour, body, and nature. It needs to scrutinize all social relations that account for the production, circulation and consumption of bio-materials. Accordingly, a critical theory of biocapitalism cannot restrict itself to an accumulation-centred analysis of capitalism but needs to understand (bio-)capitalism as social formation that integrates monetized and non-monetized economic forms, multiple forms of power and domination, and re-shapes subjectivities, needs and desires. In addition, it re-shapes body politics and human-nature-relations and constitutes new forms of extractivism. Certainly, a critical theory of biocapitalism – which still needs to be formulated – has to renounce the double temptation of techno-determinism and economism, but it can get much inspiration from the praxeological aspects of Marx' thought.

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Marxism is a funny sport: more than in any other philosophical tradition, Marxists can be judged and evaluated by the degree to which they are ‘good Marxists.’ This is not so much about the degree to which they succeed in presenting convincing paradigms of social and cultural theory, but rather about the degree to which they manage to stick to the original program, to integrate the key elements of the originally Marxian theory, and the implications they would have for political practice. How much of a Marxist program was the program of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS)? *How good a Marxist* was a scholar like Hoggart or Hall (Hebdige, McRobbie, and Gilroy)? And, of course, *when* and *for how long*?

Founded in 1964 by Richard Hoggart, the Centre, although not really claiming to be Marxist, published important work on quotidian working-class culture, and, further developed by his more famous successor Stuart Hall, focused mainly on forms of cultural struggle, which classical Marxism had neglected for a long time. Differing greatly from classical Marxism, the strict analysis of political economy never mattered much in the CCCS. The starting point (clearly so in Hoggart’s 1957 work *The Uses of Literacy* and as in E.P. Thompson’s highly influential 1964 *The Making of the English Working Class*) was working class culture as a source and

means of political articulation. This presupposed an extended understanding of culture and a shift away from the normative orientation in cultural theory, and it led to an understanding of culture which interpreted cultural struggles as dominant sources in the formation of political identities. In some ways the CCCS thus developed its own version of Western Marxism, successively moving into its own version of Post-Marxism and identity politics by continuously shifting away from the main parameters of classical Marxism’s understanding of political struggle (based on labor and economic struggles). Nonetheless, the representatives of the CCCS cultural-analytical program (first and foremost Stuart Hall himself, but also allied thinkers such as E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams) were amongst the most visible intellectuals in Britain’s New Left (Stuart Hall being the first editor-in chief of the still powerful *New Left Review*), especially so during the dark age of Thatcherism.

The strongest link to maybe-not-so-classical Marxism but at least to canonical Marxist theory was the explicit reference to the work of Antonio Gramsci, whose concept of hegemony (devoid of its strategic roots in its Leninist fashion, as a merely analytical tool) probably became the most important concept in the political strategy of the CCCS’ version of cultural theory. Clearly, this was the way in which Stuart Hall had understood the centre’s program: “Rightly or wrongly, and especially in the 1970s, the Centre developed, or tried to develop, what I would call a Gramscian project.” (Hall 1990, 17). The understanding of Gramsci’s conception of hegemony quickly developed in non-Marxist directions. In the words of the centre’s specialist on Punk music, Dick Hebdige, hegemony was simply to be understood as the power to “exert ‘total social authority’ over other subordinate groups, not simply by coercion or by the direct imposition of ruling ideas, but by ‘winning and shaping consent ...’.” (Hebdige 1979, 16). Both the concept of class and the idea that hegemony could be an aim of a party-oriented strategy had been replaced with some more general idea of cultural politics.

As a central – somewhat Marxist – point of reference, the concept of hegemony was allowed to stray from the classical doctrine and to enter the world of new struggles, new lines of conflict and, more terminologically, new social movements.



Much as in the explicitly (and self-declared) *post*-Marxist theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, the focus on the cultural determination (and articulation) of social struggles allowed not only the diversification of the classical Marxist horizon, it also left behind for good the emphasis on political economy and class struggle.

In the research program of the CCCS this development is linked to the central lines of conflict that were to be analyzed within the field of (widely understood) popular culture: next to class conflicts, generational conflicts (specifically in the analysis of *subculture* or *youth* culture), racial conflicts, and, last but not least, gender conflicts, became central. Stuart Hall was sufficiently clear about this aspect of the CCCS' program, too: "What we are talking about is the struggle for cultural hegemony, which is these days waged as much in popular culture as anywhere else." (Hall 1993, 106). Much of the analysis of these dynamics in popular culture remained faithful to the critical analysis of hegemony and was thus still Marxist, if not in content, then at least in some structure. Undeniably, each of these overlapping fields of analysis produced valuable and deeply influential research, and each of these fields could later (simplistically) be identified with second-generation scholars who had specialized in these lines of conflict (as Paul Gilroy on race and the post-colonial condition, or Angela McRobbie on gender, fashion, and girls' culture).

So much for the analyses and concrete cultural *studies*. If one looks into the history of the CCCS' (and its representatives') publications, one finds surprisingly few original attempts at genuine theory. For philosophers, certainly for theory-philic Marxists, this sounds like a disadvantage. The immense amount of literature that the centre's representatives have produced was of a different kind: Cultural Studies meant *analyses*, *inquiries* into the field of lived cultural practice and not so much abstract theorizing, grand theory, or metaphysics. In this sense, typical theoretical publications which emerged from the context of the CCCS were handbooks, providing theoretical instruments for eclectic cultural analyses. They assembled key concepts and commented on recent contributions to cultural theory without any emphatic systematic interest of their own.

As a genuine and original theoretical program, however, a program that clearly determined the further development of any media-theoretical analysis, the CCCS produced an approach to audience research and the theory of media reception. Condensed in a short article by Stuart Hall, the CCCS presented a new vision of the active role of the audience in the production of cultural meaning. As much as any cultural object was encoded (first produced), it could be decoded (creatively appropriated). Reception finally appeared as an active process that could confront the institutional order of media production with deviance and subversion. Next to 'dominant codes' certain possible layers appeared where 'oppositional codes' could enter the sphere of mass culture. Thus, the program of the CCCS emphasized the creativity of audiences in making sense of their own world. Methodologically this ended the dominance of the *Volksempfänger*, which had been kept in place for too long by Marxist cultural pessimists.

Some "pessimism of the intellect", however, to allude to Gramsci, could have been helpful for the Birmingham program, and, maybe, some sectarianism too. In 1990 already, at the beginning of the decline of any broader claims to leftist cultural hegemony, Stuart Hall stated (referring specifically to the situation in the US) that "cultural studies' has become an umbrella for just about anything" (Hall 1990, 22). Its critical potential faded with the growth of its theoretical indeterminacy. No theoretical tradition is ever fully innocent concerning its legacy, and one may doubt if contemporary cultural studies are of much help in articulating the relevant political antagonisms of the present. Birmingham's trail-blazing approach to popular culture became all-too popular. As an effect of these dialectics, the Birmingham centre was closed in 2002.

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## Bohème

Drehli Robnik

The *bohème* comes up three times in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. The term, partly synonymous with the famous *Lumpenproletariat*, serves to label French *prince-president* Bonaparte, after his 1851 coup Emperor Napoleon III, as a “bohemian”, and to label as “noisy, disreputable, rapacious bohème” (Marx 1990, 134) the personnel he assembled at high levels of government. The latter phrase is typical for the style of enumeration in Marx’s attempt to pinpoint the corruption of a bourgeoisie willing to “forfeit the crown” “in order to save its purse” (67). In his view, the bourgeoisie abandons its historical class mission of developing democratic public spheres and industrial production, in favour of an orgiastic filling of purses and bellies under authoritarian rule. *Bohème* is one of his names for this self-abandonment.

The most poetic of Marx’s outbursts into enumeration is the one that introduces *la bohème* as a French word, mirroring the *Lumpenproletariat* upon which follows his list of names for class corruption: Bonaparte made Paris’s *Lumpen* his political army, Marx writes, and he mimics that army’s composition in his writing, as he invokes the skandalon of an association whose organization is reduced to mere parataxis, opened up by the “alongside” at the start of a sentence (whose main clause doesn’t even have a verb in the German original):

Alongside decayed *roués* with dubious means of subsistence and of dubious origin, alongside ruined and adventurous offshoots of the bourgeoisie, were vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, *lazzaroni*, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, *maquerealls*, brothel keepers, porters, *litterati*, organ-grinders, ragpickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars—in short, the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither, which the French term *la bohème* (75).

As a political analysis, Marx’s *Brumaire* describes an ideologically non-class-based political rule in the interest of finance capital, which makes “all classes, equally powerless and equally mute, fall on their knees before the rifle butt” (121). As a piece of philosophy of history, this text famously opens with the historical events that repeat themselves, tragedy returning as farce. Being one embodiment of that illegitimate repetition called farce, the *bohème* itself has a career in its proto-conceptual repetitions in several post-Marxisms. These reappearances make up the margins from which this Marxian word is highlighted and stares at – not only – me. (Along the lines of problematizing recurrence – the impossibility to fulfil the tasks of history “ohne Rückerinnerung”, “without recalling” – Marx’s *bohème* could join the ranks of the unreliable *Gesperster* opposed to production-inspiring *Geister* in the *Brumaire* and other Marx classics and, ultimately, of Derrida’s *Specters of Marx*.)

Jacques Rancière’s 1983 reconstruction of Marx’s criticism of class (de)composition reads like a parody of Marx’s parody of the Bonapartist parody of history. Rancière highlights humorously the humour – and also the humus: the gardening and geology discourse – at work in Marx’s writing. Drawing on the *Lumpenproletariat* and its bourgeois counterpart, the “finance aristocracy”, both synonyms of *bohème* in the *Brumaire*, Rancière shows that what causes Marx’s indignation is ultimately the “inconsistency of classes as such” which his teleology runs into: a teleology of classes performing their tasks in a dialectics of revolutionized production (Rancière 2004, 95). Marx’s *bohème/Brumaire*-text features at an early stage of Rancière’s political theory of *democracy* as a tearing-loose from organic or functionally assigned social identities. In his 2005 conception of *populism* as the embodiment of politics,

Ernesto Laclau references Marx's work on *Lumpenproletariat* and *bohème* and their "distance from the productive process" in unfolding a theorem of *heterogeneity*. According to Laclau, in the high degree of autonomy of the state vis-a-vis society and in the impossibility to base politics of mobilization on class as a coherent foundation, Marx confronts nothing less than the "emergence of political articulation". Laclau replaces Marx's flowery names with the terms *outsider* and *underdog*, designating the heterogeneous (instead of functionally integrated) position of a part of the population that performs itself as a militant people through its political articulation (Laclau 2005, 142–53).

To Rancière's democratic and Laclau's populist *bohèmes* we should add the early fascist *bohème* of sociologist, philosopher of history and film theorist Siegfried Kracauer. In several studies on the bourgeoisie's turn to the far right, culminating in his study of Nazi and Italian Fascist propaganda, i.e., a politics of mobilization, written in 1936–1938 (but not published because Adorno rejected it for its *unreliable* Marxism), Kracauer borrows two terms from Marx's *Brumaire*: the concept of *bonapartism*, then current in socialist theories of fascism as a dictatorship that "pretends to stand *above the classes*" (Kracauer 2011, 371); and the *bohème*. This is his name for the popular subject of fascism in its early movement stage. "Remnants of the army", "high-brow writers", "unemployed", "young people": Kracauer's enumeration, under the umbrella term *bohème*, of types that, lumped together, make up Mussolini's and Hitler's "cliques", is reminiscent of Marx's, from which he also quotes the "plünderungslustige Bohème" (Kracauer 2013, 17). So, does Kracauer see Nazis as a rabble of society? No. What he highlights about them, in connection with his view of them as a *bohème*, is, first, how they resemble "artists" in their conception of politics (propaganda) as an autonomous art of forming masses and even realities. (Kracauer later expands the critique of anti-realism in his film theory.) Second, there is Kracauer's equation of *bohème* with his formal (almost proto-Laclauian) usage of the term *outsider*. Being *outsiders* relative to a stable (production-derived) organon of classes is Kracauer's common denominator for the fascist "Faschingsbande", carnival gang, and for the *middle classes*, especially the white-collar *Angestellten*. He theorizes the latter as being "ideologically shelterless" – "dispossessed" and "proletarianized" while constantly worried about their security,

repressing the fact that Fordist capitalism has nullified their bourgeois privilege and identity (Kracauer 1963, 99). Middle-class philistines and bohemians (not to be confused with the more recent, politically greenish, fusion of bourgeois and bohemians into *bobo's*) make up a non-class to be articulated politically – which fascism did all-too successfully.

Now that the fascist farce partially repeats itself roughly a century after the *March on Rome*, with right-wing populism and nationalist-authoritarian governance on the rise, how can the reiterations of Marx's *bohème* serve political diagnostics? (Provided we are mindful of the anti-migrant and heterosexist stereotyping which the term historically implied.) *Bohème* can highlight differences between authoritarian rule well-established in a nationalist *law & order*-mode, and early, genuine movemental stages of right-wing anti-institutional mobilization. At these stages, colourful warrior types – from Germany's AfD, mutated from a club of monetarist professors into a movement led by nationalist revanchists and paranoiacs, to Trump – rise to power; without keeping it for long unless they trade their *bohème* charisma for the habitus of "security" technocrats.

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## Bonapartism

Ido de Haan

After the endless crisis of Marxism, the universal applicability of a materialist reading of history has lost much of its credibility, but it has opened up a new perspective on Marx as a uniquely perceptive commentator not only of his own time, but also of ours. One of the most remarkable essays in this respect is his commentary on the rise of the future French emperor Napoléon III in *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte* (1852). Marx's detailed account of French politics between 1848 and 1852 has generally been considered a "largely unintelligible compendium of anomalies", and at best as the "untidy version of the 1859 Preface". But in fact, this text "reveals that Marx was a pioneer analyst of the politics of representation and a first-rank theorist of contingency." (Carver 2004 104, 108-9). In times when political leaders are ridiculed as idiots and feared as ghosts of an uncanny past, Marx's analysis of Bonapartist rule offers what might be called a "spectral" analysis of the vicissitudes of political power.

Many considered Charles-Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte (1808-1873), nephew of Napoléon Bonaparte, and emperor of the French Second Empire (1852-1871), to be a fool. After a hare-brained coup d'état against the regime of king Louis Philippe in 1836, he went into exile in London, where he wrote *Des Idées Napoléoniennes* (1839), in which he claimed his uncle's legacy as a new Caesar, as "exécuteur

testamentaire" of the French Revolution, and as savior of the French nation (Bonaparte 1839, 15-30). Despite his adoption of the cloak of Napoléon, a second coup d'état the nephew staged in his uncle's name in 1840 was also a failure "beyond comedy", as the *Journal des Débats* commented: "One shouldn't kill fools, but they should be locked up" (quoted in Milza 2004, 128). And so it happened. Nevertheless, Louis Bonaparte was able to amass a following, which in 1846 helped him to escape from prison and to go back to London.

Louis returned to Paris two years later, after the revolutionaries of 22-24 February 1848 had ousted king Louis Philippe, and only a few days before Karl Marx entered the city. Although Marx quickly moved on to Germany, he became a witness and commentator of the remarkable turn in the career of Louis Bonaparte. On the basis of the new constitution, reintroducing general male suffrage, Louis won a seat in the National Assembly in the by-elections of June 1848, and on 10 December he won the first presidential elections by a landslide, notably because of the support of the French farmers, who probably supported anyone by the name of Napoléon. Within four years, he became president for life, and finally emperor Napoléon III. Even then, the famous author and member of the National Assembly, Victor Hugo, wrote a scathing critique entitled *Napoléon le Petit* in which he argued that Louis was "a personnage vulgaire, puerile, théâtral et vain". He was maybe after all "not an idiot", but definitely a crook and a fraud, who "doesn't speak but only lies" (Hugo 1852, 19, 21, 34 and 39).

In *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, Marx initially seemed to follow the ridicule of Hugo. He famously opened his comments on Louis Bonaparte's path to power with the statement that "Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce" (Marx 1852, 103). Yet in opposition to this ironical reading of political history, Marx then seemed to present a materialist analysis of his times, arguing that "upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, rises an entire superstructure of different and distinctly formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought and views of life.

The entire class creates and forms them out of its material foundations and out of the corresponding social relations” (Marx 1852, 128).

However, as Marx remarked in the 1869 preface to the second edition of *Der achtzehnte Brumaire*, he rejected not only Hugo, who unintentionally gave the “little Napoléon” world-historical proportions, but he also criticized the materialist reading of the events by the anarchist thinker Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, who ultimately had celebrated the coup of Louis Bonaparte as a necessary moment in the march towards democracy (Marx 1869). Instead, the gist of Marx’s argument was that history is not fully determined by class dynamics. For one thing, “sentiments and illusions” are transmitted “through tradition and upbringing” as a result of which people “may imagine that they form the real motives and the starting-point of his activity” (Marx 1852, 128). It was as a result of such “traditional” self-conceptions that labor was divided between workers and farmers, the latter of whom were deceived about their position due to their relation to the land. But also the bourgeoisie was divided between the supporters of the house of Bourbon (which ruled during the Restoration between 1815 and 1830) and the Orleanist supporters of the dethroned king Louis Philippe, who were both unaware of the actual basis of their difference as a conflict within the bourgeoisie between landed property and financial capital. More importantly, the bourgeoisie became only belatedly aware of “the logical conclusion [of] its own parliamentary regime”, namely that it “lives in struggle and by struggle” (Marx 1852, 142).

The result of these accumulated contradictions was a general confusion about “alliances whose first proviso is separation; struggles whose first law is indecision; wild, inane agitation in the name of tranquility; most solemn preaching of tranquility in the name of revolution; passions without truth, truths without passion; heroes without heroic deeds, history without events” (Marx 1852, 125). In these opaque conditions, Louis Bonaparte was able to rise above the warring parties, and to present himself as the savior of the nation, who claimed to serve the interests of “the people”, yet in his claim to restore “order” actually saved the bourgeoisie from its own divisive weakness. At the same time, it brought him increasingly into

conflict with the parliamentary party of order, leading to a pattern not unfamiliar to the observer of contemporary Trumpist politics:

As often as the ministers dared to make a diffident attempt to introduce his personal fads as legislative proposals, they themselves seemed to carry out, against their will only and compelled by their position, comical commissions of whose fruitlessness they were convinced in advance. [...] He behaved like an unrecognised genius, whom all the world takes for a simpleton. (Marx 1852, 140)

The conflict with the parliamentary party of order became even more intense after it abolished universal male suffrage – according to Marx “the coup d’état of the bourgeoisie” (Marx 1852, 146). It enabled Louis Bonaparte to present himself as the only representative of the people’s interest – who thus should have no limit to his presidential term. To plead his case directly with the people, he toured around the country, accompanied by the members of the “Society of 10 December”, an untidy assembly of “pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, maquereaus, brothel keepers, porters, literati, organ-grinders, rag-pickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars – in short, the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither, which the French term *la bohème*” (Marx 1852, 148). Like Trump’s community of twitters after him, Louis Bonaparte thus successfully created an alternative theatre of political representation that became a fundamental challenge to parliamentary power. It helped Louis to stage the coup d’état of 2 December 1851, and a plebiscite that legitimized his installation as emperor exactly a year later.

The essence of Marx’s explanation of the success of Louis is expressed in the famous line “Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past” (Marx 1852, 103). Against the tendency to interpret this statement as a confirmation of historical determinism, it actually forms the starting point for a “spectral” analysis of political power, defined not by any iron laws of history, but by the imaginary

force of the past, in which the “tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living” (Marx 1852, 103).

In many different ways, Marx emphasized the spectral nature of the historical processes he was witnessing. It was not just the “specter of communism” which was haunting Europe, but more importantly the ghosts of the past defined the present by a process which Marx described as “world-historical necromancy” (Marx 1852, 104). It was evidently first of all the spirit of Napoléon which inspired the remarkable rise of the nephew, but before that already, the contemporary political stage had been dressed by the players of the past. Just like the French Revolution had re-enacted the Roman Republic, so had the revolutionaries of 1848 followed the script of 1789. But while in previous revolutions, “the resurrection of the dead [...] served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old”, in the revolution of 1848 “only the ghost of the old revolution walked about” (Marx 1852, 105). Louis Bonaparte was no more than a degenerate schemer who “conceives the historical life of the nations and their performances of state as comedy in the most vulgar sense, as a masquerade where the grand costumes, words and postures merely serve to mask the pettiest knavery” (Marx 1852, 149). He was so enthralled by staging his own image that he became “the serious buffoon who no longer takes world history for a comedy but his comedy for world history” (Marx 1852, 150).

Despite its imaginary character, this masquerade of history had a fundamental political impact. By resurrecting the ghost of Napoléon, Louis forged a constituency out of a formless mass of individuals. On the one hand, he constituted “himself chief of the Lumpenproletariat, who here alone rediscovers in mass form the interests which he personally pursues, who recognizes in this scum, offal, refuse of all classes the only class upon which he can base himself unconditionally” (Marx 1852, 148). On the other hand, he forged a unity from the “vast mass” of the small-holding peasants, who “live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another”, “formed by simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes” and therefore “incapable of enforcing their class interests in their own name”. In this respect,

Napoléon performed an essential role: “They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power that protects them against the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself” (Marx 1852, 187-8).

Marx’s aesthetic theory of representation – prefiguring Ankersmit’s (2002) notion that representation is not a mimetic copy, but a creative imagining of what is represented – implied that civil society was subjected to a “state machine” led by a “casual adventurer from abroad, raised up as leader by a drunken soldiery.” (Marx 1852, 186). Louis positioned himself at the same time as the impartial champion of the public order and as mouthpiece for large sections of French society that so far had failed to find a political expression of their interests. Yet the success of the new emperor’s imaginary power was also due to the fact that it had entertainment value for a society that according to many succumbed under petty self-interest: “Violent political passions have little hold on men who have in this way attached their entire soul to the pursuit of wellbeing,” argued Tocqueville (1840, 1139). Or as one of the main protagonists of the revolution of 1848, Alphonse de Lamartine, argued more pointedly in 1839, “La France est une nation qui s’ennuie!” – 1968, prefaced by a similar discourse of boredom, was in many ways a re-enactment of 1848 (Lamartine 1839; Viansson-Ponté 1968). Louis Bonaparte was leader of the *bohème*, and the political dandy par excellence, who turned politics into a costume party, dressing up in military attire as the emperor that had long been dead, and thereby demonstrating the imaginary nature of Bonapartism as a mode of political power.

In the end, Marx rejected the scenario Bonapartism enacted as that of the French Revolution “in reverse” (Marx 1852, 124). In this zombie-version of history “Men and events appear as inverted Schlemihls, as shadows that have lost their bodies. [...] When the ‘red spectre’, continually conjured up and exorcised by the counterrevolutionaries, finally appears, it appears not with the Phrygian cap of anarchy

on its head, but in the uniform of order, in red breeches” (Marx 1852, 125). This obsessive re-enactment of the past contrasted sharply with the nature of a truly social revolution, which “cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. [...] In order to arrive at its own content, the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead” (Marx 1852, 106).

The utopian energy of this progressive revolutionary ideal defined the political logic of the century between 1848 and 1968. But this legacy of the social revolution survives today only “sous une forme *spectrale*”, in the guise of a melancholic longing for a past long gone (Traverso 2016, 21). Marx’s analysis suggests that the demise of progressive history at the same time revealed the spectral nature of political representation. Bonapartism, and related forms of political power such as populism, are “specters of democracy”, that might bring power to the imagination, but it may also awaken the specters of the past that haunt us in our political nightmares.

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## Borders

Serhat Karakayali

The *Historical-Critical Dictionary of Marxism*, with its 15 volumes and several hundred articles, might provide a good example of the negligent treatment issues around migration have received in the realm of Marxism in the past. Including entries about things such as “fairy tales”, the “occupy movement” and “Hollywood”, the encyclopedia makes no mention of borders, migration or migrants, which seems quite counter-intuitive considering the role of migration both for the labor market and the constitution of the working class as a political subject. However, as we will see, the *Dictionary* does not tell the entire story about the relationship Marxism has, and has had, to the question of borders. Also, this is not the conventional story about Marxists somehow misunderstanding and distorting Marx.

Going “back to Marx” does not seem to provide a good route to an answer, as Marx and Engels didn’t pay much attention to the role of borders, or migration in general, themselves. The reason for this might be that the meaning of borders has changed drastically over the last century. In Marx’s time, borders were important as boundaries separating political entities and national economies. Although Marx did not treat them directly with regard to the role they play in the regulation of populations, they can surely be considered as partial factors that constitute and determine the value of labor. The passage in *Capital*, in which Marx reflects about

what he calls the “historical and moral element” in “the determination of the value of labour-power” (*MEW* 23, 185; Marx 1976, 275) is particularly open for such an interpretation. When he writes that “the labour-power withdrawn from the market by wear and tear, and by death, must be continually replaced by, at the very least, an equal amount of fresh labour-power” (*MEW* 23, 186; Marx 1976, 275), he talks about the costs that workers have to bear to raise their children. However, the mere notion that the general costs of labor power are also determined by a potential or virtual labor force certainly brings the question of migration into play.

When we think of borders today, we have in mind rather their function concerning the movement of people, particularly as part of a body of regulations that produces the distinction between citizens and foreigners (with plenty of subcategories). However, during most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, workers in Europe weren’t citizens and were as disenfranchised as most labor migrants around the world today. This changed slowly, beginning by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Capitalist societies increasingly integrated workers – mostly as a result of political and economic struggles of the worker’s movement. With the increasing implementation of social rights into the framework of the state the “national social state” (Balibar 2003) took shape, i.e. a state that appears to represent not only the interests of industry and corporations, but that – to a certain extent – also regulates working hours, enacts basic welfare standards, and protects its working population by controlling the labor market. Parallel to this transformation of the state, the function of the border changed. Now it does not only delineate the space in which a particular state (and the power bloc that inhabits the core of the state) has sovereign power. On the material level, the border can serve as a tool to employ measures of economic protectionism, both against commodities and labor forces from abroad, since the influx of labor into a national labor market always has a significant impact on the price of labor. Symbolically, the border also begins to represent more than a purely economic space, as it delineates the boundaries of the “nation”, insofar as the workers, who have become citizens, identify with the nation and consider the state and its apparatuses as “theirs”. From this perspective, whoever penetrates a national border can be perceived not only as a competitor, but as “Schmutzkonkurrenz” [dirty competition], a contemporary expression often employed by socialists such as Franz

Mehring and many others. Thus, foreign workers who crossed the border were seen by their fellow workers on the other side of that border as the tools of capitalists for putting pressure on the national working classes.

If we understand the border to be part of the state, it is helpful to take a closer look at a Marxist interpretation of the modern capitalist state, which is another issue about which so-called Western Marxists particularly often complained with regard to Marx's own work. Marx, goes the argument, did not develop a coherent theory of politics, let alone the state, which is why many Marxist scholars such as Lenin, Paschukanis, Gramsci, Poulantzas, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century developed distinct theories, each taking a different cue from Marx's own thinking. Common to most of these approaches is an understanding of materialism with reference to the essential topology, which Marx formulated in the "Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy". There, in a short paragraph, Marx distinguishes a social and material infrastructure from political and ideological superstructures. According to Marx, in any given society, the former determines the latter.

Marxist theories of the state often tried to tie the state rather to social classes and the power they exercise. One line of thought saw the state as an instrument of the ruling classes. Concerning borders this meant that the scale of their permeability was – as it were – "willed" by the state. Another line perceived the state not as an instrument in the hands of the class enemy but as an independent institution whose power was not derived from social classes. With this perspective one could explain why states actually regulated the flow of labor force – instead of establishing a global labor market, the wet dream of any neoliberal. Both paradigms treated the state (and, as a consequence, borders) as neutral or "empty" apparatuses. These views therefore treat the state and its border the same way as Marx has accused his contemporaries of treating capital, money, and labor, i.e. as things and not as the product of human interaction. If the aim of Marx's work on capital was to de-reify its appearance, i.e. to trace the social relationships that lead both to the way capital operates economically and the way it presents itself to the observer, then the same has to be done with borders. One important contribution in this direction comes

from the Greek/French Marxist Nikos Poulantzas, who essentially defined the capitalist state as being a "condensation of a relationship between classes" (Poulantzas 1978), thus avoiding the impasses mentioned above, in which the state is unrelated to the social struggles in a society. But what does this mean for the problem of borders?

In contemporary border studies borders are conceptualized mostly as institutionalized absolute sovereignty. Migrants, then, are thought of as objects of such an apparatus and only defined in terms of their mobility towards and across such borders. Such a perspective neglects that migration is connected to the history of labor, capitalism, and modern forms of governance, and that migration (transnational or internal) represents the capability of living labor to resist and to escape from the conditions of production (cf. Mezzadra & Neilson 2013). Looking at borders as a "condensation of relationships" means employing an essential insight of the operaist movement, which emerged in Italy in the 1960s in opposition to the "economistic" Marxism of the Third International, which is that transformations and dynamics are not driven from a supposed logic of capital but by the relation between "living" and "dead" labor.

However, what is important for this concept is that living labor cannot be reduced to a sociologically defined social group. The production of living labor consists instead of an endless chain of social connections, resources, knowledge, sentiments, and environments, which can by no means be relegated to the "productive sphere" and leads to an historically specific and variable excessiveness. In this perspective, for example, industrialization, i.e. the emergence of the factory as an institution, appears as a compromise attempting to deal with massive flights from the rural regions.

Migration does not indicate the sum of all migrant individuals, nor their spatial movement or subjective "motive" for migrating. Rather, migration refers to a subcutaneous reconfiguration of social life. In this sense, migration is an active transformation of social space and a world-making practice. Subsequently, this has consequences for the conceptualization of the border. The allegedly monolithic border

apparatus decomposes and falls apart into multiple factors: actors, practices, discourses, technologies, bodies, affects, and trajectories become visible, with migration as one of the driving forces.

The border can be understood as a site of constant encounters, tensions, and contestations, and migration as co-constituent of the border. The constant and structurally conflicting re-figuration of the border is a reaction to the forces and movements of migration that challenge, cross, and reshape it.

Many of the existing contemporary constructivist approaches in border studies also conceptualize the border as a result of a multiplicity of actors and practices as it is expressed in the notion of “border work” (e.g. Rumford 2008; Salter 2011). However, many of these highly interesting constructivist approaches either completely erase migration as a constitutive force or conceptualize the migrant as a passive victim. An approach informed by Marx’s fundamentally relational and materialist thinking puts “border struggles” at the center of the analysis (see also Mezzadra & Neilson 2013, 13f.).

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## Caste

Urs Lindner

Indian Marxists have, for a long time, been oblivious to the “caste question” (Rao 2009). It is only within the last few years that they have started, under the pressure of lower-caste political mobilizations, to acknowledge caste inequalities as a social fact that cannot be explained away as being due to a lack of modernity. One straightforward ‘sociological’ explanation for this blind spot could be that leading Indian Marxists have all been of upper-caste origin – with the upper-caste denial of the “persistence of caste” (Teltumbde 2010) being one of its modern mechanisms of reproduction. There are also, however, more internal reasons for this negligence which have to do with the theoretical grammar of Marxism itself, and can be traced back to Marx’s historical materialism as a philosophy of history as well as to his critique of political economy as a scientific theory.

According to the *Communist Manifesto*, one of the founding texts of historical materialism, the triumph of the bourgeoisie implies that “all that is solid melts into air” (Marx and Engels 2010, 487), meaning that in modern, capitalist times the social relevance of ascriptive inequalities steadily declines. Applied to caste inequalities the corollary has been this: caste is something belonging to the past and will, like all “heavenly ecstasies” (ibid.), be drowned “in the icy water of egotistical calculation” (ibid.) – a road that the Indian (post-)colonial state with its secularism

and scientism will inevitably have to take. There is, however, still another and deeply ironic twist to this story. When Marx himself, in an article series written for the *New York Daily Tribune* in 1853, applied historical materialism to the Indian case, he mentioned caste only three times. According to him, the British colonizers had to fulfill a “double mission in India, one destructive, the other regenerative” (Marx 2010, 217), because the subcontinent had been stuck in stagnation and had lost all historical dynamics. What constituted for Marx this “imaginary waiting room of history” (Chakrabarty 2000, 8) were, however, not caste hierarchies, but a *mélange* of three other things: the economic interventionism by a ‘despotic’ state, a system of isolated village communities, and the absence of private property. When, according to Marx himself, caste was not even a fundamental social characteristic of the pre-colonial past, why should Marxists, in their analysis of Modern India, be attentive to this kind of inequality?

One way of escaping this theoretical impasse could be to jettison historical materialism and focus instead on the scientific theory of the capitalist mode of production Marx has elaborated in *Capital*. Then, however, the question arises as to whether the categories of Marx’s critique of political economy are adequate for India’s (post-)colonial capitalism, with its huge amount of unfree labor shaped, among other things, by caste relations. Postcolonial critics like Dipesh Chakrabarty deny such an appropriateness, claiming that India has its own social ontology, which is incommensurable with that of the West. In a recent reply to them, Marxist sociologist Vivek Chibber (2013) argues that these critics simply misunderstand Marx’s concept of capitalism, which primarily refers to market dependency and a class of laborers ‘freed’ from the means of production. Against this allegation, I would like to recall that Marx consistently considered the ‘double freedom’ of the wage laborer, i.e. not only her separation from the means of production but also her juridical status as a formally free subject, as constitutive of capitalism. If one can show, as Chakrabarty and others have done in their historiographic work, that the recruiting practices of capitalist enterprises in colonial India heavily relied on relations of personal domination, then the Marxian approach is in serious trouble. Correspondingly, Indian Marxists have either ignored these relations of unfreedom, which were shaped by caste subservience, at best declaring them to be remnants of

a rapidly dissolving past, or, acknowledging these realities, they have claimed that India is ‘not yet’ ‘fully’ capitalist, thereby extending the ‘waiting room of history’ infinitely.

Caste, in this respect, might serve as an entry-point for an iconoclastic Marxism, which takes into account what historians such as Arno Meyer have also established for the ‘West’: that the ‘double freed’ wage laborer, as a necessary condition of capitalism, is at odds with the historical record – not only in India, but everywhere, and – as Heide Gerstenberger (2016) revealed – at all ‘stages’ of this mode of production. This – and here Chibber, the orthodox renegade, may be right – does not have to lead us into abandoning the critique of political economy in its entirety. For, I would claim, Marx’s main explanations of the dynamics of capitalism remain intact even if one discards the assumption of the ‘double freedom’ of the wage laborer as constitutive, i.e. as something more than a historically contingent possibility within the capitalist mode of production.

Additionally one might ask what a reconstructed Marx has to positively offer regarding the understanding of caste in India. I would say it is primarily three things: first, the Marxian approach can lend plausibility to what Ambedkar already pointed out in 1917: that “*caste is an enclosed class*” (2002, 253) functioning via the mechanism of endogamy. Under pre-capitalist conditions caste is simply one form of class. What constitutes, in modern India, the divergence between class and caste are different degrees of the closure of class relations combined with different kinds of status ascription. Second, and this was emphasized by Ambedkar as well, caste has to be considered as something fundamentally relational. Marx’s account of class inequality, focusing on underlying social relations and not on distributive end-states, can make sense of this relationality, which cannot be grasped by mainstream, distributive theories of inequality. Third, Marx may remind us – against orientalist scholars like Louis Dumont – that caste is not only about status and identity but also about power and exploitation. It is a social structure that is both rule-governed and non-hermeneutic. Thus, Marx may serve as an antidote to ideological assumptions championed by both Hindu nationalists and some proponents of postcolonialism: that caste, under modern conditions, only continues to exist due to the

classification practices of the Indian state that are intended to uplift lower-caste people.

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## Chinese Mode of Production

Wang Ran

'Mode of production' is a core concept of historical materialism and takes an important position in Marx's theoretical system. As a socialist country ruled by the Communist Party of China (CPC), the People's Republic of China (PRC) explicitly upholds Marxism as its guiding ideology. At the same time, there is a significant gap between the historical evolution of its mode of production and the viewpoints generally ascribed to Marxism. It is therefore of great significance to examine the concrete content, contradictory features and developmental trends of the contemporary Chinese mode of production in order to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of Marx's thought and to understand its contemporary value.

In 1949, after 22 years of armed struggle, the CPC established the PRC. Although China was still an agricultural country, and did not qualify for establishing a socialist mode of production as Marx expected it, with the completion of the Socialist Transformation in 1956 a Soviet-style socialist mode of production was nevertheless established. From then until 1978 China implemented complete public ownership and a highly centralized planned economic system. During this period the Chinese mode of production basically 'conformed to' Marx's general definition of socialism, which he proposed in *Capital* and the *Critique of the Gotha Program*.

After 1978 the CPC no longer subscribed to Marx's general idea of the socialist mode of production and gradually implemented reforms and initiated an opening up of the economy. On the basis of the cumulative historical experience of economic construction since the founding of the PRC, the party gained the insight that a planned economy is not conducive to the rapid development of productivity and the rapid improvement of people's living standards. In the 1980s it proposed that China is in the primary stage of socialism and that exclusive public ownership and a fully planned economy are incompatible with the less-developed state of its productive forces. In the 1990s the party put forward the view that a planned economy and a market economy do not represent essential attributes of socialism, on the one hand, and capitalism, on the other, and that non-public ownership is an important part of a socialist market economy. Under the guidance of this understanding China has gradually created an ownership system with various forms of ownership and transformed into a socialist market economy, while public ownership remains at its core.

Whether or not the Chinese mode of production is still to be considered socialist is a major issue drawing attention at home and abroad. Although there is a huge difference between the Chinese case and Marx's general idea, the former still possesses the basic characteristics of socialism even according to Marx's own standard, while it also developed many similarities with capitalism described by Marx.

In terms of ownership structure, on the one hand, the assets of enterprises under non-public ownership now account for more than half of the total assets of enterprises. On the other hand, however, according to Chinese law, rural land belongs to the village collective, and urban land and natural resources belong to the state, which ensures that public ownership still occupies a dominant position. At the same time, important industries such as finance, energy, transportation, communications and national defense, which are vital to the national economy, are still under the control of the state, ensuring that the state-owned economy dominates the national economy.

In terms of resource allocation, the market has a fundamental role in the allocation of resources, and the vast majority of products is priced by the market and can be freely traded. On the other hand, the state, with its own means of production and regulatory industrial policies, can exercise strong macroeconomic control over the market and plays an important role in maintaining the balance of the total economy, promoting economic restructuring and optimizing the layout of productive forces.

Overall, although China's non-public ownership economy has enjoyed tremendous growth, and the market's fundamental role in resource allocation has also been established, public ownership still holds the dominant position and the government can still control the general operation of the economy. In other words, capital plays an important, but not yet the defining, role in the operation of the Chinese economy, whereas the government still has a decisive influence. This structure maintains the socialist nature of the Chinese mode of production.

It should be noted that this socialist mode of production in an obviously capitalist style is not stable and that capitalist factors have a strong tendency to erode and attack the socialist factors. This instability is embodied by the trend that commodity and monetary relations tend to dominate the political operation of the system. The leading role of the publicly-owned economy and the state's macro-control must all be implemented by the government. The CPC and the Chinese government exercise a kind of democratic centralism, which, to some extent, prevents capital from grasping political power through controlling the elections. At the same time, the system's design is too centralized to avoid corruption, allowing capital to bribe and interfere with political power for its own profit. How to ensure that the party and government operate in accordance with the political logic required by public ownership to effectively control capital, and make non-public enterprises and market economies serve the development of social productive forces and improve peoples' lives, has become the core issue that the CPC faces. Whether or not the problem can be properly solved will have a direct bearing on how the nature of the Chinese mode of production will change. However, due to the centralized nature of the system under the leadership of the CPC, the solution to this

problem depends largely on the personal will of the supreme leaders, which leads to a great deal of uncertainty.

In Marx's view, as far as the general law of the evolution of human society is concerned, the transformation of modes of production is based on the level of development of the productive forces rather than the arbitrary choice of humans' subjective will. At the same time, Marx does not deny that this law can have its own unique form of realization in different countries. The subjective will of humans can in some cases promote or delay the realization of general laws of development.

Due to its special national conditions, China established the socialist mode of production without going through a capitalist stage. However, the lack of productive forces corresponding to capitalism makes its socialist mode of production instable, which forces the government to reintroduce certain capitalist factors. It seems like the capitalist mode of production thereby makes a new appearance in China. At the same time, the government seeks to guide these capitalist factors toward developing productive forces and improving peoples' livelihood within the basic framework of the socialist mode of production in order to lay the foundation for consolidating and developing that production. Just as the establishment of the socialist mode of production in China relies on the correct application of humans' subjective will, whether the capitalist factors in China's current mode of production can be effectively manipulated to avoid changing the radical nature of the socialist mode of production ultimately depends largely on the ruling wisdom of the CPC.

All in all, the historical transformation of the Chinese mode of production still seems to be regarded as a proof of the Marxist theory of history. And it shows that under certain historical conditions the capitalist mode of production may take a specific form, but it cannot be completely skipped as an indispensable element of the evolution of the mode of production.



## Commoning

Anette Baldauf, Moira Hille and Annette Krauss

In recent years in the field of social sciences, and the arts as well as politics, debates on the commons have claimed new entry points for a radical repudiation of neoliberalism; they have inspired the envisioning of alternatives beyond capitalism and other forms of domination. The insights and energies developed in and around the debates often promise to provide perspectives for a new economic, political, and social discourse and of practices that help articulate and build on the many existing struggles challenging the politics of accumulation and exclusion (Stavrides 2016).

Historically, the labour – and also the conflicts – involved in the making of the commons has chafed against a Western utopian understanding of coming together as a social congregation, or gathering, free of friction. As such, the commons are discussed as to be simultaneously made against, as well as within, existing fields of power to negotiate their manifestations, not to reproduce them. As different dimensions of power organize the overdetermined terrain of the social, social movements are often caught between competing agendas, as well as in the gap between their declared aims and the actual complexity of everyday life. This struggle has been called *commoning* (see Federici 2011). The term “commoning” allows for a recognition of the different struggles for the commons as both the claims for the sustenance of shared resources, and as a struggle for different forms of relating and

belonging. Finally, the concept of *commoning* also suggests taking seriously a community of commoners who are actively engaged in negotiating rules of access, use and maintenance of the shared resources (De Angelis and Stravrides 2010). According to Peter Linebaugh, *commoning* is a verb, in other words, it is a social practice. Commons are not yet made but always in the making; they are a product of continuous negotiations and reclaiming (Linebaugh 2008).

Within the Western framework, this approach is often associated with Marx’s account of primitive accumulation, describing the massive waves of enclosure in the woods of London, and its more contemporary articulation in David Harvey’s critique of “accumulation through dispossession” (Harvey 2004). Already in the 1970s Silvia Federici’s manifesto “Wages Against Housework. They say it is love. We say it is unwaged work” questioned the Marxist basis of political economy; her work has since insisted on the necessity to expand the concept of primitive accumulation to include not just the appropriation of land but also of women’s bodies and their reproductive labor (Federici 2004).

While the concept of the commons as a thriving alternative to aggressive enclosure is vividly discussed in different Marxist and Post-Marxist contexts, scholars of indigenous and postcolonial studies have levelled their uncompromising criticisms not so much at the term commons, but more at its particular framing within leftist Marxist politics. Sandy Grande, Eve Tuck, K. Wayne Yang, and Glen Coulthard, to name a few, argue that Marxist frameworks, and along with them, the so-called “return of the commons” (Coulthard 2014, 12) continue to place land as property, and therefore never leaves the very ground of dispossession. As a consequence, they ask, what do the claims for the commons and the practices of commoning mean on land that is stolen; moreover, what do these claims obscure in the context of settler colonial nation states?

This tension, Greg Fortier argues, becomes most obvious in the particular framing of the commons in the context of e.g. the Occupy Movement. For Fortier “the problem with the idea of the commons in settler states is that it evades the question of ongoing settler complicity in the project of genocide, land theft, assimilation,

and occupation” (Fortier 2017, 30). In the wake of these arguments, the critiques of indigenous and postcolonial scholars raise the disturbing question of how to think of commons in the very centre of Europe, built on and sustained by dispossession and colonialism, as well as in the light of on-going racist wars at Europe’s outer borders.

Complementing the critique of settler colonialism put forth by indigenous scholars, postcolonial scholars have confronted the concept of the commons with the history of colonialism as a violent history of dispossession of land, bodies and the social. Following Franz Fanon, postcolonial theorists insist that in Europe primitive accumulation initiated the devastating long-term effects of proletarianization, whereas in the colonies, it manifested itself in the dispossession of land. Synthesizing these two trajectories of critique, Peter Kulchyski argues in his study on indigenous cultural politics, “what distinguishes anti-colonial struggles from the classic Marxist accounts of the working class is that oppression for the colonized is registered in the spatial dimension – as dispossession – whereas for workers, oppression is measured as exploitation, as the theft of time” (Kulchyski 2005, 88). With a few exceptions – e.g. Silvia Federici, whose work has continuously tried to think of women’s investment in the commons beyond Europe and the Western idea of land enclosure (Federici 2011, 1) – the political claims for the commons often neglect to address the continuities of the colonial condition. Key questions, such as on whose land are the commons supposed to take place, whose resources are meant to be redistributed through commoning practices, who conceptualizes the political utopias that enter the academic field, and who profits by this entry, remain unaddressed.

Finally, indigenous accounts of land challenge the Marxist critique of primitive accumulation and accumulation through dispossession on another level: built on deep relationalities, these accounts assert continuity, sustainability, reciprocity, and care. Indigenous cosmologies rely on an understanding of land that goes far beyond the concept of property – land cannot be owned; humans and non-humans, including land, animals, spirits, share an ecological connection: “We are this land, and this land is us”, describes Gregory Cajete (1994, 90). This indigenous place-

thought entails a profound critique of the concept of the commons with regards to their complicity in the anthropocentric notion of both Marxists’ and capitalists’ views on land and natural resources. This critique is most poignantly posed by Sandy Grande, when she points at the “commodities to be exploited, in the first instances, by capitalists for personal gain, and in the second, by Marxists for the good of all” (Grande 2015, 31).

Commoners, who aim to relate their commoning practices for working against such exploitations on a material as well as on a symbolic level, are left with what Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang calls the necessary “attending to what is irreconcilable within settler colonial relations and what is incommensurable between decolonizing projects” (Tuck and Yang 2012). Simultaneously, they, and respectively us, need to work on acknowledging the significant absences within Western accounts of the commons, in order to reveal the connection between the commons and the history of empire.

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## Cultural Marxism

Marc Tuters

A central concept in the contemporary genre of right-wing manifestos, Cultural Marxism is a term of art used to disparage the canon of Western Marxist thought as propagating a conspiracy to undermine presumably traditional Western values. Initially coined by political commentators in the US in the early 1990s, the concept was popularized by the American paleo-conservative figure Pat Buchanan – famous for having promoted the notion of a "culture war" for "the soul of America" at the Republican National Convention in 1992 – and has experienced a resurgence in popularity in the late-2010s with the emergence of the so-called "alt-right" around the election of Donald Trump. The concept of Cultural Marxism seeks to introduce readers unfamiliar with – and presumably completely uninterested in – Western Marxist thought to its key thinkers, as well as some of their ideas, as part of an insidious story of secret operations of mind-control whose nuances may differ but whose basic premise is remarkably similar whether told by Anders Breivik (2011) or Andrew Breitbart (2011).

The story, repeated again and again, tells of how a bunch of Jewish intellectuals infiltrated America through the minds of its youth, culminating in the sixties counterculture, which is framed as a low point in the culture war for preserving

traditional American values. (In its traditionalism, and preoccupation with contamination, the concept can be seen to have a certain structural similarity to the charge of “cultural Bolshevism” which Weimar-era conservatives directed towards aesthetic modernists of their day.) This conspiratorial and often anti-Semitic concept imagines the corrupting and feminizing influences of European decadence as having spread octopus-like throughout the American body politic in particular via its infiltration of the academy (Walsh 2015).

In the words of Andrew Breitbart, the founder of Breitbart News, a new right-wing media outlet that supported Donald Trump and exploded in popularity coincident with his insurgent candidacy: “When the Soviet Union disintegrated, the battle took a different form. Instead of missiles the new weapon was language and education, and the international Left had successfully constructed a global infrastructure to get its message out. Schools. Newspapers. Network news. Art. Music. Film. Television” (2011, 3). Breitbart is referring here, without accreditation, to Buchanan’s idea (2002) – which was in turn inspired by an obscure retired American naval officer by the name of Gerald Atkinson (1999) – that while the West was busy winning the Cold War abroad it had in fact unknowingly ceded ground to Cultural Marxism at home, particularly through higher education. Based on this template then, the typical account sees Marxism as responsible for having seeded all the important social movements that came out of the 1960s, from environmentalism to equal rights, as well as for a variety of schools of critical thought such as postmodernism and deconstructionism (see Peterson 2018, 285–334) – even if the latter may have little truck with Marxist economism.

The Cultural Marxist narrative attributes incredible influence to the power of the ideas of the Frankfurt School to the extent that it may even be read as a kind of “perverse tribute” to the latter (Jay 2011). In one account, for example (Estulin 2005), Theodor Adorno is thought to have helped pioneer new and insidious techniques for mind control that are now used by the “mainstream media” to promote its “liberal agenda” – this as part of Adorno’s work, upon first emigrating to the United States, with Paul Lazarsfeld on the famous Princeton Radio Research Project, which helped popularize the contagion theory of media effects with its study

of Orson Welles’ 1938 broadcast of *The War of the Worlds*. In an ironical sense this literature can perhaps be understood as popularizing simplified or otherwise distorted versions of certain concepts initially developed by the Frankfurt School, as well as those of Western Marxism more generally. One such example might be the concept of “the Cathedral” (Yarvin 2008), developed by figures in the so-called neo-reactionary movement on the far right as a kind of critique of the hegemonic, unconscious consensus between powerful figures within academia and the media who use the concept of “political correctness” as a tool of oppression developed by those who (falsely) imagine themselves as being oppressed. Although the narrative of Cultural Marxism’s ineluctable triumph, which one encounters in all of these texts, seems patently false, defenders argue that seemingly unbiased research supports the claim that academics have moved markedly to left of the rest of Americans in recent decades (Abrams 2016). The polarization of these contested findings have in turn helped to breathe new life into the Cultural Marxist conspiracy theory, turning university campuses into sites of far-right activism in recent years.

While the critique of Cultural Marxism may have initially developed out of the culture wars of the American new right, in recent years it has also been taken up by the European new right who often cite Gramsci as inspiration in championing a counter-hegemonic movement of “identitarianism” (de Benoist 2015), which stands in opposition to the sanctimonious cant of liberalism, thought to be destroying Europe from within. And though the analysis of Marxism proffered by this literature would certainly not stand up to scrutiny by any serious historian of the subject, we can nevertheless understand Cultural Marxism as a prime example of how the ideas of conservatism grow above all in reaction to those of the left (Robin 2011).

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## Debt

Joost de Bloois

In his work, Karl Marx does not seem to give the question of 'debt' much thought. At least, not at first sight. As Davanzati and Patalano (2017), in their effort to reconstruct Marx' theory of (public) debt, observe: "Marx does not provide a systematic and orderly presentation of his ideas" on the subject (51). Being primarily the theorist of *productive* capitalism, and being a century or so away from the financialization of capitalism, and through it, the financialization of almost every aspect of life, it is perhaps not all that surprising that Marx spent only a handful of pages of his immense oeuvre on the analysis of 'debt'. Is Marx the right thinker to turn to if we are to understand the workings of debt, and by extension a world in which we find ourselves immersed in debt? If the question of 'debt,' quantitatively, does not seem to occupy Marx all that much, it does recur in his writing over a period of over four decades, and often at important moments. (Davanzati and Patalano 2017, 51). In fact, Marx' unpacking of the *logic* of debt within the capitalist system, if succinct, perfectly hits the mark for those seeking to grasp the mechanics of contemporary capitalism, especially after the Great Recession of the past decade.

First and foremost, Marx explains how the question of 'debt' takes us directly to the question of the role of the State in capitalism. For Marx, a closer look at 'public'

debt exposes the State as a pivot in the political economy. Marx reveals debt, rather than constituting a ‘burden’ for the State, to be a key instrument of State power. As he writes in *The Class Struggles in France 1848 to 1850*, the ‘finance aristocracy’ has a distinct stake in the increasing indebtedness of the State: “In a country like France, where the volume of national production stands at a disproportionately lower level than the amount of the national debt, where government bonds form the most important subject of speculation and the Bourse the chief market for the investment of capital that wants to turn itself to account in an unproductive way – *in such a country a countless number of people from all bourgeois or semi-bourgeois classes must have an interest in the state debt, in the Bourse gamblings, in finance.* Do not all these interested subalterns find their natural mainstays and commanders in the faction which represents this interest in its vastest outlines, which represents it as a whole?” (Marx 1969; my emphasis). State debt becomes an instrument for the exercise of political i.e. class power and repression in two major ways.

Firstly, it gives political power to the creditors of the State; it turns *unproductive* capital accumulation into a vital political factor. Crucially, Marx emphasises that the bourgeois State recruits its own creditors: both the expanding bourgeois State and the ‘countless number’ of creditors of that State are consolidators of class power, and their interests are not necessarily opposing. Debt gives birth to the ‘finance aristocracy’ of the Bourse (stock market) whose aim it is “to get rich not by production, but by pocketing the already available wealth of others.” (Marx 1969). Secondly – and this will sound like another well-known refrain to contemporary ears – public debt allows the State to increase *taxation*. Such ‘austerity’ however does not befall all equally: it is the working classes (i.e. productive wage labor) upon whose shoulders taxation is imposed (Davanzati and Patalano 2017, 52). In Marx, debt thus becomes a means of *governing* (see Lazzarato 2012 and 2015). Among others in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* and *Capital* Marx demonstrates how, as a consequence of the correlated increase of the political power of *rentiers* and (over-)taxation, *debt more and more becomes a prerequisite for capitalist reproduction*: “Public credit becomes the *credo* of capital.” (Marx 1887). Debt thus introduces “the *distributive conflict between ‘financial aristocracy’ and labor*” (Davanzati and Patalano 2017, 57; their emphasis) at the very heart of capitalism, as it determines the

workings of the State and class struggle. As a result, ‘labor’ is constantly diminished as a factor in capital accumulation and consequently as a *political* factor. The preponderance of debt means that wages can be reduced without ensuing social upheaval; workers’ bargaining power can be reduced, working hours extended, as *production* is no longer the life-blood of capitalism, but *speculation, investment and rent* (see Harvey 2011). While the ‘finance aristocracy’ sees its influence stretched to almost absolute dimensions, the vast majority of productive forms of labor are hollowed-out engines of impoverishment. “The finance aristocracy, in its mode of acquisition as well as in its pleasures, is nothing but the *rebirth of the lumpenproletariat on the heights of bourgeois society*,” Marx says (Marx 1969). The end of productive capitalism and labor breeds all sorts of daylight robbery, primitive accumulation and financial sorcery; at the same time, it morphs bourgeois mores into “lusts wherein wealth derived from gambling naturally seeks its satisfaction, where pleasure becomes *crapuleux*, where money, filth, and blood commingle.” (Marx 1969). Although modest in volume, Marx’ analyses of debt bring us close to home. Perhaps too close for comfort.

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## Dependency

Emmanuel Renault

The notion of dependency is usually not associated with Marx's thought. Interestingly enough, it is only at the margins of the Marxist discussion that this concept has been taken seriously. In feminist theory, Christine Delphy (1984) has shown that the exploitation of women by men does not depend so much on the tasks they are performing at home than on the fact that they are performing tasks for whom they are dependent. In "dependency theory", this concept has also been used to analyze the exploitation of the periphery of the world economy by its center (Gunder Frank 1978). In both cases, what comes to the fore is that individuals, social groups and countries can be exploited by other individuals, groups or countries because they are depending on them. Furthermore, in both cases the dependency is conceived as being produced by a set of social, political and cultural factors, as well as being reproduced by the very process of exploitation. These ideas were already at play in Marx' theory of capitalist exploitation, and it may well be the case that they still raise relevant issues.

### Capitalist exploitation as multifold dependency

In *Capital*, exploitation is analyzed at the macro-scale of the structural social

relation between capitalists and proletarians, at the meso-scale of institutions such as extended and legally regulated markets, or the manufacture and large-scale industry, and at the micro-scale of the experience of exploitation. As a "social relation of production", exploitation is defined as structural dependency: since they are dispossessed of the means of production, the proletarians are dependent on the capitalist to produce their means of subsistence (Marx 1990, 270-274). At the meso-level, this structural dependency actualizes itself in various institutional forms. On the market, it takes the form of a monetary dependency of those who are deprived of the means of payment, and therefore have to sell their labor-power to those who are in possession of these means of payment (ibid, 280). In the workplaces, the structural dependency takes other forms, notably those related to the technical division of labor and technological autonomisation of the means of production. The technical division of labor implies that the individual activity loses its function and value if it is not integrated in a process of productive cooperation (ibid. 480-491). It then depends both on other individual productive activities and on a directing authority organizing cooperation (ibid, 448,450). Furthermore, the technological autonomisation of the means of production as systems of machines implies that the very rhythm and intensity of the worker does not depend on him but on his means of production (ibid, 544, 535). And finally, at the micro level, the experience of exploitation as domination is embodied in experiences of dependence: the worker knows that he has to sell his labor power on the labor market and that he has to obey the directing authority and the machines, even if he is reluctant to do all this, because he is dependent on wages for his survival.

This multifold dependency is analyzed by Marx as the result of a network of historical processes addressed notably in the section on the "So-called Primitive accumulation". What comes to the fore, then, is the expropriation of the agricultural population from the land, creating a mass of workers deprived of the means of production. But his dependency also results from the transformation of the independent craftsman into a worker of an "heterogeneous manufacture" (or putting-out system) and "organic manufacture," (ibid, 461-470) and later of a large-scale industry.<sup>1</sup> As soon as it has become systemic, this multifold dependency tends to reproduce itself: the wages are never enough to enable workers to buy the means



of production and the other inputs (raw materials, business premises, energy, etc.) that would make them independent of the capitalists. “In the ordinary run of things, the worker can be left to the ‘natural laws of production’, i.e. it is possible to rely on his dependence on capital, which springs from the conditions of production themselves, and is guaranteed in perpetuity by them” (Marx, 899).

Capitalist exploitation continually reproduces the structural as well as institutional dependencies it is grounded upon, and continually worsens them, since the monetary dependency is increased by the production of a “relative surplus population” or “industrial army”, while the technical dependency is increasing due to the technical division of labor and technologization of the labor process. The development of capitalism as a specific mode of production appears, then, as a process of deepening the dependency of the worker. In its final stage, in large-scale industry, “his helpless dependence upon the factory as a whole, and therefore upon the capitalist, is rendered complete” (Ibid, 547).

### **Dependency as a critical concept**

Given that Marx himself has depicted capitalist exploitation as a process of increasing dependency, it is quite surprising that in the debates concerning the normative standards of the critique of exploitation, dependency has almost never been mentioned.<sup>2</sup> These debates have mainly considered the three normative standards of injustice, domination and alienation.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Marx’s account of exploitation can be articulated in terms of structural inequality, that is, in terms of injustice (of distributive and acquisitive types). It can also be articulated in terms of structural subordination of the activities of the working class to the benefits of the members of the ruling classes, that is, in terms of domination as a social relation of domination between classes as well as an asymmetrical relation of power in the workplaces. And finally, exploitation can be analyzed as an experience of loss of control over one’s own working activity and the contexts and products of this activity, that is, as alienation. But something is missing in this picture in which the critique of exploitation is articulated only with reference to these three critical concepts. What

is not taken into account is the fact that the structural injustice and domination, as well as the alienation characteristic of work, are rooted in a system of organized dependency that gives a specific meaning to the very experiences of injustice, domination and alienation. Suffering from injustices that are experienced as simply the result of past unjust appropriation of properties (acquisitive injustice), or contemporary unjust distributive mechanisms (distributive injustice), is not the same as suffering from inequalities one is depending on. Having to serve the interests of those whom one is afraid of is not the same as having to obey those whom one is depending on. Having the feeling of being dispossessed of one’s working activity by its social environment is not the same as when one is also experiencing that this activity depends on this environment, in the sense that one can’t actually find better environments for this activity. Moreover, bringing dependency back into the picture can help capture the fact that one of the specificities of the negative social experiences of exploitation is its ambivalent nature. As an experience of injustice, exploitation can always turn into habituation to injustice, and as an experience of domination, exploitation can always turn into “voluntary servitude”. These turns also define a specific form of alienation as attachment to what one refuses – namely injustice and domination.<sup>4</sup>

Taking dependency into account in the criticism of capitalist exploitation can also help in tackling an issue that can hardly be articulated solely in terms of injustice, domination and alienation: the issue of socially organized asymmetrical dependency. Now, this latter issue seems particularly relevant in the age of contemporary neoliberal capitalism. At the macro-level, the dismantlement of welfare protections is clearly making individuals economically more dependent on their own exploitation. But neoliberalism has not only reduced state protections against economical dependency, it has also generalized new forms of economical dependency, such as private debt. To the short-term dependency of the wage, which usually (that is for the majority of wage earners) does not amount to more than the living costs for a month, it has added the long-term dependency of private debt that makes individuals dependent on their exploitation for years. Moreover, at the meso-level, contemporary neoliberalism is giving more and more room to “independent workers”, freed from the organizing authority of the firm and of the power-relations

structuring capitalist workplaces, but nevertheless exploited by capitalist firms who organize their exchanges with their clients (in “platform capitalism”) or who use them to outsource their productive activities.<sup>5</sup> Exploitation operates then only through forms of organized dependency of the productive activity itself.

It therefore seems that contemporary transformations of capitalist exploitation require a robust critical concept of asymmetrical dependency. Marx has paved the way for such a concept, and he has also suggested that one should not only think of dependency in terms of intersubjective and contextual dependency alone, as is often the case in contemporary discussions, but also in terms of material and systemic dependency.

## Notes

1] For an analysis of the institutional transformation from the putting out system to the capitalist industry as construction of increased dependency, see Marglin 1974.

2] One exception is to be found in Iris Marion Young’s (1990) short remarks on exploitation as one of the five faces of oppression in the second chapter of *Justice and the politics of difference* (see also her remarks on “Marginalisation” in the same chapter).

3] See for instance, among many other contributions to the discussions concerning exploitation and injustice, Reeve 1987. On the relationships between injustice, domination and alienation, see for instance, Balibar 2012. The fact that Marx rejected a critique of exploitation in terms of injustice should indeed also be taken in consideration in these discussions; see Renault 1994.

4] We have elaborated these points in Dejours et al 2018.

5] On the transformation of exploitation in contemporary neoliberalism, see *Actuel Marx* 63: “L’exploitation aujourd’hui”.

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## Digital Labour

Marc-Antoine Pencolé

Across the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the spread of information and communication technologies had huge implications for the development of capitalism and labour relations, especially from the 1970s onward, with the trend toward the computerization of the workplace. While all this is already well-known, the subsequent rise of pervasive interconnected networks (the Internet) brought forth two seemingly new forms of labour, entirely mediated through digital platforms, which came to be designated as *digital labour*.

The first kind is publicly discussed as “uberisation” but we could also call it *digital waged labour*. It brings us back to the core of Marx’s concern, where technological change affects the socialisation of labour and shapes class conflict: capitalist platforms act as mere intermediaries between freelance workers and clients, each providing a virtualised and automated front-end (a web site or a mobile phone application) for a certain type of service. It extends from the coordination of physical tasks, which are geographically anchored – like Uber’s transportation services, but also other companies offering delivery, catering, housework, etc. services –, to a variety of purely informational tasks, realized by workers competing on a global scale – requiring as much skill as graphic design, IT services, accounting, etc., or as unskilled and degrading as micro-tasking on Amazon Mechanical Turk (an

online market place where individuals can trade their human intelligence). Sociological studies of such digitally socialized waged labour have undeniably deepened our understanding of contemporary capitalism (Huws 2013, 2016; Graham, Hjorth and Lehdonvirta 2017), adding a valuable chapter to the central section of Marx’ *Capital*<sup>1</sup> by showing how networks increase surveillance and domination, precarity, and competition between atomised workers. The second kind of digital labour – let’s refer to it as *digital unwaged labour* – is located at the uncertain margins of Marx’ theory, and the least we can say is that it is a much contested terrain. It refers to the ordinary spontaneous activities and social interactions that are mediated through digital platforms and which generate data. Indeed, certain capitalist platforms (whether meant for blogging, tweeting, posting pictures or videos, professional networking, etc.) manage to offer to millions of users a free service, and concentrate huge amounts of capital while formally employing very few workers. If we acknowledge that value does not pop up from nowhere but has to derive from labour – a keystone of the Marxian critique of political economy –, then someone who produces data, even accidentally or without knowing it, while relating with friends or using any connected device, must literally be considered to be working and exploited.

When the notion was coined in 2008 and 2012<sup>2</sup>, global digital outsourcing was already a decade old but the fast-pace growth of digital platforms directly affecting the larger public was fairly recent. “Digital labour” might then have been at first an umbrella term for loosely connected phenomena, which mainly had in common a striking technologically driven tendency to renew capitalist accumulation, and that shook up our usual framework for analysing labour relations and organizing resistance. Its unity, therefore, may well be found on the level of the historical context of its formulation – one of practical and theoretical uncertainty – though not necessarily in the deeper logic of each phenomenon. Indeed, the theoretical justification of the extension of the concept of labour to such free participation and leisure depends on two traditions that proposed very innovative reinterpretations of Marxian thought: first, the “blindspot debate” which animated Anglo-phone critical media studies in the 1970s (Smythe 1977)<sup>3</sup> centred around the potentially productive – and not only ideological – role of media infrastructure under

late capitalism; second, the Italian post-operaist school of thought and the theory of cognitive capitalism (Virno 1992; Lazzarato 1996; Terranova 2000, Dyer-Witheford 2010). Concepts such as *audience labour*, or *social factory* and *immaterial labour*, allowed the theory to grasp the blurring of boundaries between the workplace and the rest of social life under the influence of communication technologies. As pointed out by Kylie Jarrett (2016), the difficulties of such a notion of *digital unwaged labour* – is it labour, if it is so free, what exactly is the product, and how can its value be measured? – were largely due to the inherently gendered apprehension of work it presupposed. In reality, the realm of waged labour, of producing commodities and of that which is measured through value, has *always* been dependent on a more fundamental sphere of work: that of the reproduction of the workers themselves.<sup>4</sup>

Reframing digital unwaged labour rather as a *digital reproductive labour* would mean that it contributes more to the networked reproduction of social life, which is an underlying condition of capitalist accumulation, than to the direct production of actual commodities.

Thus, the application of *social reproduction theory* to new technologies makes visible what is certainly the moment of truth for the concept of *digital labour*. It is an attempt at realizing an encompassing critique of pervasive digital technologies, beyond the sole focus on privacy: whether by enrolling digitally mediated activities into the direct production of commodities or not, it remains that these technologies shape the very subjects and their interactions – inside or outside of the workplace – in relation to the structures of capitalist societies.

## Notes

1] The long chapters 13–15 of Marx' *Capital* are entirely dedicated to the question of labour socialization, of the eliciting and coordinating of partial tasks into a full labour process under the command of capital.

2] In 2009, in North America, two conferences were held that marked the birth of the field: "Digital Labour: Workers, Authors, Citizens", organized by The Digital Labour Group of University of

Western Ontario, created in 2008; and "The Internet as Playground and Factory" hosted at the New School in New York, whose proceedings were published in 2012 (Cf. Scholz 2012).

3] To learn more about the "blindspot debate" and its relevance for new media issues, see Andrejevic 2002; Manzerolle 2010; Fuchs 2014.

4] In addition to Jarrett's work, see Fortunati 2011; Jarrett 2016; Thorburn 2016.

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## Dirty Capitalism

Sonja Buckel & Lukas Oberndorfer

The concept of 'dirty capitalism' (Buckel 2015) opposes the idea of a "pure" capitalism according to which an analysis of social developments can be achieved by applying the category of class and focusing on the contradiction between capital and labor. With Marx and against Marx the term counters such conceptualizations with an analysis of the historically grown capitalist mode of socialization ("Vergesellschaftung"), in which diverse relations of power combine and newly articulate a complex whole.

Thus, categories such as race and gender neither present side contradictions (Nebenwidersprüche) of capitalism nor extensions to enrich its analysis, but are the product of conditions on whose continuation capitalism is constitutively dependent.

The term "dirty capitalism" emphasizes a double movement. Firstly, it is a social-theoretical concept which emphasizes that there is no, and has never been an, "im-pure"<sup>1</sup> form of capitalism in the above-mentioned sense. Secondly, capitalism is dirty in that it is a multiple relation of domination. Critical analysis of capitalism therefore always means analyzing with the objective of emancipation.

From this analytical perspective emerges a modified view of emancipation: the challenge is to create a project which knits together strategies of resistance against the different relations of power in the knowledge that only an attack from various points of departure, while having in mind the complex whole, is able to question and overcome the capitalist mode of socialization.

Or, to put it in Marx' words: that genuinely all relations of power have to be taken into account in the attempt "to overthrow all relations in which the human being<sup>2</sup> is a debased, enslaved, abandoned, despicable essence." (MEW 1, 385). Every omission marks a blind spot which in some circumstances might be accounted for by one's own privileges but undermines emancipatory political practice.

If one thinks this Marxian version of the categorical imperative through to its end, there can be no talk of pure and abstract laws of movement anymore. This can also be shown when uncovering a marginalized Marx who himself approvingly states that such trans-historical "abstract laws do not exist" (MEW 23, 26f), and that the capitalist mode of production itself is dependent on the simultaneous existence of other modes of production (MEW 4, 114) which are not based in the value form (such as e.g. subsistence economy, production based on enslavement, and unwaged reproductive labor).

The underlying reason can be found in capitalism's inability "to reproduce in its entirety through the value form. [...] A complete commodification of everything and everyone, above all a pure capitalist economy, is out of question." (Jessop 2001, 28, own translation).

However, with Marx one can argue against Marx, that although he recognized and selectively analyzed this relation – for instance with the "primitive accumulation of capital" – he never developed it systematically. Thereby, Marx falls short of his own research program since according to the "materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life." (MEW 21, 27).<sup>3</sup> Silvia Federici supposes that the reason for Marx' tenacious omission of reproductive labor is the condition of the working class in England:

on average, female workers hired themselves out in the factory for twelve to fourteen hours per day and had hardly any time to take care of the household. Up until the 1870s, consistent with a policy of the "unlimited extension of the working-day" (MEW 23, 248), "and the utmost compression of the cost of labor-power production, reproductive work was reduced to a minimum." (Federici 2012, 94).

Whereas one could grant Marx the claim that the analysis of dirty capitalism, in which various relations of power are interlocking for the first time towards a globally articulated capitalist mode of socialization, would not have been possible considering the development of social movements as well as critical research and its division of labor at the time, today such thinking falls short.

Generations of movements, and with them theorists, referring to Marx have been struggling to overcome the conceptual self-limitation of concentrating on the value form when analyzing capitalism.

De-colonial works (cf. e.g. Quijano 2007, Lugones 2008, Dussel 2000) show that the capitalist mode of socialization, with its onset in the beginning of modernity, and the emergence of nation states which was articulated with it, have been imperatively dependent on the violent and unpaid appropriation of foreign labor, land and raw materials.

These works, however, insist that primitive accumulation does not stand, as Marx implied, at the outset of capitalism only, but presents an ongoing process (already Rosa Luxemburg pointed towards this) apparent in phenomena such as land-grabbing or bio-piracy (for an overview cf. Dörre 2012).

This highly violent process, which found its most brutal expression in transatlantic trade and in the devastation of enslaved persons, is combined with the formation of a colonial system whose effects persist despite formal decolonization. Its core is constituted by the racialization of humanity (Mills 1997, 20ff.) which enables in the first place the direct and indirect violence inscribed in diverse parts of this

order, such as the division of labor, knowledge production, border regimes, differentiation of individual rights, and chances of life (Caceres 2017, 9ff).

Until this day, colonial relations of power are constitutive of the capitalist mode of socialization: economically they permit the continued seizure of land, raw materials and labor – either unpaid or below reproduction costs. Politically they have deeply divided the global working class and thereby serve as a stabilizing resource to follow through with its exploitation.

In the same manner also, gender relations are dividing the global working class. According to Marx' value theory of labor, surplus value is created when the labor power is not only producing the equivalent to its own value, i.e. the value necessary for its own reproduction (Marx, MEW 23, 184), but works beyond this point and thereby produces excess value. The labor time necessary for the physical and emotional reproduction of labor power (a power that, according to Marx, takes the shape of the form of a commodity in capitalism) remains unpaid, and is thus free of charge to the capitalist class. If this would not be the case, costs would be so high that the surplus value of labor becomes marginal. Capitalist value-creation thus rests on a cushion of mainly unpaid and female care work (Wichterich 2009, 22).

In this, women\* and men\* are not given biological entities but embodiments of social relations of power: genders are socially produced as binary, and only binary, with respectively contrary desires along the heterosexual matrix. The gender-hierarchical division of labor is “a central, possibly even the central mode of the social construction of gender” (Wetterer 2002: 26, own translation), since the re-/production process is also bringing forth the possibility of differentiating between the genders and the firm belief in their naturalness: by constantly doing different things, men\* and women\* become different.

Undoubtedly, the analytical perspective which is articulated with the concept of dirty capitalism continues to be confronted with the challenges of over-complexity. However, those still convinced that capitalism can be analyzed by focusing

exclusively on the value form or the relation between capital and labor only prove that they are neither up to date with current research nor with current struggles.

With regard to academic and theoretical work, the point is to achieve collective knowledge production by innovatively connecting divided and specialized research. It is therefore necessary to create the conditions and spaces for such collectivizing endeavors.

In order for this mode of socialization, which not only in its formative stages but today still operates behind people's backs “dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt” (MEW 23, 788), to come to its world-historical end and to be replaced by an emancipatory society, it is required that the protagonists of this change be equipped with a comprehensive social perspective, one which has been developed in the last decades in arduous conflicts.

Those who fall short of such a perspective have to put up with the accusation of bigotry. Because the real movement which aims to abolish the present state of things can only succeed when it establishes a common interest of all the “debased, enslaved, abandoned and despicable”, who despite being differently affected take the perspective of society as a whole and go all out for change.

## Notes

1] Moreover, the notion “impure” has a problematic Christian-religious connotation in German and, therefore, does not suit the purpose of critique.

2] Original translation: “man”, in German: “Mensch”.

3] Emphasis added by the authors.

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## Double Socialization of Women

Florian Knasmüller, Nora Ruck, Max Beck & Katharina Piening

The term "double socialization of women" [doppelte Vergesellschaftung von Frauen] was coined by the German sociologist Regina Becker-Schmidt (1991, 2003, 2010) in order to theorize the relation between gender and socialization as well as the discrimination and resistance of women. A former student of Theodor W. Adorno, Becker-Schmidt is strongly anchored within Marxist and critical theory but specifically criticizes the notions of 'labor' and 'socialization' employed by both theoretical traditions (e.g., Marx 1962, 53) for failing to capture the social significance of private housework (Becker-Schmidt 2003, 11). While Adorno and Horkheimer, for example, did criticize the inadequate social recognition of housework (see Becker-Schmidt 2003, 12) they nevertheless retained the Marxist equation of labor with productive labor and located women in the private sphere of the family (see Becker-Schmidt 1991, 289–390). In a feminist re-interpretation of Marxist and critical theory, Becker-Schmidt exposes not only the social and psychological consequences for women of the gendered division of labor in capitalist society, but also the ideological nature of ruling gender relations.

Becker-Schmidt further developed a number of feminist critiques of, and engagements with, Marxist theory. In Italy these debates were initiated by Mariarosa Dalla Costa (1972, 159–160), who in contrast to Marx ascribed surplus value to (mainly



women's) housework activities, arguing that the capitalist class could only produce surplus value because work as commodity was reproduced in the private sphere. Other Marxist feminists substantiated Dalla Costa's manifesto using empirical data. Based on historical research, Silvia Federici (2012; other works on the topic date back into the mid- 1970s) interpreted the gendered division of labor as a (pre-)condition of capitalism. In Germany, the Bielefeld group around Maria Mies coined the term *Hausfrauisierung der Arbeit* [Housewification of work; transl. N.R.] in order to theorize the observation that the gendered division of labor is not only a necessary basic condition of capitalist relations of production but also leads to the systematic demotion of reproductive labor (Werlhof, Mies and Bennholdt-Thomson 1988).

Becker-Schmidt complemented these more structural Marxist feminist analyses by a psychological perspective that asks how working conditions are reflected in women's psyches. Her theoretical endeavors were motivated by empirical analyses of the experiences of women employed as factory workers and who furthermore shouldered the majority of childcare and housework responsibilities in their families (Becker-Schmidt 1980). The interviewees insisted on the significance of both forms of work while relating their difficulties of combining and alternating between two incommensurable spheres of work. On top of the time-consuming nature of this double-burden, the women experienced considerable psychological pressure trying to live up to the distinct requirements of these two fundamentally different lines of work. Nevertheless, for their own personal fulfillment the women chose to put up with the consequences: "It is a lack within one domain of practice that is compensated by gratification within the other domain" (Becker-Schmidt 2010, 67; transl. N.R.). Becker-Schmidt (2010, 66-8) developed her social theory on the basis of the experiences of these women and called for a re-interpretation of the Marxist notion of socialization: women, insofar as they partake in both productive and reproductive labor, are subject to 'double socialization'.

The process in which individuals in capitalist society become members of society is fundamentally mediated by (wage) labor. Along the lines of class, ethnicity, and other social groups, individuals are socialized into concrete relations of labor and

gender (Becker-Schmidt 2003, 1-2). The logic of capitalism furthermore infiltrates all domains of social life by increasing rationalization, the logic of exploitation, unification, and ubiquitous commodification. However, the process of socialization is not only achieved by partaking in social life. Becker-Schmidt borrows the term 'inner socialization' from Adorno in order to theorize the fact that individuals adjust their inner lives to the demands of objective reality, i.e., drive and personality structures as well as patterns of action and perception are reconfigured in response to social forces. This intrapsychic adjustment does not come without resistance, though (Becker-Schmidt 1991, 36). Defiance arises when the potential of self-determination, i.e., 'individuation', is constrained too much in the process of socialization. Individuals can thus never be totally socialized (Becker-Schmidt 2003, 2).

Broadening the androcentric notion of labor in Marxist theory allows for the ideological nature of ruling gender relations to come into view. Becker-Schmidt here addresses the social separation of productive labor and reproductive labor as an artificial division of two social domains that are hierarchically ordered along gender lines, while at the same fundamentally interrelated. In order to understand the ideological nature of this division, she employs Marx' analysis of commodity fetishism (Marx 1962, 86). Marx proposed that capital and human labor are structurally related. While capital is needed in order to produce machines, it is wage labor that puts them into operation. It is thus only when both capital and labor are combined that commodities can be produced. However, to the workers it seems as if machines produced without their effort. In commodity fetishism commodities appear as natural things, and the social conditions of their production, as well as the human labor necessary to produce them, are obscured. Becker-Schmidt (2010, 72) proposes that a similar mechanism makes the social value of women's care and housework invisible: while reproductive labor is utterly indispensable in order for productive labor power to be (re-)created and sustained, the mutual interdependence of these two social domains is obscured in capitalist society. It is exactly by rendering the inextricable interrelation of productive and reproductive labor invisible that relations of power and oppression elude criticism and resistance (Becker-Schmidt 2010, 69-72).

Beyond a social-theoretical analysis of women's exploitation and discrimination, the notion 'double socialization of women' also allows to take into view specific potentials for resistance, for both women's inner and outer socialization are marked by more ruptures than are men's. In their biographical development, girls tend to identify more strongly with parents of both genders and with their respective gender roles than do their male siblings. Thus, they do not unambivalently internalize their socially-attributed gender role. This mode of inner socialization of women creates specific patterns of perception and thought (Becker-Schmidt 2010, 68-9). Maybe more importantly, however, insofar as they partake in both productive and reproductive labor, women are not totally subject to the logic of rationalization that characterizes wage labor (Becker-Schmidt 1991, 389). It is exactly because women are socialized through both of these social domains that the contradictory nature of social organization can be unveiled. To Becker-Schmidt, this opening for defiance, critique, and resistance carries the enormous potential "of collapsing the entire casing of unreasonableness and unacceptability which houses women's ambivalent socialization into two halved life-worlds." (Becker-Schmidt 2010, 72-3; transl. N.R.).

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Enthusiasm  
Andrew Poe

Enthusiasm, an affect once associated with abstraction and testimony to divine inspiration, has its origins in religious experience.<sup>1</sup> In the long history of this Western phenomenon, it was generally thought that the only real measure of humanity's access to divinity could be confirmed by the expression of something named "enthusiasm." Over time a series of religious reformations coupled with modern social and political enlightenments, transformed enthusiasm from a religious affect into a political danger. And, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, enthusiasm seemed to have become a centerpiece of revolutionary, rather than religious, life.<sup>2</sup>

Because of this complicated admixture of religious and revolutionary potencies, we should not be surprised that Marx struggled to orient himself to the concept of enthusiasm. If capital's power manifests itself in abstractions that re-disguise materiality, enthusiasm might appear as a significant resource for capitalism, generating new pathways for novelty (Toscano 2008). But, as I hope to illustrate, Marx's language on enthusiasm shifts, specifically from *Enthusiasmus* to *Begeisterung*, tracing Marx's changing thinking on the communist revolution, as well as the religious imaginary. Following this shift, we see an opening for a new modality of enthusiasm that can be deployed against capitalism and towards collective agency, in the form of a revolutionary occupation.

## 1. Illusions

Marx's struggle with religion, and its notable absence in his theory of a communist future, is well known (Colas 1997, 337–342). Contextually, Marx is often read as one who means to assault the passivity of religion, in contrast to the necessary activity of the enlightenment of communism (Rosenberg 2011, 60). Indeed, the religious experience he so often describes looks to be emblematic of a logic of abstraction. As he famously exclaims, "Religion is the general theory of the world – its encyclopedic compendium, logic in popular form, spiritualistic point-d'honneur, its enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*), its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its general consolation and justification." (Marx 1976a, 378).<sup>3</sup>

What would Marx mean here by referring to religion as the enthusiasm of the world? His own vocabulary in this passage seems particularly abstract. In its totality of form and spirit, Marx presents religion with a force that is undeniable. As he continues, "Religious misery is at once the expression of true suffering and also the protest against true misery. Religion is the sigh of the desperate creature, the heart of a heartless world, the ghost of a spiritless condition. It is the opium of the people." (Marx 1976a, 378). Here, in this famous passage, Marx illustrates the potency of religion's force. There is a double, liminal quality to religion; religion appears to be both something and nothing – both pain and the protest against pain, heart and heartlessness, spirit and spiritlessness. Significantly, this double quality becomes a vehicle for bourgeois forces. Capital – so easily dressed in religious disguise – deploys such forces to exploit, with the consequence of deep-seated alienation. In naming enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) as central to this double quality of religion, Marx highlights for us his thinking on this phenomenon. He sees enthusiasm as something of a passage between the presence and absence of reality – a sort of threshold between illusion and true reality.

## 2. Enthusiasm and Interest

Marx's early language on enthusiasm demonstrates that this phenomenon might

be caught between abstracted and material realities. This is especially clear in his pairing of the concepts of enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) and interest (*Interesse*). Reflecting on the dangerous bourgeois logics he sees as apparent in earlier modalities of revolution, Marx explains, “If the [French] revolution was a failure, it was not because the masses were ‘enthusiastic’ and ‘interested’ in the revolution, but because the most numerous part – the part distinct from the bourgeoisie – was not really interested in the principle of revolution, did not have a peculiarly revolutionary principle – only an ‘idea’ – and so only an object of momentary enthusiasm and apparent uprising.” (Marx 1972b, 87). Marx’s use of the idiom enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) seems to borrow from the Greek etymology – to be inspired, possessed by a god. Interest, by contrast, conveys the importance of something – that which is of interest is that something which would make a difference (from the Latin *interesse* – to be between, “inter” and “esse”, to be of difference). Joining enthusiasm and interest together, Marx highlights a notion of enthusiasm as that affect which “makes a difference” or at least that feeling that “a difference” is being made. This is consistent with several instances of Marx’s use of enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) in his thought, prior to 1848. As Marx summarizes, “No class of civil society can play this [transformative] role without arousing a moment of enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) in itself and in the masses... a moment in which it is truly the social head and the social heart.” (Marx 1976a, 388).<sup>4</sup> The moment of enthusiasm matters; though Marx seems, at least in his early work, unclear as to why.

In Marx’s early uses of the term “enthusiasm” he seems to simply recapitulate the religious affect, even in political contexts. But such an expression of enthusiasm risks the agency of those who experience it. I propose that, at least within his terminology, we see an anxiety regarding the utilization of enthusiasm. If enthusiasm is an affect that shows us difference, what is the moment of difference, and who is making it? Attention to Marx’s changing language on enthusiasm highlights a resolution to this problematic. Indeed, in his later writing, we see a rethinking of enthusiasm, such that it might become possible to counteract the illusionary qualities latent in the previous “religious” conception.

### 3. New Possessions

As his work progresses, Marx begins to deploy a new vocabulary for enthusiasm. This shift in his language and his thinking is most obvious in the *Communist Manifesto*, where the language of the “spectre” (*Gespenst*) highlights a move in vocabularies away from revolution as confrontation, and towards a language of haunting through occupation.<sup>5</sup> The work of the *Manifesto* highlights another form of political power – a “public” power – that lies in collectivity itself. This collectivity is best conceived as a spectre, haunting the living, coopting the ghostly power of capital from itself. This spectre becomes the “true democracy” to be fulfilled, where free development of each and all is possible. As Marx explains,

The bourgeoisie, when it comes to rule, has destroyed all the feudal, patricidal, idyllic conditions. It has mercilessly torn the multicolored and variegated feudal ties that bound humanity to any natural order and left no other link between man and man than pure, naked interest. It has drowned the holy shudders of pious fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*), of chivalrous enthusiasm (*Begeisterung*), of petty-bourgeois sadness in the icy waters of selfish calculation. (Marx 1972c, 464-65).

At this crucial moment in the *Manifesto*, when Marx is explicating the logic of “overturning” essential to the bourgeois activity of revolution, we see an important edit. The bourgeoisie have eradicated zealotry (*Schwärmerei*) and chivalrous enthusiasm (*Begeisterung*) in the icy waters of calculation. At first gloss, the emphasis here appears to be on calculation. But a close reading must also account for the specificity of Marx’s language, and what is present and absent: why *Schwärmerei* and *Begeisterung*, and not *Enthusiasmus*? Why this shift in vocabulary?<sup>6</sup>

The shift we find illustrated here highlights for us a change in Marx’s own thinking. *Enthusiasmus* may be left out precisely because it was the centerpiece of the bourgeois revolutions. Marx’s use of this new synonym for enthusiasm – *Begeisterung* (which we might read etymologically as *mit Geist erfüllen* / filled with spirit/ghost) – is crucial, for it allows him to move away from the language of religion and divinity and towards the language of haunting. Here, enthusiasm is

transformed, precisely at the moment where the word disappears. Enthusiasm-as-*Begeisterung* becomes with spirit, with ghosts, enlivened with inspirations; a clear shift away from thinking on enthusiasm as “god within”. The *Manifesto* makes possible that shift by its claim to embody the specter that haunts (*Gespensst* / *Geist*). Here, Marx introduces us to embodied ghosts, beyond the bourgeois lifeworld and the means of production. This goes to the center of the bourgeois anxiety of production – all that is solid melts away. This shift from “being with god” to “being with spirits” offers a new affective vocabulary that helps to make manifest the activity of occupation (the haunting of capitalist systems of power). Taking over and occupying the networks of bourgeois power, and accelerating those networks – networks of communication, networks of transport, networks of power – enthusiasm as haunting (*Begeisterung*) becomes the means of countering the illusions manifest in bourgeois enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*). Revolution, in a moment of enthusiasm, is no longer overturning; revolution is occupation.

## Conclusion

Marx’s shift in language – a shift which perpetuates throughout most of the remainder of his writings after the publication of *The Communist Manifesto* – traces a contrasting transformation in his thinking. *Begeisterung* brings us within enthusiasm. Now enthusiasm-as-*Begeisterung* has become the affect of revolutionary occupation, not simply the desire for abstraction or revolutionary overturning. “Enthusiasm” seems to be an affective threshold for Marx, residing on the boundary between the religious fantasy of human reality and the affective motivation of true human emancipation. In this way, we can read Marx as beginning a new political enthusiasm.

## Notes

1] For an excellent and ranging history of this concept, see for example, Fenves 1997.

2] Recent work on the concept of revolution, especially that of Ypi, attempts to draw Kant and Marx closer together. See Ypi (2014, 7) for example. I argue, counter Ypi, that Marx rethinks enthusiasm from within revolution, as opposed to that of the standpoint from without. This makes sense of Marx’s changing language from “enthusiasmus” to “*Begeisterung*”, as I explain below.

3] All translations of Marx are my own.

4] Ypi is also concerned with this transformative affect in Marx’s thinking on revolution. For instance, she claims “In this moment of enthusiasm, Marx continues, the claims and rights of this agent ‘are truly the claims and rights of society itself’ and the actions it produces are those of society’s ‘social head’ and ‘social heart.’” (Ypi 2014, 9).

5] Here I follow on Derrida’s famous analysis. “What for the moment figures only as a specter in the ideological representation of old Europe must become, in the future, a present reality, that is, a living reality. The *Manifesto* calls, it calls for this presentation of the living reality: we must see to it that in the future this specter-and first of all an association of workers forced to remain secret until about 1848-becomes a reality, and a living reality. This real life must show itself and manifest itself, it must present itself beyond Europe, old or new Europe, in the universal dimension of an International.” (Derrida 2006, 126).

6] It was an important late German enlightenment debate as to whether or how we might distinguish between *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei*. The worry here was that, without some affect of inspiration, the very notion of “enlightenment” might collapse into a cold and calculating reason. Marx’s language seems very attuned here to these historically informed worries.

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## Exclusion

Gianfranco Casuso

Taking up an Hegelian idea, Marx refers in *Zur Judenfrage* to the forms of inclusion and integration that a political state must guarantee. According to Hegel, freedom cannot be reduced to its individual form nor operate only by means of subjective moral reason: it has to be realized by virtue of the reciprocal recognition of individuals within a framework of rational institutions and practices that foster their self-realization, i.e. by way of their inclusion in a rational *Sittlichkeit* (Hegel 1986, §142-157). Against Bauer, Marx asserts for his part, that Jews do not have to renounce their religion in order to *emancipate* themselves *politically* and thus to have the possibility of such inclusive participation. That would have been precisely the end of the bourgeois *political revolution*: to relegate religion – like any other set of communitarian beliefs and practices – to the private sphere, thereby neutralizing *difference* and guaranteeing only an *abstract political equality* thanks to a formal right that exclusively serves the constitutive egoism of civil society (Marx 1972a, 367-370). But this, Marx holds, is insufficient for an authentic *human emancipation*.<sup>1</sup> The problem lies, then, in a law made for unrelated individuals, for a fictitious “legal subject” that distorts the idea of the real individual (*Gattungswesen*) (ibid. 356-357, 370). As in Hegel, a broader, *social* notion of freedom is required (Neuhouser 2000), since *human emancipation* is only possible by virtue of the inclusion of human beings in social institutions and practices that encourage various

types of intersubjective relationships which are equally necessary for their full self-realization (Marx 1972a, 370).

In his *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*, Marx seems to complement this perspective with the development of the categories of exclusion and emancipation linked to the figure of the *Proletariat* – and its roots in the Hegelian notion of the *Pöbel* (rabble) – which transcends his critique of formal Right. For Hegel, the emergence of the *Pöbel* is associated with indignation and insurrection (*Empörung*) against society (Hegel 1986, §244Z). It knows that its condition of absolute deprivation is based on the principles of modern civil society, which is understood as a space of competition where laws only protect atomism, reproduce inequalities and reduce the complex scope of human relations to the satisfaction of private interests, and do not represent a space for the confluence of free wills (Casuso 2017a). Material deprivation by itself does not produce the *Pöbel*; what is also necessary is the feeling of not being able to guarantee its subsistence or participate in the social advantages by its own means (Hegel 1986, §245).<sup>2</sup> It knows that its situation depends on a social structure that hinders the fulfillment of its own ideals of freedom and universal emancipation, which remain an unrealizable *possibility* (Ibid, §230, 237). The *Pöbel* perceives this *unjust contradiction* and this generates indignation (ibid, §244Z). Its members are the *excluded*: those who abide by the norms of society without obtaining benefits from it or being able to *recognize* themselves as its co-authors. Thus, unlike the *salaried worker* who is subjected to *exploitation* (*Ausbeutung*), the excluded are not functional to society. In the same way, exclusion is not really a relationship, but a “non-relationship” in which there is no intentionality on the part of an Other, an identifiable agent that could benefit from that relationship. The agent of exclusion is, therefore, society as a whole or, rather, the processes of constitution of a society made to the measure of abstract and selfish individuals. *Exclusion*, in this way, should not be understood only as the impossibility of participating in the advantages of an already constituted society, but, mainly, as the negative side of the *constitutive power* of the social (Casuso 2017b). From this a fundamental (or ontological) form of exclusion emerges, one which Marx analyzes in relation to the specific mode of exclusion in modern society: the *Proletariat*.<sup>3</sup> This category has similar characteristics to the Hegelian *Pöbel* (Marx

1972b, 390-391). As in Hegel, it does not refer only to poverty, but carries the feeling of *indignation* against a society in which proletarians do not find their own place, not even as workers exploited by an easily identifiable part of the society. Hegel argued that in light of this, the generation of alternative spaces of cooperation was necessary, as these would directly combat the causes of exclusion (Hegel 1986, §253). Corporations (*Korporationen*) can be taken as a model of this kind of association that allow social restructuring by normatively modifying some modes of human relationship and combating the disintegration, atomism and selfishness of a mercantile society (Casuso 2017a). In that sense, they represent the ethical moment in civil society, its *truth* (Hegel 1986, §256). As we saw above, Marx's *Proletariat* is not seen simply or directly as the working class, that is to say, a class among others, but rather as "a class of civil society that is not a class of civil society" (Marx 1972b, 390). It is, therefore, a "part with no part" (Rancière 2004). In that sense, the resolution of the problem caused by the appearance of the *Proletariat* necessarily implies the solution of the problems of the social order in terms of emancipation (Marx 1972b, 390). Since this requires "a sphere that has a universal character by virtue of its universal suffering" (ibid), the *Proletariat*, by transcending the particular, by not properly being a part of society, is in a position to bring about a structural transformation that would *universally* affect the whole of society and that would be oriented towards a better realization of social freedom. In that sense, as Marx implies in *Zur Judenfrage*, a *political revolution* is not enough, because it implies simply replacing one part with another in a liberal struggle for power (Marx 1972a, 368).

As a negative ontological category, the excluded denotes those who do not take part in the *constitution* of a world to whose rules they are subjected. But this condition entails a critical potential that can lead to social reconfiguration through the exploration of unrealized possibilities which inhabit their experiences of "universal suffering". Precisely by virtue of this universality, such experiences can be communicated and transcend particular interests. This, in addition, confers on the excluded – as can be observed in the current operation of social movements<sup>4</sup> – an epistemic privilege that allows them to first perceive certain malfunctions, reveal social contradictions and contribute to their overcoming. This is something that

the more limited category of *Ausbeutung* – and correspondingly that of the *working class* – cannot explain with the same degree of clarity.

## Notes

1] "Political emancipation, however, is a great step forward; but it is not the last form of human emancipation (...)" (Marx 1972a, 356).

2] This deprivation suffered by the excluded, as Hegel affirms, occurs in many dimensions: "It is impossible for them to maintain their rights through formal justice (...) due to the costs linked to the administration of justice. They also have a great disadvantage in terms of religion, as well as health and education" (Hegel 1983, 118).

3] "When the proletariat declares the dissolution of the hitherto existing world order, it merely declares the secret of its own existence, since it is in fact the dissolution of this order. When it demands the negation of private property, it is only laying down as a principle for society what society has laid down as a principle for the proletariat, what has already been incorporated in itself without its consent as the negative result of society." (Marx 1972b, 391).

4] On the epistemic role of social movements today: Fricker (2007), Medina (2013) and Anderson (2016).

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## Educating the Educators

Chad Kautzer

The notion of 'educating the educator' appeared as part of Marx's posthumously published *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845), which criticizes the materialism of fellow Left Hegelian Ludwig Feuerbach for being merely "contemplative [*anschauend*]" and one-sided. The latter accounts for the sensuousness (*Sinnlichkeit*) of the world of our experience and its impact on our consciousness, Marx argues, but fails to address the way our praxis constitutes this world. Feuerbach thus misses the fact that we are encountering *ourselves*, the outcome of our labor, when we encounter the world, which Georg Lukács will later describe as a condition of *reification*. Moreover, Marx continues, any materialism that overlooks the transformative role of our praxis – the negativity Hegel located at the core of subjectivity (Hegel 1977, 117) – prevents us from grasping not only the truth of experience, but the significance of revolutionary praxis as well.<sup>1</sup> We are thus limited to what Jacques Rancière calls "impotent contemplation" (Rancière 2003, 132) and Lukács describes as a "fatalistic stance" (Lukács 1971, 38), allowing us to do little more than interpret the world, when, as Marx's famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach proclaims, the task is to change it.

Although the eleventh thesis continues to be the most famous, Marx's third thesis – wherein he asserts "it is essential to educate the educator" – arguably provides

more insight into his critical project and the history of self-criticism within the Marxist tradition. Before I discuss the methodological, theoretical, and pedagogical senses of Marx's claim, here is the relevant section:

The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances [*Umstände*] and upbringing [*Erziehung*], and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances and that it is essential to educate [*erziehen*] the educator [*Erzieher*] himself. Hence, this doctrine necessarily arrives at dividing society [*Gesellschaft*] into two parts, one of which is superior to society. (Marx 1978, 144)

The *methodological* conclusion Marx draws is that it is we mere mortals who produce and shape the conditions, which in turn produce and shape us, and thus our methodology must include *dialectical* and *historical* methods capable of comprehending this ongoing and multidirectional relationship. In this context, our praxis is the “educator” that shapes or “educates” the material conditions and social relations that inform our beliefs, values, and epistemic frameworks. In short, we produce the material conditions of our own upbringing [*Erziehung*] and this historical relation can only be understood dialectically and with our praxis at the center of the story.

To make this case, however, is to already enact the second sense of Marx's claim, which concerns *theory*. The critique of Feuerbach is a form of educating the educator, but not simply because Feuerbach had been an “educator” to Marx. It is rather that Marx is seeking to re-center praxis in the production of theory. Marx argues that a materialism without praxis “necessarily arrives at dividing society [*Gesellschaft*] into two parts, one of which is superior to society.” He is referring to the division between theory and practice, which leads to theory becoming elevated and unaccountable. Reintegrating praxis and theory production keeps theory grounded, thus inhibiting it from being put on a pedestal – reified, granted authority, and defended beyond its time. Theory must remain in what Cornel West calls the ‘funk of life’, subject to revision in the face of actual material conditions with, again, praxis at the center of the story.

This self-critical (theoretical) notion of ‘educating the educator’ informs a tradition within so-called Western Marxism – from Karl Korsch, Georg Lukács, and Antonio Gramsci to the Frankfurt School, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean-Paul Sartre – revitalizing historical and dialectical methods and the centrality of praxis against the ossified determinism of the Second International and the “scientific” Marxism of the Soviet Union that express a clear separation of theory and practice. As Sartre describes it: “Men and things had to yield to ideas – a priori; experience, when it did not verify the predictions, could only be wrong” (Sartre 1963, 23).

Decolonial Marxist thought continued this critical and praxis-centering tradition. Frantz Fanon, for example, takes Sartre to task for his treatment of black praxis, or what Fanon calls the “intellectualization of black *existence*” (Fanon 2008, 113). In the context of colonial racism, Sartre had reduced the lived experience of *negritude* and black struggle to a mechanically conceived dialectical moment destined for negation. This kind of theory “expels me from myself,” Fanon wrote (Ibid, 144). It was Fanon's mentor Aimé Césaire who famously equated colonization with “thingification” (Césaire 2001, 42) and noted that in the colonies “black people... were doubly proletarianized and alienated,” i.e. as workers and as black people (Ibid, 94; cf. Fanon 2008, 89-119). With these conditions in mind, Fanon argues in *Wretched of the Earth* (1961) that “a Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched when it comes to addressing the colonial issue” (Fanon 2004, 5). Given the material conditions of black life, labor, and decolonial resistance, it was essential to educate the educator and revise Marxist theory.

The third sense of ‘educating the educator’ is *pedagogical* and concerns the transformation of the teacher-student relation. Similar to the aforementioned problem with the elevation of theory, the paternalism of the teacher as master continues to be a focus of critique. Standpoint theory, developed most thoroughly by feminist theorists, is a critical response to traditional structures of epistemic authority, for it privileges knowledge grounded in the praxis of those experiencing domination and engaged in social struggles.<sup>2</sup> This situated knowledge, notes Patricia Hill Collins, typically diverges from standard academic theory, taking the form of “poetry, music, essays, and the like” (Hill Collins 2000, 9). Relatedly, Paulo Freire sought

to undermine the traditional “banking” model of education in which passive students receive deposits of knowledge from an all-knowing teacher (Freire 1993, 92). “The students, alienated like the slave in the Hegelian dialectic,” he wrote, “accept their ignorance as justifying the teachers existence – but, unlike the slave, they never discover that *they educate the teacher*” (Ibid, emphasis mine). In Freire’s alternative, “pedagogy of the oppressed,” which he practiced for decades, each side in this dialectic is simultaneously treated as a teacher and student. And it was in response to his own teacher, Louis Althusser, who espoused the banking model, that Rancière called for a “method of equality,” which begins with the assumption of equal intelligence and eschews the logic of explication (Rancière 1991, 12). Each of these examples of educating the educator is a critical response to the traditional division of teacher and student, rethinking the sites of knowledge production and re-centering the agents upon whose praxis it depends.

All three senses of Marx’s call to educate the educator – the methodological, theoretical, and pedagogical – rely upon the dialectical method and seek to entrench the fundamental integration of theory and practice. The reflexive nature of Marx’s under-appreciated third thesis also ensures Marxism’s continued relevance to the extent it encourages its self-critical inclinations, which surely entitles it to greater recognition than it has gained thus far.

## Notes

1] Hegel claimed that the proof of concepts is found in their actualization in the world – allowing immediate certainty to become mediated truth – while Marx argued this actualization is the result of praxis, which is why the omission of praxis obscures the nature of truth.

2] Cf. Lukács’ “What is Orthodox Marxism” (Lukács 1971, 1-26), for the importance of the proletarian standpoint in dialectical materialism.

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## Extractivism

Jeff Diamanti

Extractivism names a given economic form of organizing natural and social resources in which sustained profitability depends on the extraction, over time, of an increasing amount of natural resources from the earth. In the language of macro-economics, Total-factor productivity (TFP) is a measure of cumulative increases in productivity that exceed technological, capital, and labour input (or cost-share): growth depends over time on increased TFP, which is achieved by both optimizing inputs (or reducing lag, waste, and drag) and via what Harvard economist Dale Jorgenson famously described as the “somewhat surprising” correlation between “non-electrical energy and productivity growth.” (Jorgenson 1984, 30). In 1963 the University of North Carolina economist Edward Renshaw offered a statistical image of this dependence on increases in energy for productivity gains over time, astonished as he was at the shift in energy requirements by mid-century, remarking, “nearly four times as much prime mover is required today to produce a dollar of real income as was required in 1880.” (Renshaw 1963, 284). Between 1870 and 2009, roughly 135 billion tons of oil have been extracted and unleashed into the global economy (Jones 2009, 30). As of December 31, 2014, an estimated 1,237 billion short tons of proven recoverable coal had been tagged for future extraction (EIA 2018).

Extractivism is thus the name for an economic problem internal to capitalism. For socialism, it is the name for an exogenous problem for politics: that is, until capitalism is no longer the *de facto* exogenous force coordinating decisions in socialist economies. Hence, extractivism originates under capitalism, while it merely *inflects* socialism, so long as the latter has not yet made its way through the transition period – when socialism is still a national, rather than international, political form. So far we have not seen a fully international socialism, and so we have seen neither a capitalist nor socialist economy immune to the problem of extractivism.

Extractivism generates rather obvious environmental challenges, but why is it also a source of socio-political conflict? Marx is very clear about the energetic content of capital over time and its consequence for labour. Look closely and you’ll see it spelled out in the all important twenty-fifth chapter of *Capital* Volume One:

The greater the social wealth, the functioning capital, the extent and energy of its growth, and, therefore, also the absolute mass of the proletariat and the productiveness of its labour, the greater is the industrial reserve army. The same causes which develop the expansive power of capital, develop also the labour power at its disposal. The relative mass of the industrial reserve army increases therefore with the potential energy of wealth. But the greater this reserve army in proportion to the active labour army, the greater is the mass of a consolidated surplus population, whose misery is in inverse ratio to its torment of labour. The more extensive, finally, the lazarus layers of the working class, and the industrial reserve army, the greater is official pauperism. *This is the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation.* (Marx 1976 [1867], 798).

More commonly known as the *immiseration thesis*, Marx is here – at the critical heart of his *magnum opus* – revealing the twofold forms of energy that capital will acquire over time: first, as capital accumulates in larger quantities, reflected in the scale of operations, gross output, and relative command of individual firms and entire sectors, its need for less and less human labour-time per unit of output generates a tendency (or energy – “the energy of wealth”) toward contradiction. That contradiction is spelled out further in “the absolute general law of capitalist

accumulation,” which is the fateful fall in the rate of profit as capitalist accumulation reaches its zenith (even if its zenith is cyclical, rather than terminal). More and more wealth accumulates in fewer and fewer hands, while more and more labourers subsumed into the economic process are suddenly shed from the production process, causing rolling and irresolvable waves of unemployment. This is the first valence of energy used by Marx in this passage: ever expanding stages of growth met by ever intensive forms of secular stagnation.<sup>1</sup>

The second valence is more literal: capital in its constant form – that is, the machines, buildings, hardware, and physical character of what capital employs as its own part of the bargain – is both ever growing in magnitude and value relative to the variable form of capital (i.e. labour power hired to light it all up) *and*, as a logical consequence, animated by more and more energy over time relative to the quantitative energy of human input.

What Marx calls the general law of capitalist accumulation is thus about a historical trajectory to accumulation – namely, the rising surplus army of labourers that capital paradoxically produces in the measure that its physical character over time displaces that same labour – at the same time as it is about an environmental relation: more and more resources will be needed from the earth’s subsurface to fuel the rising magnitude of capital’s constant forms – its machines, buildings, hardware, and so on. Of course there are moments when capital appears to need fewer resources, or when it suddenly appears to do more with less, but these do not contradict the historical arc of the general law: they confirm it. Cutting costs is the *sine qua non* of capital as a logic, and so individual firms and sectors naturally find cheaper and more efficient forms of energy as others become more costly. Yet the relative cheapness of a given form of energy becomes immediately compromised once it is no longer emergent, but is instead dominant. Hence cheap oil is largely credited for the golden era of US hegemony, from the early 1950s through to the late 1960s (see Levinson 2016), while cheap coal is understood to have provided the physical and economic conditions for large-scale industrialization in England, and then Germany and France in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (see Malm 2015). Flipped around, the same is true of the era of *expensive* oil that characterizes the

post-70s era, most vividly expressed in the floating average of over \$100 USD per barrel between 2000–2008. Not coincidentally, this is the era of what Neil Brenner has influentially termed “the long downturn,” when the rate of profit began its steady fall towards the negligible rates that mark the long present (Brenner 2006, 239).<sup>2</sup>

Capital, in other words, will always be an extractivist mode of social organization not despite, but because of, its intransigent drive to cut costs. Using more and more physical energy from fossil fuels is a form of cutting labour costs, until it is not. When the cost of energy rises to the level of a constraint, capital seeks out either new sources of energy or innovative ways to extract what’s left. That is to say, energy in the form of fossil fuels has typically been a *very* cost effective means to economize and minimize human labour power (or variable capital), and when specific forms of extracting fossil fuels become too costly, some other form is usually just over the horizon.

If extractivism is the logical mode of capitalist accumulation over time, then why does it act as an exogenous force on actually-existing socialisms of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries? Álvaro García Linera, vice president in Evo Morales’ Bolivia since 2006, calls the entangled histories of Latin American socialism and resource extraction a part of the “long process of socialization of the conditions of production,” similar to the transitional programs of Mao’s China and Lenin’s Soviet Union (Linera 2013). The transition towards fully socialized conditions of production begins at a point of near full calibration to the international division of labour. The international division of labour is itself the expression at any given moment of the unfolding history of the capitalist mode of production, which in Linera’s words makes “Nature...a reservoir of material vehicles of *exchange value*, of profit.” (Linera 2013).

As we have already seen, capitalism is logically and historically extractivist in that its mode of production simultaneously compliments human labour power with the material wealth and puts them in competition, even if that complementarity and competition occur on opposite poles of the earth. Hence, while Stalin imagined that socialism in one country was possible – the outcome of which was a Soviet

industrial complex at least as energy intensive as its capitalist counterparts – neither Lenin, Mao, or Linera thought, or think, the contradictions of capitalism can be resolved short of a global revolutionary process:

Socialism is not a new mode of production that would coexist alongside capitalism, territorially contesting the world or one country. Socialism is a *battlefield* between capitalism in crisis and the tendencies, potentialities and efforts to bring production under community ownership and control. In other words, it is the historical period of struggle between the dominant established *capitalist mode of production* and another potentially new *mode of production*. The only *mode of production* that will overcome capitalism is communism, the assumption of community ownership and control of production of the material life of society. And that mode of production does not exist piecemeal, it can only exist on a world scale. But until that happens the only thing that is left is the struggle. (Linera 2013).

Hence, from the perspective of the Bolivian Democratic-Cultural Revolution, the transition to a mode of production that breaks the intransitive relation between surplus value and subsurface energy, minerals, and metals is paradoxically contingent on the temporary increase in socialist forms of extractivism. Critiques of the Latin American socialist project on the grounds of its dependency on fossil fuels thus make the same error as Stalin: “it is naïve”, Linera continues, “to think that extractivism, non-extractivism or industrialism are a vaccination against injustice, exploitation and inequality,” (Linera 2013) since for him, like all socialists, extractivism is a technical system for human interaction with natural systems, and not itself the mode of production. The mode of production that socialism aims to overcome is capitalism, which includes not just the genre of interaction between nature and culture, but the value form which dominates that relation.

If extractivism is an economic problem endogenous to capitalism, it is a fine metric with which to gauge at any given moment our collective proximity to communism.

## Notes

1] See Melinda Cooper’s recent treatment of secular stagnation as both a social crisis of reproduction and a crisis in the reproduction of the value form of capital in “Secular Stagnation: Fear of Non-Reproductive Future” (2016).

2] You need not be a Marxist to observe the falling rate of profit in the post-70s era: see former Director of the National Economic Council under President Obama, Larry Summers (2016).

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There is a feeling that the world changed in the past couple of years, and that it has something to do with the Internet. With “😂”, “post truth” and “fake news” as the UK Oxford Dictionary’s “words of the year” for the last three years, one has the sense of some sort of epistemological rupture – although history will ultimately be the judge of this. It seems that the logic and temporality of social media has penetrated deeply into culture and politics, reframing the legitimacy of issues and demanding new assessment criteria in order for one to stay abreast of the increasing pace of cultural change. Illustrative of this, are the vernacular interpretations of political events, as developed by fringe Internet communities, which seem to have acquired an enormous influence in the past several years. As demonstrated by Brexit and the election of Trump, within the new social media ecosystem it is the way in which emotional narratives confirm people’s pre-existing biases that seems to accounts for the viral spread of misinformation, disinformation and “alternative facts”. This phenomenon corresponds with the rise of automated personalization – as currently exemplified by the Facebook News Feed – and the concomitant argument that market segmentation decreases public argument and thereby diminishes the public sphere (Sunstein 2001, Pariser 2011). While these discussions are generally framed in terms of a declension narrative, as a provocation we can turn to dialectical materialism to speculate on the inversion of this fragmentary

condition. Against the pervasive pessimism over the supposed death of liberalism, the Marxist wager here is that the seeds of a new class consciousness might lie dormant in this very fragmentary and neo-tribalistic condition.

The rise of fake news can be tied to systemic transformations in the news business. While Marx was a newsman himself during the years of the mid-nineteenth century German revolutions, it is hard to know what – if anything – he might have made about the twenty-first century problem of fake news. For while it can certainly be said that disinformation has roots that extend back into Marx’s time, it is arguably the case that what today we call fake news is the specific product of a quite particular constellation of factors, of which two are at central issue here. On the one hand there is an extreme concentration of media ownership such that, in the US for example, most people tend get their news from one single source: Facebook. On the other hand there is a greater variety of news content being generated by a plurality of sources with often dubious credentials. As such, the news media are no longer in a position to “manufacture consent” (Lippman 1922, Herman & Chomsky 1988). From this media ecological perspective, the concept of “the truth” thus appears increasingly as though it were a relic of an earlier paradigm wherein the news media collaborated with political power-brokers in order to maintain hegemony of what has been referred to as “embedded liberalism” (Harvey 2005, 11). With official accounts of the truth appearing more open to interpretation as well as to contestation, aspects of social constructivism can thus be said to have “gone mainstream,” as it were, to the extent that reality today seems far more malleable to many more people.

Once the relatively exclusive purview of academics on the post-Marxist left, since Brexit and Trump of late it has become increasingly common to hear right-wing populists embrace a paranoid form of epistemological relativism: “How does anybody decide? That’s an epistemological question... You reach your own truth, find the truth. It’s not that hard” (Cernovich 2017). As such, actors find themselves in possession of distribution networks that can rival long-established news organizations and which are moving beyond mere contestation to circulate their own vernacular interpretations of events. This “democratization” of media production often

feels empowering and revelatory, both for these niche producers and their audiences. The universalist correspondence theory of truth – long out of fashion amongst postmodernists – thus yields to a newly ascendant conspiratorial notion of truth that is revealed through a process of unveiling. The journalistic belief in “cold hard facts” gives way to a search for a notion of revealed truth that is always somehow “out there” (as the X-Files tv-series had already presciently observed at the close of the millennium), almost within reach in spite of being actively obscured by the powers that be.

If one of the normative criteria for a democratic society – at least in the Rawlsian tradition of liberalism – is that citizens share some common “epistemic principles”, then it is arguable that the Internet actually works to undermine this epistemic consensus by providing each and every one of us with sources to validate our existing opinions, thereby allowing us to fit the facts to our antecedent systems of belief (Lynch 2016). As had already been noted nearly two decades ago, the cognitive bias towards group-think can make the Internet a breeding ground for radicalization, in which, “[r]epeated exposure to an extreme position, with the suggestion that many people hold that position, will predictably move those exposed, and likely predisposed, to believe in it.” (Sunstein 2001, 71). Indeed, findings from recent experimental research in evolutionary psychology confirm this echo-chamber theory, showing subjects to consistently, although unconsciously, favor intuitive as opposed to rational explanations when making moral value-judgments. Humans, we are told, tend to construct post-hoc rationalizations for what they believe to be true in conformity with the values of their own tribes (Haidt 2012, Slovic and Fernbach 2017). Thus empowered, our supposedly tribal natures are busy shattering the edifice of liberal-consensus reality into a million little pieces, with no hope of any universal project on the horizon that might be capable of reassembling its fragments.

While fake news is currently recognized within policy circles as one of the most pressing problems of technocratic governance, dialectical materialism might be seen to offer a quite different interpretation of the mainstreaming of epistemological relativism and of social constructivism. In *History and Class Consciousness*

(1971), originally published in 1923, Georg Lukács combined aspects of Hegelian metaphysics and Weberian anti-positivist sociology in order to develop the concepts of reification and of totality. Taken from the German word for objectification [Verdinglichung], reification was Lukács’s term for the process of subsumption through which objects are transformed into subjects and subjects are turned into objects, while he defined totality as “the system of production at a given moment in history and the resulting divisions of society into classes” (ibid, 50). Following Engels’s assertion that the proletariat was “prescribed, irrevocably and obviously, in its own situation in life as well as in the entire organization of contemporary civil society” (1956, 134–5), Lukács claimed that totality in fact lay dormant in those commodities that Marx had theorized as “external to man, and therefore alienable” (1992, 182).

For Lukács, reification contained within it the roots of its own overcoming since it produced an epistemological standpoint from which the totality could be grasped. It was through the material encounter between the objectified subject (laborer) and the subjectified object (the commodity) that a truly universal class consciousness would emerge. As Marx and Engels had themselves alluded to, it was paradoxically only through the total subjugation to (and repurposing of) the commodity form that “man” would “face with sober senses, his real conditions of life” (1948, 12). So, while the liberal critique posits that fake news threatens to undermine the shared epistemic principles which underpin democracy, dialectical materialism might ironically invert this critique by identifying fake news as the initial by-product of a new kind of epistemology, one perhaps closer to the machine.

To conclude this provocation, we might look towards Stiegler’s (2010) proposal for a “new critique of political economy” that reorients the Marxist problematic over the ownership of the means of production to focus on the exteriorization of memory into corporately-owned inscription devices. While recognizing the threat that it poses to established liberal traditions, might we also see fake news in terms of Stiegler’s dialectic of pharmakon, in which the poison and remedy are of a piece? Might this new plasticity of reality actually provide some kind of real challenge to



the hegemony of liberal consensus, as the partizans of post-truth populism like to claim? While its initial effect has been to empower the sock-puppets of established interests, arguably the scandal of fake news is also making us face our near total subjugation to a capitalist mode of production wherein the greatest problem is how to conceptualize a collective relationship to the labor that it extracts from us. It might thus be through the realization of what Stiegler refers to as the “generalized proletarianization” of consciousness that we could then come to recognize, with sober senses, the therapeutic value of technology for overcoming this same condition.

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## Fame

Katharina Hausladen

To be famous for something means, above all, to be under discussion. What prompts this discussion, or more precisely, what someone is famous for does not always have to be obvious, much less comprehensible. Indeed, the attribute “famous” always refers to a specific quality, which can be connected to either a regular activity (be it singing, skiing or acting) or to a singular action (be it a one-hit wonder or a political scandal), sometimes though only to a rumor (for instance about an affair). Such a quality can, however, also simply persist in the virtuosity of bringing itself into a discussion in such a way that its own prominence beats by far the value of its fame. Ultimately, no matter how exceptional the achievement, without medial presence, it is hardly worth a dollar and any presence therefore as an achievement on its own. If capital, as Marx said, “eschews no profit”<sup>1</sup> and fame eschews no attention, then the equation must be that profit accumulates with increasing attention. In this regard, attention is the product in the fame trade and everything that accumulates attention is capital.

In pop culture vocabulary, fame denominates the epitome of displaying the commodity form: when a famous person – “star” here – seizes a specific role, pose, or mask and roughly fuses with it, the star ego becomes the central resource for the delimitation of labor and labor power that is typical for creative capitalism. This

delimitation, however, is necessary in order for the identification offers that a star makes for even arousing the desire in their recipients to know who it is that is singing, looking or dancing. Indeed, almost quite as if the star ego had always been there and had chosen some such point in time. In 1978, Grace Jones exemplarily sang about the impossibility of the seamless transgression from persona to person in the title song of her album “Fame”: “Fame, so alone with my name, even that don't belong to me.” Andy Warhol makes a similar comment in *From A to B and Back Again*: “Movie stars get millions of dollars for nothing, so when someone asks them to do something for nothing, they go crazy – they think that if they're going to talk to somebody at the grocery store they should get fifty dollars an hour. So you should always have a product that's not just ‘you’” (Warhol 1975, 85f).

But because the star persona's ego is – as Jones and Warhol in particular knew – a specifically chosen one, it can also be adapted to fit in with aesthetic-political concepts of queer self-empowerment. And precisely because this persona is a public figure, such concepts can be performatively carried out as exemplary experiments of anti-holistic subjectivities and identities. In this sense, Mike Kelley asserts in regards to John Waters' films: “Waters celebrates ‘queerness’ for its abject nature relative to dominant American society. One need not search for an outside aesthetic in his films, because ‘you’, the supposedly empathic film viewer, already represent the other. [...] The freakish characters in his films were not designed just to be laughed at; they are, in a sense, role models” (Kelley 2003, 104ff). Role models for subject forms that are not aiming for self-optimization. Role models of a freedom that is accessible to all. Surely, to speak with Butler, “[not] all performativity is to be understood as drag”, but it arguably “can become [...] the possibility of an enabling social and political resignification” (Butler 2011, 176). Therefore the fame cannot be invoked vividly enough for all those who sing like Planningtonrock: “Patriarchal life, it's time to step aside!”

## Notes

1] Here, Marx cites the English unionist T.J. Dunning. The citation is exclusively included in the German version of “Capital”. (Cf. Marx 1956, 788: footnote 250).

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## Fascism

Özgür Yalçın

Throughout history, more or less every state had to intrinsically rely on force and violence for coming into existence. Within the context of capitalism, Antonio Gramsci has formulated this insight as the claim that the capitalist state is made up of two different domains: a 'political society' – which operates through force – and a 'civil society' – which operates through consent (Gramsci 2011). Put very simply, Gramsci defined hegemony as the sum total of this latter force and consensus. Against this background, it is worth remembering Georgi Dimitrov's definition of fascism as a reactionary, super-oppressive form of state that denies political freedoms, including fundamental rights such as freedom of thought, assembly, and association (Dimitrov 1983, 179-87). In other words, fascism is the most reactionary, terrorist, and bloody form bourgeois sovereignty can take when it is monopolized. In such a situation, political society (force) has gained an overwhelming power over civil society (consensus). In addition, according to Dimitrov, fascism is not a product of any time, but a product of the era of imperialism, the last stage of capitalism – a Marxist-Leninist standpoint (Dimitrov 1983). Defining fascism with reference to the power of capital,<sup>1</sup> Dimitrov emphasizes the relationship between the level of capitalist development and fascism. The most savage fascist experience in history shows that Dimitrov was correct in a remarkable way. Why was German fascism so much more powerful and brutal than Italian fascism? In reply to this

question, one should not, as some have done, point to the Weberian charismatic leadership (of Adolf Hitler). Such an approach clearly ignores the structural dynamics of fascism. Rather, building on Dimitrov's analysis of the prerequisites of fascism, I would argue that there is a decisive structural reason, namely that Germany had the most advanced industrial production capability at that time in Europe (Pascal 2011, 109-17), and along with other historical conditions this enabled the most dramatic fascist experience in history.<sup>2</sup>

Although the experience of Nazi Germany is highly compatible with Dimitrov's examination of fascism, a considerable number of scholars are currently arguing that contemporary capitalism, and its mechanisms of exploitation and oppression, cannot be read anymore through theories which depend on Marx's understanding of capitalism. Even if for some it seems right at first glance, this proposition is very narrow-minded from the perspective of a structural approach. Of course, there is no doubt that contemporary capitalism is not the same in every aspect when compared with the capitalism that existed at the time of Marx – particularly if we think of 'finance capital'. The term 'finance capital' was first defined by Rudolf Hilferding, the Austro-German Marxist theoretician, in response to the then growing strength and centralization of capital in large firms, cartels, and banks. For Hilferding, the earlier competitive 'liberal capitalism', which formed in response to the interventions by mercantilist states, was transforming, at the turn of the epoch, into a monopolistic finance capital that was integrated into a centralized and privilege-dispensing state (Hilferding 1983). For Hilferding, the flows of financial capital were aiming at imperialist integration into the nascent global economy. However, this imperialist expansion was not caused by the inadequacy of the internal market but by the pursuit of higher profit rates by capitalists controlling the means of production. Very importantly, Hilferding stresses that financial capitalism is not a different phenomenon from industrial capitalism when it comes to capital accumulation and its profit-making orientation. Some leading theoreticians within Marxism at that time, such as Otto Bauer or Karl Kautsky, considered Hilferding's book (namely, *Finance Capital*) as the fourth volume of Marx's *Das Kapital*. In fact, as David Harvey clearly indicated, there is a strong relationship between industrial and finance capital – "finance and money capitalists also demand their cut of the

surplus value produced" (Harvey 2011, 89) – as shown by naming just a few examples in which special circumstances led to a developed financial capitalism without a developed industrial capitalism, e.g. Switzerland, Hong Kong, or the Cayman Islands.

Regarding the context given above, Marx's theory of capital accumulation and over-accumulation (the crisis of capitalism) still have a strong claim to validity in today's capitalism. As Marx claims:

Capitalism establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole. (Marx 2007, 708-9)

Capitalism as an industrial and financial economic system is characteristically crisis-prone. It is determined by forces that cause it to be unstable, chaotic and self-destructive. In *The Communist Manifesto*, written over 170 years ago, Marx and Engels described capitalism as:

a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, [that it] is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. (Marx and Engels 2012, 25)

However, this sorcerer has succeeded in pulling a rabbit from the hat during each time of crisis, and that rabbit is called fascism. In times of crisis, the capitalist state has succeeded in securing the hegemony of capitalism by using intense ideological and repressive powers via what Gramsci called political society. The capitalist state is essentially primed for the consolidation of bourgeois hegemony. As identified in Marxist theory, power in such a class-divided nation-state consists largely in class power. Class power is established on the objective position of different classes occupying different positions in the social division of labor; "it designates the capacity of each class to realize its specific interests" (Poulantzas 2000, 36) in relation to the

power of other classes. Hence, class power is materialized with regard to definite apparatuses and performs. Louis Althusser expresses the historical role of the state in capitalism in the following way:

The state is a repressive ‘machine’ that enables the dominant classes (in the nineteenth century, the bourgeois class and the ‘class’ of big landowners) to ensure their domination over the working class in order to subject it to the process of extorting surplus value (that is, to capitalist exploitation). (Althusser 2014, 70)

This role of the state in capitalist formation is not merely an argument raised by the Marxists. In the opposing camp, Friedrich Hayek also says that the state must be a strong legislator and enforcer to ensure the development of individual entrepreneurial freedoms and the market (Hayek 2005). That is to say, the state has to forcefully create new markets for capital accumulation and increased profitability by making and implementing related laws and investments (Bonefeld 2010, 15-24). The problem now becomes how to minimize oppression by the state itself; the response of Hayek is the creation of a private sphere totally independent of communal interference. For Hayek, such a private sphere is only able to come into existence if there are definite actions and rights that are insured and not violated by the state. It necessitates not only individuals but also that the state be obliged by the rule of law. Such a theorization of liberty obviously conflicts with the idea of popular sovereignty as it means that there are various laws which should be beyond the domain of a government to change; however, the idea of popular sovereignty presupposes that a government voted by the citizens has the right to overturn and/or modify all laws. In brief, two fundamental points stand out in Hayek’s theory of ‘minimal’ state concept: (1) the reproduction of capitalism requires permanent state regulations, and (2) popular sovereignty can be sacrificed for a given rule of law which aims to support market interests.

In a nutshell, fascism is an integral part of capitalism and is visibly put into force when capitalism enters a crisis, due to its own contradictions or when faced with a counter-threat from an opposite or alternative ideology. Various predominant

methods in this process include (at the local level) the restriction of rights and wages of non-capitalist classes, the monopolization of political decision-making mechanisms, the use of violence against dissident groups, and, (at the international level), regulatory wars against determined enemy states or groups. Here, someone may raise the question: why are the countries where capitalism is most developed the freest countries on the world? My reply is that you cannot fully comprehend how free a regime is without attempting to test the limits of the system. Especially in the western countries where capitalism is highly developed, capitalism’s ideological and cultural hegemony over civil society and its relatively high level of prosperity – mostly based on the exploitation of underdeveloped countries – means that capitalist reproduction is provided with a consensus within civil society, and thus there is no need for the use of force by political society in general. One of the best examples of this is the fact of communist parties being fully integrated into the neoliberal system. Therefore, Marx’s critique of capitalism (regardless of his teleological propositions) is still vivid today and provides us with a basis for a further deconstruction of capitalism. Adding all this to the account, there is no need to wait for concentration camps or mass genocidal practices to designate a regime as fascist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. “The mistake of the 21<sup>st</sup> century human is to think that fascism will return in a Nazi uniform.”

## Notes

1] If we think of fascism as an ideology based solely upon transcendent/holistic ultra-nationalism, we have a one-dimensional approach. Even if the germane historiography presents incommensurate pictures of fascism, the theories of fascism can be separated into materialistic and ideological sets. In this respect, fascism is not only identical with a totalitarian regime that discards parliamentary democracy. In a capitalist state, fascism can be an economic and political response to the challenges with which the administration of society may be threatened by specific conditions (Amin 2014).

2] World War I was essentially a result of an economic struggle among the ‘Great Powers’ in Europe. After the Treaty of Versailles, the imperialist expansion of Germany was halted and German capital was restricted to the internal market only. In this context, keeping in mind the failure of leftist politics in Germany, the Nazi Party was able to achieve a robust political mobilization based upon German nationalism and anti-Semitism within the social and political conjunction that developed after World War I. Besides, the Nazi Party had also given important economic promises to the people,

mainly, more production and more employment. With a powerful war economy, they indeed succeeded in providing these two. With simple historical research, it can be easily seen that capital in Germany at that time integrated itself with the Nazi regime in order to complete its imperialist expansion. The case of Germany in this respect is also an explicit example of ‘uneven development’ as a contradiction of capitalism that is very well analyzed within Marxist theory.

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## General Intellect

Roberto Nigro

In his *Grundrisse* Marx employs a powerful image to indicate the kind of knowledge which constitutes the heart of social production: *general intellect* is the name he gives to the abstract knowledge on which the production of wealth and the reproduction of life rest. Marx writes: “The development of fixed capital indicates to what degree general social knowledge has become a *direct force of production*, and to what degree, hence, the conditions of the process of social life itself have come under the control of the general intellect and been transformed in accordance with it. To what degree the powers of social production have been produced, not only in the form of knowledge, but also as immediate organs of social practice, of the real life process.” (Marx 1973: 706). This passage of the *Grundrisse* includes the last pages of notebook VI and the first ones of notebook VII, (ibid. 690–712) and has been referred to as “The Fragment on Machines” since the early 1960s when discussions concerning the concept of the general intellect began. As is generally known, *Grundrisse* is a lengthy, unfinished manuscript, composed by Marx in the years 1857–58. A limited edition of the manuscript was published in Moscow in two volumes, in 1939 and 1941 respectively. But since only three of four copies of this edition ever reached the “Western world” one can say that discussion prompted by the *Grundrisse* began only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the manuscript was first effectively published in the German original only in 1953 by

Dietz Verlag, Berlin. From the beginning the debate was heavily influenced by the reading of the text by the Italian workerist movement (*Operaisti*). The Operaisti (in *primis* Raniero Panzieri and Enzo Grillo, the latter also being the translator of the *Grundrisse* into Italian) were the first to give a completely new account of the text. According to the *Operaisti*, in the “Fragment on Machines”, Marx depicts a situation in which abstract knowledge becomes the main productive force on which the production of wealth rests. Marx writes: “In this transformation, it is neither the direct human labour [a worker] himself performs, nor the time during which he works, but rather, the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery over it by virtue of his presence as a social body – it is, in a word, the development of the social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth.” (Ibid. 705). The general productive force arises from social combination, the technological application of natural sciences, and scientific labour in general. Therefore, Marx writes: “*The theft of alien labour time, on which the present wealth is based*, appears a miserable foundation in face of this new one, created by large-scale industry itself. As soon as labour in the direct form has ceased to be the great well-spring of wealth, labour time ceases and must cease to be its measure, and hence exchange value [must cease to be the measure] of use value.” (Ibid. 105).

The interpretation of the Fragment on Machines developed by some workerists was all the more significant since it did not reduce the general intellect only to the dimension of fixed-capital.<sup>1</sup> In fact, if general intellect is only understood as fixed-capital, the Marxian pages on machines cannot but prefigure a kind of humanism, in which the automated system of machines is going to replace human labour and, by the same token, to liberate human beings from the slavery of wage-labour. This kind of utopia has fed all kinds of socialist imageries and communist illusions even before the workerist reading of *Grundrisse*. Last but not least it has also nourished teleological interpretations of history based on deterministic ideas of the collapse of capital due to the force of its inner contradictions. However, we all recognise that this kind of transition towards a society finally liberated from wage labour has never taken place. Moreover, capitalism has even been able to intensify exploitation and the extraction of surplus-value from several other branches of human activity.

According to the workerists we have to give a much more controversial account of the meaning of the general intellect. In particular, we should not reduce it to fixed capital, that is to say, to the simple idea that under the new circumstances of capitalist production knowledge is encapsulated in the machines. Moreover, a new account of the meaning of the machine should also be developed, i.e. one that no longer considers the machine as an object confronting the human being. To limit these considerations to the seminal analyses of workerists, we should distinguish two main periods in the history of the interpretation of the Fragment on Machines: in the early 1960s and in the 1970s the fragment was interpreted, on one hand, as a powerful instrument for describing a situation in which human labour is going to disappear as a dominant factor of production. In this connection, human activity would be liberated from wage labour. On the other hand, by focusing on these aspects, workerists also emphasised the important role played by subjectivity (or “living labour”) in the Fragment. The transformation of the mode of production, the increasing role played by social cooperation and by knowledge, would lead to the emergence of a new class composition, i.e. to new subjects. In the 1970s the affirmation of the general intellect was interpreted as the possibility of the emergence of a new antagonistic subject, (this idea echoed, of course, the notion of the social individual present in Marx’s Fragment on Machines); a subject that was able to appropriate the wealth it was producing.

At the end of the 1990s it was already clear that the emancipatory force of the general intellect had failed to emerge. At the same time an antagonistic subject, which would be able to appropriate the common wealth, had also failed to emerge. In other words: the disappearance of labour-time as a measure of the production of wealth did not lead to the end of exploitation or to new forms of liberation. Rather, it had brought new, intensified forms of domination, misery for the masses, and wealth for small groups of capitalists.

From the 1990s a discussion began which was connected with political practices centred around the emergence of new social and political movements, and which emphasised the role of a new kind of intellectual subjectivity. This debate led to the most comprehensive and well-known analyses of the general intellect that are

still at the forefront of contemporary discussions in political philosophy; discussions to which Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt have prominently contributed, above all with their seminal work *Commonwealth* (2011). Here, the general intellect plays the role of the most constitutive form of biopolitical production: a mode of production that no longer revolves around fixed capital, but rather on various forms of social interaction and of social communication. This involves language, and epistemological paradigms, but also affects and relationality. It includes all aspects that are productive and which refer to living labour and living subjects. Hence the general intellect becomes the very terrain of struggle since it is living labour that has to be continually governed in order to constitute a source of profit for capital. By the same token the general intellect is also the terrain where life, while being produced, constantly escapes various forms of government imposed by capital.

If capital exercises its domination over society through political forms such as bureaucracy, administration, finance, and monetary politicism, or by controlling communication, desires, affects, and so on, the question at issue is how the common wealth that is constantly produced by new subjects can be appropriated by those very subjects instead of by capital. In other words: in recent discussions the question of the general intellect is transformed into the question as to whether an appropriation of the common wealth is possible – which is the question of the constituent power of the common.

## Notes

[1] Fixed-capital can be understood as means of labour. Together with the material of labour and living labour it constitutes one of the essential moments of the labour process itself. Marx explains that: “the means of labour passes through different metamorphoses, whose culmination is the *machine*, or rather, an *automatic system of machinery*” (Ibid., 692).

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## Golden Age

Pepijn Brandon

In his section on the ‘genesis of the industrial capitalist’ in *Capital*, Volume I, Marx famously describes Holland as “the exemplary capitalist nation of the seventeenth century” (Marx 1990 [1867], 651).<sup>1</sup> The immediate context is a passage in which Marx fiercely denounces the role of Dutch colonialism in the East Indies (see the entry on the VOC in this collection). However, Marx returns to what is commonly known as the Dutch Golden Age at several other points as well. These passages are often insightful, though of course they do not present us with the latest word regarding the economic history of the early-modern Netherlands (Lourens and Lucassen 1992; Van der Linden 1997; Brandon 2011). They were based on careful reading and note-taking on the economic and political history of Europe from the sources available to Marx, in particular, extensive outtakes from Von Gülich’s five-volume history of trade (Von Gülich 1830-1845; Marx 1983, 245-64, 389-411, and 898-905). The material gathered from contemporary historians and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century observers, combined with his own anti-capitalist instincts, sometimes led him to quite hyperbolic descriptions. A good example is his contention that “by 1648, the people of Holland were more overworked, poorer and more brutally oppressed than those of all the rest of Europe put together.” (Marx 1990 [1867], 653). While there is interesting modern research that suggests that Marx was right to note that inequality and the level of exploitation in the Dutch



Republic increased significantly during the Golden Age, his comparison with the rest of Europe seems overblown. Nonetheless, if we are willing to read between the lines of his more intuitive descriptions, a rich interpretation of the nature of the Dutch Golden Age emerges. This interpretation is in no way ‘economistic’—a crime of which Marx is often proclaimed guilty. In particular, it gives special attention to the role of the state, warfare, and colonialism in capitalist development.

There is little that is Golden in Marx’s version of the Dutch Golden Age. Its start coincided with the beginning of a cycle of commercial wars between European states, propelled by “the discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins.” (Marx 1990 [1867], 651). At its zenith, the Dutch violently dominated the European East-India trade and the commerce between the various parts of Europe. Contrary to schematic representations of this history, Marx did not see Dutch economic success in this period as the achievements of a pure ‘merchant capitalism’ that grew rich from exploiting suppliers and consumers without changing the relation of production. Rather, he stressed the links between trade and plunder abroad and the high level of development of the home economy. The proceeds from “undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder, floated back to the mother-country and were there turned into capital.” (Marx 1990 [1867], 653). The main achievement in the field of statecraft with which Marx credits the Holland burgher-administrators who look down on us from the walls of countless art museums was the development of an intricate system of public taxation, debt, and credit, which in itself became a new source of exploitation. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Dutch were outcompeted in the field of manufacture by the English. The Netherlands entered a long period of depression, and Dutch capital started to move across the Channel.

These scattered remarks provide less than a full history, but more than just rudimentary suggestions for an approach towards the rise and decline of the Dutch economy during the Golden Age. They form a possible point of entry from which to think in fresh ways about the transnational nature of the origins and historical

development of capitalism itself. Marxist historians of the twentieth century have often tried to capture this history as a neatly separated sequence of national trajectories towards ‘real’ (meaning industrial) capitalism, which only came to full fruition in Britain in the course of the eighteenth century. Such an approach can draw from a particular (mis)reading of Marx’s (1990 [1867], 651) remark that

the different momenta of primitive accumulation distribute themselves now, more or less in chronological order, particularly over Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England. In England at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they arrive at a systematical combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern mode of taxation, and the protectionist system.

In this interpretation, ‘momentum’ is understood only in its narrow meaning of ‘instance’ or ‘moment’. The Dutch Golden Age provides the penultimate ‘failed moment’ before English success. It is puzzling how a text that is so dynamic in its portrayal of global interactions, explosive leaps, and complex interplay of forces and tendencies as the historical section at the end of *Capital*, Volume I, can be read in such a schematic, dull and pedantic way. The passage cited does not necessarily support it. The Latin ‘momentum’ refers not only to ‘moment’, but also to movement, motion, impulse or course; to change, revolution or disturbance; to cause, circumstance or influence.<sup>2</sup> If we infer the possible meanings from the passage just cited, we might read the sequence of historical capitalisms sketched there in a very different fashion. Each of the states mentioned drew together particular impulses, changes, and influences from the great international swirl of capitalist development that they participated in. The Dutch contribution to this inherently trans-national process was to fuse local patterns of capital accumulation more solidly than had ever been done before with the expansion of world trade and the internationalization of finance, a fusion that relied heavily on state power. The more ‘systematic combination’ of these factors in eighteenth-century Britain could only arise in connection to capital’s advances elsewhere, both in Europe and in the non-European regions subjected or marginalized through colonization, slavery, war, and economic extraction. From a historical-methodological point of view, a re-reading of Marx’s section on ‘the so-called primitive accumulation’ that pays more attention to the

Dutch case should not aim for constructing a slightly earlier and marginally different national trajectory towards capitalism, but to dissolve the strange marriage of Marxist historiography and national exceptionalism altogether. The specificity of the English moment, like the Dutch moment, must be understood through capital's global instantiations. Starting this transnational opening-up from two opposite ends of the North Sea might not seem a very radical step. But it could be when this movement is elongated from one port of entry to another, across oceans.

## Notes

1] This version gives a slightly different translation of the phrase than the translation used here.

2] It is noteworthy that in the first German edition of *Capital*, Marx did not use the word 'Momente' but 'Methoden'. Cf. those passages in Marx 1983 [1867], 601 and Marx 1987 [1872], 674. The change in the wording of the second edition should be read as a broadening out and enrichment of his initial formulation, not as a conscious change of direction, for which there is no textual evidence.

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## Haitian Revolution Jeanette Ehrmann

“The N.’s revolutionary history is rich, inspiring, and unknown.”<sup>1</sup> Written by C. L. R. James (1939) in the midst of globally connected struggles against fascism and colonialism, this observation is not primarily a critique of bourgeois historians. Rather, it is directed at the Fourth International and at all the Marxists who, according to James, still have to recognize “the tremendous role played by N.s in the transformation of Western civilization from feudalism to capitalism” (ibid.). Even though Marx himself had emphasized the importance of the European enslavement of people of African descent for the rise of modern capitalism (MECW 6, 167), he remained peculiarly silent regarding the most radical expression of Black revolutionary history: the Haitian Revolution. Marx mentions the Haitian Revolution only in the margins, hidden in the *The German Ideology*, where he defines it as an anti-colonial struggle for liberation, enforcing the abolition of enslaved labor. Yet the successful uprising of the enslaved people of Saint-Domingue does not qualify as a proper revolution in the eyes of Marx, even though it resulted in the overthrow of a colonial plantocracy and in the independence from a revolutionary, yet racist, French Empire. In a polemic, he claims that Max Stirner “imagines that the insurgent N.s of Haiti and the fugitive N.s of all the colonies wanted to free not *themselves*, but ‘man’” (MECW 5, 309) – a thought Marx refuses. In contrast to Hegel, who in the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* had appraised post-revolutionary Haiti as

“a state on Christian principles” and as a signifier of Black people’s inherent capability of freedom, Marx, on the other hand, defines the historical role of the newly created “N. republic” as merely having laid out the ground for the abolition of enslavement in the United States (MECW 19, 229). In both cases, Haiti only represents the liberation of people of African descent, not of humankind.

Today, Marx’s dismissal of the revolutionary credentials of the Haitian Revolution permeates most of the critical theories inspired by Marx, which either silence or trivialize it as a marginal event on the periphery of modernity. In contrast, throughout the worlds of the Black Atlantic and the Black Pacific (Shilliam 2015), Haiti has been, and continues to be, a symbol of universal emancipation both in political movements and in counter-hegemonic theory-production initiated and cultivated by Black people and People of Color. It was none other than Paul Lafargue, husband to Marx’s daughter Laura, who declared the Haitian Revolution to be an inspiring example of a radical socialist revolution with an anti-racist agenda. While Marx condescendingly referred to his son-in-law as “African”, “gorilla” or “creole”, who was lacking “English manners” (MECW 42, 315f.), Lafargue himself took pride in his Black ancestry – which, ironically enough, went back to pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue. He self-identified as *homme de couleur*, person of color (Derfler 1991, 53), a political category invented in Saint-Domingue that transcended the racialized matrix of European Enlightenment and colonialism. In a world of institutionalized white supremacy, Haiti was constituted as a decolonial and deracialized republic, making it a safe haven for all indigenous people and people of color endangered and threatened by colonization, enslavement, racist terror, and genocidal violence perpetrated by white people. Historically, this was proven by the mass migration of African-Americans from the United States to Haiti in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Haiti became a political counter-model to Western liberal capitalist democracy for various anti-colonial, anti-racist, and anti-capitalist liberation movements, from Aotearoa to Vietnam to South Africa.

It was Black Marxism that prominently put forward the idea that the Haitian Revolution was indeed not a mere instance of individual emancipation – the

transformation of colonized and enslaved people of African descent into free men and free laborers, as Marx had claimed –, but a crucial step in the universal emancipation of humankind. According to James (1939), the formerly enslaved revolutionaries, who had been classified as “movable property” by the *Code Noir*, were, in fact, “black proletarians”. The Caribbean plantation complex, which had been based on a proto-proletarian division of labor, at the same time enabled the political organization of the enslaved population as revolutionary subjects. By destroying this complex, the “Black Jacobins” became the vanguard of universal emancipation, staging the first socialist revolution in world history (James 1938). However, what James performs in his book *Black Jacobins* as an epic of emancipation is not the mere integration of Black revolutionary politics into a conventional Marxist frame. Rather, he changes the frame itself by decentering the white, Euro-American urban proletariat that had been thought of as the only revolutionary subject and the embodiment of universal emancipation. By writing the history of the Haitian Revolution as the history of a revolution proper, Black Marxism thus deconstructs the “North Atlantic universals” (Trouillot 2002) and the “white mythologies” (Young 2004) that are prevalent in conventional Marxist and even post-Marxist theories.

While Susan Buck-Morss (2000) continued to study the hidden connection between the Haitian Revolution and Hegel – a connection that for the first time had been examined by Pierre Franklin Tavares (1990) –, post-Marxist interpretations of the Haitian Revolution gained momentum in the run-up to its bicentenary in 2004, leading to a so-called *Haitian Turn*. This intellectual shift in North American academia re-centers the Haitian Revolution and includes it in the history of Enlightenment and the Atlantic revolution (Joseph 2012). Although post-Marxists no longer outright ignore the Haitian Revolution, they unreflectingly incorporate it in their canon of a particular Euro-North American Marxist thought, which masks its implicit whiteness as an assumed universality. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000, 118), for example, compare the iconic revolutionary leader Toussaint Louverture with Marx, stating that both were global utopian thinkers, with Toussaint translating the rhetoric of Enlightenment’s universalism and the French *Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen* “into practice”. In a similar vein, Slavoj Žižek (2008, 208) describes the events of Saint-Domingue as “a key

supplement” to the French Revolution. According to him, the Haitian Revolution was “clearly ‘ahead of its time,’ ‘premature,’ and as such doomed to fail” (ibid., 392). Instead of questioning the epistemological and political conditions of their theoretical practice, the post-Marxists inscribe the Haitian Revolution into a grand narrative of European Enlightenment and the bourgeois French Revolution. In doing so, they do not take seriously the autonomous struggles for, and conceptions of, emancipation brought forward by the enslaved people themselves. Not only that, they also do not recognize the importance of colonialism, enslavement, and racism as specific forms of domination and exploitation that are more than a mere momentum in the dialectics of class struggle.

At this point, the contributions of Black Marxism are vital. From the vantage point of Black Radicalism – a body of social and political theory rooted in the lived experiences and in the genealogies of resistance of Black people on their forced journey from Africa to the Americas –, Black Marxism rethinks Marxist theory from scratch. Cedric J. Robinson (1983) places the Haitian Revolution in the theoretical framework of a “racial capitalism”, which suggests an intertwining of class and race in the transatlantic history of colonial and racist violence. Likewise, in *The Souls of Black Folk* W. E. B. Du Bois reflects the centrality of race as a fundamental category of domination, oppression, and exploitation on a global scale and even after the formal abolition of enslavement when he predicts that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the colorline” (Du Bois 1903, 31). In the midst of the anti-colonial revolutions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Frantz Fanon states that “a Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched when it comes to addressing the colonial issue” (Fanon 2004, 5). Similarly, the central aim of the Haitian Left after the foundation of the Haitian Communist Party in 1934, bringing together intellectuals such as Jacques Roumain and Jacques Stephen Alexis, was to understand the interlocking, but also contradictory, logic of race and class domination (Smith 2009). Trying to integrate racism, capitalism, and neo-colonialism, Haitian Marxism thus made an important contribution to a Marxist grammar of political economy and a Marxist critique of modern capitalist society that is still largely unacknowledged.

It is obvious that the Haitian Revolution has remained mostly unnoticed in critical theories of the global North up until today. But we cannot tell a solely heroic story of this revolution. While anti-racist struggles are being ignored most of the time in what Charles Mills (2003) calls a “White Marxism”, this rings true even more for the revolutionary struggles fought by Black women. The celebration of the Haitian Revolution as a moment of universal emancipation within the narrative logic of a masculinist, heroic storyline obscures the contradictions of this revolution in the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality. The fact that the newly created republic was founded on the subordination and exclusion of Black women underlines the importance of Black Marxist feminism as a critical social theory (Hill Collins 1990) – even more so as the Left today puts forward polemics against what is often called “identity politics”, accusing the theorization of different positionalities of being a strategy of social division. In her response to this accusation, Selma James, a Jewish socialist feminist thinker and activist married to C. L. R. James, claimed that “if sex and race are pulled away from class, virtually all that remains is the truncated, provincial, sectarian politics of the white male metropolitan Left” (1974: 92). Envisioning a democratic revolutionary socialism therefore does not only require a social and political theory that is aware of the intersectionality of different forms of oppression and exploitation. It has to start from the Black feminist insight that, as Angela Davis (2016) puts it, emancipation is only imaginable as the common practice of an “intersectionality of struggles.”

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## Notes

1] While C. L. R. James uses the term „Negro“ throughout his article *Revolution and the Negro*, I abbreviate this term as „N.“ to avoid reproducing the violence of racialized language, which legitimizes and normalizes the dehumanization of Black people in contexts of white capitalist supremacy. As

can be seen below, Karl Marx also used the n-word for people of African descent. Instead of attributing Marx’s use of racialized language to the common parlance of his time, it is more appropriate to understand it as an expression of his general „theoretical inattention to the theme of race“, treating it as „an unproblematic idea“ (Peterson 2005, 237f.) and therefore as a category irrelevant to his critique of political economy.

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## Housing

Michael Klein

"Incidentally, another thing I have at least been able to sort out is the shitty rent business", Marx wrote to Engels in a letter from Summer 1862 which gave account of the chronic misery of his family's living conditions. Marx, notoriously incapable of keeping accounts, had mentioned the burden of rent and placations of the landlord in earlier messages. Paying rent was as equally vexing for Marx as it is for many of today's renters. In the letter, however, he tackled something he considered different: "I had long harboured misgivings as to the absolute correctness of Ricardo's theory, and have at length got to the bottom of the swindle". (Marx 1984, 380–81). The groundwork for his *theory of ground rent* was later laid out in the third volume of *Capital* (Marx 1981). It would go beyond the scope of this note to fully unfold his theory of ground rent. The main achievement of the concept, to put it in a nutshell, was a theory that connects to the labour theory of value:<sup>1</sup> a socially distinct class of landlords rents out land, and claims higher profits for the advantages for production of one plot of land over another in the form of *differential rent*; socially determined by the profitability of the land, it reflects historical modes and relations of production. Moreover, Marx complements the concept of differential rent by so-called *absolute rent*: because of it being private property, rent is conditioned by the class of landlords holding a monopoly over scarce land. As such,

the theory of ground rent shows that in capitalism, production involving land of any sort is turned into a business just like any other.

Rent is central when it comes to housing – not only because housing, too, follows the logics of capital accumulation in capitalist societies, but because rent has been key in determining who is living where and how. In spite of this aspect, which has been inscribed into processes of urbanization at least since the industrial revolution, Marx contributed little to the topic of residential living.

Housing, however, gave cause for another seminal text in a Marxist tradition: in the early 1870s, Engels published a polemic entitled “The Housing Question” (Engels 1872). It was written as a reaction to reformists who discussed the miserable residential conditions of the unpropertied classes as the central *Social Question*, allegedly best solved by equipping workers with home ownership. Unfolding major lines of the debate, Engels rejected the argument as ineffective, and moreover as a mere tactical distortion: the social question was not to be found in housing, but in the ownership of the means of production. For Engels, the misery of housing was little more than a secondary evil. With this and Marxists’ focus on the production side of the economy in mind, housing – or, more generally speaking, reproduction and everyday life – lived in the shadows of the factory and the division of labour for the following decades. Following the epistemological shift towards neoclassical economics, depoliticised supply-and-demand models took over theories of ground rent as sole explanations also in the field of urban studies.

The renewed interest in housing over the last decades started not least from the actual developments taking place in urban areas. Running out of other investment opportunities, in many cities since the 1970s capital turned towards urbanization and housing. Considering today’s economic developments, housing actually accounts for a major part of capital accumulation which keeps the global capitalist economy running. More than ever before, the progressive commodification of housing rendered buildings as something to invest in rather than to live in. This aroused the attention of various disciplines contributing to urban research: critical urbanists showed that mainstream economics is incapable of explaining the

mechanisms of housing. Linking Marxist theory with other concepts of power and oppression, critical urban theory uncovered the processes underlying housing and its stabilizing and destabilizing effects as part of a wider economic and political project.

We know the downside of large-scale investment in real estate: the creation of scarcity in developed land, rising rents, less affordable housing, and the gradual dissolution of neighbourhoods. We have witnessed the exacerbated version of these drawbacks through the rapid financialization of the rental market over recent decades – with indebtedness, disinvestment in the housing stock to induce renters to move and make space for those paying more, displacement of lower-income populations, and evictions as its consequences. Housing, it turns out, has served as a key technology, an apparatus, for governing populations. Rent – or tenure, more generally speaking – is but one aspect in an ensemble of mechanisms through which the restructuring of contemporary urban life takes place, complemented by other aspects ranging from the role of reproductive labour to forms of cohabitation, from the division of the domestic sphere from the public, to construction regulations, to architecture and the built environment. Moreover, processes of stratification and exclusion within housing cannot be confined to income alone, but also operate along the intersecting lines of class, race and gender.

Against this background, however, housing has also become a major cause of discontent. Affected by the transformation of urban cohabitation, this discontent has taken on various forms, from anti-eviction campaigns, to rental protests or attempts to strengthen affordable rents and create new social housing. With the appraisal of the role of everyday life in general, housing has definitely stepped out of the shadow of the factory: far more than a “secondary evil”, the *right to housing* is no longer postponed to the future but is one of today’s manifold struggles.

## Notes

1] Throughout the history of political economy, landed property represented a theoretical challenge: not itself a product of labour, it has no value. What role should be attached to this resource given by nature in the economic process?

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## Imperial Mode of Living

Ulrich Brand and Markus Wissen

Despite increasing geopolitical and geo-economic rivalry, the further exploitation of natural resources and the use of global sinks are considered as the basis of global capitalist development and the overcoming of its various crises. Behind this stands a global consensus about the attractiveness of modern capitalist everyday practices: what we call the "imperial mode of living" (hereafter IML; cf. Brand & Wissen 2017; 2018).

The concept of the IML highlights a fact that has been emphasized by Marx and Marxist thinking: capitalism implies uneven development in both time and space as well as a constant and accelerating universalisation of a Western production model. The logic of liberal markets since the nineteenth century, and especially since World War II, has been normalised through its unconscious reproduction in everyday practices. This is a main driver of the ecological crisis.

The IML implies that people's everyday practices, including individual and societal orientations, as well as identities, rely heavily on: (i) the unlimited appropriation of resources; (ii) a disproportionate claim to global and local ecosystems and sinks; and (iii) cheap labour from elsewhere. The availability of commodities is organised through the world market, backed by military force and/or the asymmetric



relations of forces as they have been inscribed in international institutions. The concrete production conditions of the consumed commodities are usually invisible. In the global North the IML contributes to safeguarding social stability. Moreover, it provides a hegemonic orientation in many societies of the global South. In recent years, it has been partially globalised. A large group of “new consumers” (Myers & Kent 2004) has emerged in countries like China, India, and Brazil. However, the IML is not socially neutral. People with relatively high levels of education, incomes, and environmental consciousness tend to use more resources than lower classes.

In conceptualising the IML we benefit from, and build upon, various theoretical concepts in the tradition of Marx. The starting point is that the capitalist mode of production is expansive and geared towards increasing surplus value, production and consumption. This goes hand-in-hand with an extension of the capitalist (world) market and a capitalist valorisation of ever more areas of life.

Theoretically, we refer to various neo-Marxist approaches:

(a) Political ecology emphasises the unequal appropriation of nature. The ecological crisis is understood as a medium and a result of an unequal distribution of power along the lines of class, gender and ethnicity. Consequently, the key to overcoming the ecological crisis is neither the market nor technological innovation but the struggle against social power and domination. Democratising “societal relations with nature” (Görg 2011) and rejecting exclusive property rights – in support of, say, extractivist practices or privatisation of genetic resources – is not only an aim in itself but also a means of ecological sustainability. An important component of such transformation would be the overcoming of destructive patterns of production and consumption which are at the heart of the IML.

(b) Regulation theory attempts to highlight the temporary coherence between the historical development of a mode of production and distribution on one hand, and a mode of consumption on the other (the regime of accumulation), which is safeguarded by a range of institutional forms that together constitute a mode of

regulation (Jessop & Sum 2006). Aglietta argued in his seminal work that after World War II the emergence of a working-class mode of consumption, centred around standardised housing and automobile transport, became “an essential condition of capitalist accumulation” (Aglietta 1979, 154). This is an important factor for the generalisation of wage labour in Fordism (Huber, 2013 links fossil capitalism and the wage relation). It points to the social spread of the IML, which had been an upper class-phenomenon before the rise of Fordism (Brand & Wissen 2018, chapters 2 and 4).

(c) The concept of hegemony originated in the writings of Antonio Gramsci (1929–30). A hegemonic (i.e. broadly accepted and institutionally secured) mode of living is deeply rooted in the everyday practices of people and safeguarded by the state. As a consequence, domination (along class, gender, race, international and post-colonial lines) is then largely accepted by the dominated. Hegemony can imply different modes of living. However, alternatives remain at the margins and may gain strength mainly in situations of crisis. Modes of production and consumption that become hegemonic in certain regions, or countries can be generalised globally through a “capillary” process, i.e. in a broken manner and with considerable gaps in time and space. This process is associated with concrete corporate strategies and interests in capital valorisation, trade, investment, and geopolitics; with purchasing power; and with dispositions of an attractive mode of living that predominate in, and diffuse into, many societies.

(d) Feminist economics, ecofeminism and other feminist social sciences make important contributions to a broader understanding of economies and societies (Biesecker & Hofmeister 2010; Salleh 2017). Beyond the formal economy, capital investment, financial markets, and wage labour there are other structures and processes which are the preconditions for the functioning of the formal economy that is mediated by money. Predominantly, children are raised and the elderly are cared for outside the formal market economy.

(e) Practice theories are a cornerstone for the concept of IML (Jonas 2017). They argue that social practices are shared behavioural routines that are constituted by

sets of interconnected elements. The elements include: social and political institutions, socio-technical configurations such as physical infrastructures, available knowledge, and prevailing symbolic orientations and forms of power. Environmentally detrimental social practices, such as driving a car, are hard to steer intentionally and to manage or influence via consciousness-raising campaigns.

Since the financial collapse of 2008 the IML has constituted an important element of societal consensus. In the capitalist centres of the world system, the reproduction of wage-earners has been challenged by neoliberalism. However, the costs of reproduction can be reduced through enhanced access to globally-produced commodities traded in liberalised markets that exploit labour elsewhere, i.e. by increasing relative surplus value in the global North. This process occurs along structural lines of class, gender and ethnicity but it is broadly accepted, and its deepening is a crucial strategy of crisis management.

Furthermore, the IML is unevenly universalised in many countries of the Global South. There, development is defined as capitalist modernisation with a more or less selective world market integration, and this is broadly accepted by elites and urban middle classes. Some regions of the global South have adopted the IML through rapid economic growth due to industrialisation and proletarianisation, as in China, and the development of a globally oriented service economy, as in India.

Ecological crisis phenomena – like the loss of biodiversity and climate change – have been caused by the spread of industrial production and consumption patterns. These create conflicts over resources and the use of land, geopolitical tensions, and intense capitalist competition. Exclusive access to resources, guaranteed by contracts or through open violence, and the externalisation of social-ecological costs that the use of these resources entails, are the *conditio sine qua non* of the global North's mode of production and living, and constitute its imperial character.

In sum, the concept of the IML helps to understand:

- i. Why, despite the crisis of neoliberal imperial globalisation, resource- and energy-intensive everyday practices persist and continue to have severe socio-ecological consequences;
- ii. how forms of living are closely linked to the dominant mode of production and capital's valorisation strategies, politics and structures of the state, and prevailing orientations and dispositions of action;
- iii. why environmental politics is largely ineffective and why we experience a severe "crisis of crisis management". The very structure of national and international politics is deeply linked to the dominant mode of production and living;
- iv. why (neo-)imperialist strategies with respect to natural resources and sinks have recently gained importance;
- v. that in the current economic crisis, the challenge is to develop and strengthen resistance and alternatives to dominant crisis politics and to promote a fundamental socio-ecological transformation;
- vi. how countering the hegemonic IML by transforming modes of living can be a starting point but that such transformation requires the blocking of unsustainable capital and state strategies.

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## Infrastructure

Darin Barney

As far as I know, the word *Infrastruktur* never appears in the writings of Karl Marx.

Marxists have sometimes substituted “infrastructure” for “base” in the famous “base and superstructure” couplet derived from the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*: “The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real basis (*Basis*) on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite form of social consciousness” (Marx 1972, see Wuthnow 1993). In popular usage, infrastructure tends to connote physical systems and structures, especially those that facilitate transportation, communication, and the provision of services, but its resonance with the Marxist category of *Basis* is instructive. Just as the economic base of society is comprised of material *relationships* – wage relations, property relations, class relations – as much as it is of material objects, contemporary infrastructure studies take for granted that the “peculiar ontology” of infrastructures “lies in the fact that they are things and also the relation between things” (Larkin 2003).

Infrastructure also bears the qualities of what Marx described as constant capital: “that part of capital which is represented by the means of production, by the raw material, auxiliary material and the instruments of labour [which] does not, in the

process of production, undergo any quantitative alteration of value” (Marx 1978, 202). Infrastructure is constant capital in the sense that it remains in place so that labour, which comes and goes, can continually or repeatedly generate value.

Together, these two oblique references suggest the defining characteristics of infrastructure.

The first is that infrastructures are social relationships *materialized*. Marx calls our attention to the manner in which capitalist relations are invested in, materialized as, and reproduced by infrastructure in the form of constant capital, but the same applies to nearly every other relationship of inequality, exploitation and domination we might wish to consider. It is not a coincidence that the recent turn to infrastructure in the social sciences and humanities was initiated by a feminist. When Susan Leigh Star describes infrastructure as “a substrate...part of the background for other kinds of work,” she implies the subordinate status of women – as providers of the reproductive and restorative labour that regenerates the productive labour (and citizenship) of men – that has persisted throughout modern western history (Leigh Star 1999, 38). Women, which is to say gender relations, were the first form of constant capital, the first infrastructure (Federici 2012). Similarly, relationships of exploitation and disparity between the Euro-American metropole and the Global South were and are materialized in infrastructures of slavery, colonial extraction, production, circulation, and the imposition of sovereign violence (Larkin 2008). Slavery, imperialism, and colonialism (including settler colonialism) operate by transforming racialized peoples and their geographies into infrastructure (Jabari Salamanca 2016). Infrastructures are thus social relations in material form, and so are a primary site for materialist analysis.

The second defining characteristic of infrastructure, suggested by its status as *constant* capital, is a temporal orientation towards repetition, continuity and duration. Infrastructure is what is expected. It is memory made concrete. In satisfying expectations, infrastructure recedes into the invisibility of routine. This is true even in settings where a lack of certain kinds of infrastructure has, itself, become infrastructural (Simone 2004). In this sense, infrastructure reifies, transforming the

social relations it embodies into things that appear to be *just there*, beyond the social and outside history.

Nevertheless, infrastructure remains irreducibly political, because it distributes and concentrates resources and advantage, enables and disables mobility (including migration), organizes spatial and temporal relations, and manifests inequality and power. Under conditions variously named globalization, neoliberalism, and the network society, infrastructure is the medium by which capital becomes the state, and by which the state accomplishes itself as an organizer of flows and bases of identity (Easterling 2014). Our friends The Invisible Committee are helpful here:

What is it that appears on euro banknotes? Not human figures, not emblems of a personal sovereignty, but bridges, aqueducts and arches [...] As to the truth about the present nature of power, every European has a printed exemplar of it in their pocket. It can be stated in this way: power now resides in the infrastructures of this world [...]. Contemporary laws are written with steel structures and not with words [...]. [P]ower consists in infrastructures, in the means to make them function, to control them and build them. (Invisible Committee 2015, 83-85).

Herein lies one of the many contradictions that constitute infrastructure as historical and political, as opposed to merely technical. In one sense, infrastructure recedes into the invisibility, repetition, and durability of routine, reifying and concealing the contingent social relations it materializes. This is its primary function vis-à-vis capital. However, there are also occasions when infrastructure becomes punctual, when it stands out and is made visible, even thematized. This happens when states and their capitalist partners explicitly invoke infrastructural innovation, renovation and expansion as proof of their legitimacy and promote infrastructure as an object of ideological investment. It happens when public or collective systems of social infrastructure (schools, hospitals, parks, the wireless spectrum, etc.) are withdrawn from the commons and privatized or commodified. It also happens in moments of infrastructural failure – blackout, interruption of service, delayed connection, decay, unexpected detour – when the social relations materialized by

infrastructure are suddenly exposed (Bennett 2005). Such failures are often technical, but they can also be political, as when the gap between infrastructural forces and infrastructural relations is made sensible through political action.

This suggests a third defining characteristic of infrastructure: it is dialectical, a medium of transformative, and even revolutionary, potential (Boyer 2017). Infrastructures are the prevailing social relations materialized, and they contain all the contradictions characteristic of those relations, contradictions that can burst forth at any moment. This means that infrastructure is a medium of political struggle, a struggle over which relationships will repeat, continue and endure in material form which will be contested, and a struggle over the possibility of alternative relationships and infrastructures. As Deborah Cowen observes, infrastructures materialize both empire and resistance:

Infrastructure connects a range of political conflicts which might otherwise seem disparate and discrete: crises surrounding the rights of refugees and the provision of asylum in a world of thickening borders; crises of indigenous peoples' lands and sovereignty in the face of transnational extractive industries; crises regarding local livelihoods in an economy organized through speed and flexibility in trade across vast distances; crises of water infrastructure in Black and Indigenous communities; crises of police and carceral violence that breed profound distrust in the core institutions of the state for communities of color. At the center of these struggles are the [infrastructural] systems engineered to order social and natural worlds (Cowen 2017).

The line that joins the struggles of indigenous peoples, poor migrants, precarious workers, and incarcerated Black populations is the organization of inequality and capitalist power by infrastructure. In its materiality, infrastructure gathers resistant, fugitive political experiences and energies that might otherwise tend towards fragmentation, isolation and dissipation. As the class struggle composes itself, it is likely that infrastructure will be a key medium of that composition.

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There are several ways of approaching the question of universality in Marx. And it is impossible to do this without considering, at the same time, some implications that Marxism has had for this concept. The starting point can only be negative: what universality is not.

The concept of universality has often been superimposed on that of universal history. In this way, it is the universal character of the concept of history that also guarantees the normative character of political universalism. An example in the liberal field is gradualism, according to which there is a universal concept of freedom, which, however universal, remains trapped in the gap between the latent universal and its actualization. From this perspective, entire populations can be kept in the “waiting room of history,” (Chakrabarty 2000) waiting to be ready for freedom. In the Marxist field, we find a similar conception. Pivoting on a stadial conception of universal history, non-capitalist modes of production and non-state political forms have been defined as pre-capitalist, pre-modern and pre-political. Marxism of the Second and Third International, pursuant to a normative philosophy of history, set itself the task of accelerating the phases towards the final stage of socialism, thereby justifying the destruction of the rural forms of self-government and imposing on so-called backward countries an ordeal through the

historical stages that lead to socialism. Thus, a crash course towards capitalism was imposed on rural, as well as other, populations, generating conflicts and frictions still visible today.

Another way of understanding universalism emphasizes its polemical nature. If capital produces its own universalism in terms of abstract labor, commodification, and exploitation, alternative universality would take shape in reactive and polemical terms, by generalizing the common condition of exploited as constituting a common front against a common enemy. This type of universalism was at the basis of the holy war against imperialism declared by Zinoviev at the Baku Congress in 1920. This concept of the universal overcomes local differences by producing identity pursuant to its juxtaposition to another universal. A long tradition of Western Marxism held that the struggle against imperialism or the real universality of capital already constituted the common ground for the universalism of the oppressed. But what this universalism does is to conceal differences in the name of a binary opposition toward a bad universal to be fought. Unless one ascertains that those differences re-emerge in inverse proportion to the intensity of the polemical opposition put in place between universals.

This does not mean that we must give up on universality. It means that we must free it from the philosophy of history and from the binary oppositions in which it is bridled. It means, in part, that we must also free it from the excess of theory that imprisons it in those binary oppositions and, instead, begin digging into the real historical material. This can be done by actually looking at Marx from the margins, without “the master-key of a general historic-philosophical theory, whose supreme virtue consists in being supra-historical” (Shanin 1983, 136).

A double move can be made starting from Marx and the tradition that refers to his name. A first move was made by Vera Zasulich when, on February 16, 1881, she wrote to Marx to ask his opinion on the Russian rural communities. According to the Russian Marxists, these communities constituted an obstacle to progress towards socialism and, therefore, deserved to disappear or be destroyed. Marx replied that his theory “provides no reasons either for or against the vitality of the Russian

commune. But the special study I have made of it [...] has convinced me that the commune is the fulcrum for social regeneration in Russia” (Shanin, 124). Marx showed himself to be closer to the populists than to the Marxists. This letter was hidden by Plekhanov so that one of the possibilities opened by Marx and the communist tradition was marginalized. But this underground current was not entirely quashed. It continued to flow and to conflict with the dominant current.

Indeed, it is possible to bridge Marx’s letter to Zasulich with another letter – that written on October 24, 1956 by Aimé Césaire to Maurice Thorez, who, at the time, was the secretary of the French Communist Party. In that letter, Césaire denounced the paternalism of the Communist Party’s members, “their inveterate assimilationism; their unconscious chauvinism; their fairly simplistic faith, which they share with bourgeois Europeans, in the omnilateral superiority of the West; their belief that evolution as it took place in Europe is the only evolution possible, the only kind desirable, the kind the world must undergo” (Césaire 2000, 149). Finally, denouncing the “emaciated universalism” that suppresses the multiplicity of particular and alternative paths of development, Aimé Césaire presented an alternative vision of universalism, based on solidarity that respects the particulars. With that letter Aimé Césaire announced his resignation from the Party. It is along these different coordinates and with these letters, which are all the while political statements, that the legacy of insurgent universality takes shape.

Insurgent universality is an experiment with time, space, and politics. If one casts off the dogma of the philosophy of universal history, the enormous political and economic material that constitutes the present ceases to be organized in terms of advanced, backward or residual forms. Rather, it becomes an interweaving of temporalities that recombine in the moment of an insurgency. As happened in Russia with the rural commune when populists and Socialist Revolutionaries tried to combine the forms of local self-government and collective ownership of the peasant communities with the workers’ councils. As was the case during the Paris Commune when the Communards referred to “archaic” and medieval forms of local self-government to reconfigure them in a socialist sense. These experiments must be

investigated not in the abstract, but by digging through the temporal layers of existent historical material.

Insurgent universality is an experiment that, by creating new institutions and re-activating others from the past, reconfigures political space. Its scale is neither the nation nor world democracy. Its universalism is not given by spatial extent, but by a way of practicing politics. It is about the third institutional dimension beyond the binary opposition of constituent and constituted power. It is not stuck in the reaction to power.

If universalism is potentially valid for everyone, even those who do not want to be subsumed, as, historically, the Russian peasants during the revolution and the non-European populations during anti-colonial struggles were, the insurgent universality is open to anyone who questions his or her position in a given order and acts to change the entire order.

The logic of the former universalism is still colonial. It presupposes unity to produce new unity. And this always depends dialectically on an alterity towards which it must be possible to trace exclusions and juxtapositions. Insurgent universality, instead, has freed itself from this obsession with unity and with -isms. It is an experiment with the democratic excess of the plurality of powers. And it is the incompleteness of this experiment, not the experiment in itself, that is shared. This is the meaning of the beautiful image given to us by the Zapatistas in their 1996 *Fourth Declaration*: “The world we want is one where many worlds fit.” Insurgent universality begins with this plurality of worlds, authority, and forms of self-government; it begins with equal access to politics in the form of assemblies and groups; it begins with the Communard’s universalization of politics and property.

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## Intellectual Property

Felix Stalder

Marx has never, to the best of my knowledge, dealt directly with intellectual property, which is the relations and dynamics of ownership established through copyright, patent and trademark law. Rather, he focused on science, in particular on what we would call today "research and development" (R&D), which is those elements of techno-scientific innovation most directly related to the production process. He understood science as a social phenomenon organized under capitalism as wage labor, like most other activities in the production process. This, to some degree, reflects the historical circumstances of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The distinction between basic and applied science was not yet fully developed, and the copyright industries were economically relatively insignificant and trademarks barely established.

Still, within a broadly Marxist viewpoint, three main perspectives can be mobilized to help understand the current role that intellectual property plays, both in the expansion of capitalism as well as in challenges to it: *accumulation by dispossession*, *alienated labor*, and *general intellect*.

The notion of "accumulation by dispossession" was recently introduced by David Harvey as a way to re-conceptualize Marx's treatment of "original" or "primitive



accumulation”, the process by which resources came under the control of capital for the first time. As Marx pointed out, this was often a violent process, because most of the time the resources in question were embedded in preexisting social relationships that had to be broken-up by capital in order to accumulate them. The waves of enclosures that transformed the countryside in Great Britain during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century is an often-cited example of this. Land, previously organized by villagers as commons, was converted into private property, often for grazing sheep to produce wool for the textile industries. In this process, villagers were expelled from the land and forced into the city, entering the capitalist economy as proletarians. Similarly, the destruction of existing social relationships as a precondition for accumulation was a major incitation of colonialism. For Marx this was a one-time process, setting the stage for capitalist expansion. Harvey, on the other hand, stresses that this is an ongoing process and a core element of capitalism in all of its periods, including the present one. One of the means by which this process is carried out today is the establishment of new IP rights. As Harvey notes,

wholly new mechanisms of accumulation by dispossession have ... opened up. The emphasis upon intellectual property rights in the WTO negotiations (the so-called TRIPS agreement) points to ways in which the patenting and licensing of genetic materials, seed plasmas, and all manner of other products, can now be used against whole populations whose environmental management practices have played a crucial role in the development of those materials. Biopiracy is rampant and the pillaging of the world's stockpile of genetic resources is well under way. (Harvey 2004)

IP, then, plays an important role in the expansion of capitalism by converting concrete and embodied knowledge – often produced and cultivated by communities without any notion of individual ownership – into privately-held assets. This is, again, a violent process, and IP can be understood as enacting “epistemic violence”, that is, providing categories for conceptualizing the world that devalue other epistemic orders and their respective definition of cultures, people and ways of being. For example, by recognizing exclusively individual ownership and denying all rights based on communal production and care. Major struggles by local farmers and

indigenous communities have erupted all over the world. Since 2003 in Peru, NGOs and the government have been fighting against “biopiracy” by US and Japanese companies that were granted patents for medicinal properties of the Maca root, known for centuries to the local population. In 2012 additional patents were sought by Chinese companies, forcing new, complex and costly legal battles upon the Peruvian government. Despite a few cases, in which patents were withdrawn (such as an infamous US patent on “Basmati rice lines and grains”), such an accumulation by dispossession through IP law is generally successful strategy for expanding capitalism.

The second notion relevant to contemporary practices of IP is “alienated labor”. For Marx, alienation, most generally, is the result of the separation of the product from the producer, highlighting a major difference between artisanal and industrial work. In the first case, the artisan sells the product of his/her labor, whereas the industrial worker sells his/her labor-power and has no claims on the products of his/her labor. The notion of alienation might seem ill-fitting in respect to intellectual property and in particular to copyright. In liberal theory, copyright is understood as a way of establishing a strong relationship between producer (author) and product (work). In the continental European (*droit d'auteur*) tradition, this link is supposed to be unbreakable as certain claims, such as the right to be named as author and to have the integrity of the work respected, are inalienable. The more utilitarian Anglo-Saxon copyright, on the other hand, contains the notion of “works for hire” on which the original author loses all rights to the work by selling his labor power.

In practice, however, such legalistic differences are mostly negligible. In most cases, producers of copyrighted works produce them under contractual frameworks which transfer all rights to their employers. Or, they find themselves in such an uneven relationship with the copyright industries that their contractual freedom is mostly formal, and their capacity to negotiate favorable terms eventually is limited to that of any person who needs to sell his or her labor power to survive.

In contrast to “dispossession” and “alienation”, notions which are well-developed and relatively straightforward, the concept of the “general intellect” is much more fragmentary. It became widely discussed only recently, most importantly by post-workerist theories of cognitive capitalism (Virno 2001). Marx used it only once, in *Grundrisse* (Notebook VII), where he briefly sketches the importance of distributed knowledge which he sees embodied in the “social individual” (that is, the person as a set of capacities which are produced socially, for example, through education), in machinery and in advanced forms of social organization. At some point, when the capital and knowledge embedded in machinery, and in the processes of their use, passes a certain threshold, simple wage labor, measured by the hour, is no longer adequate to measure the value produced. The separation of production and reproduction, typical for the industrial organization of labor, breaks down and the workers’ full social and intellectual capacity come into play.

In this transformation, it is neither the direct human labour he himself performs, nor the time during which he works, but rather the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery over it by virtue of his presence as a social body – it is, in a word, the development of the social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth.

This, however, produces a contradiction, as Marx noted immediately.

On the one side, then, [capital] calls to life all the powers of science and of nature, as of social combination and of social intercourse, in order to make the creation of wealth independent (relatively) of the labour time employed on it. On the other side, it wants to use labour time as the measuring rod for the giant social forces thereby created, and to confine them within the limits required to maintain the already created value as value.

The sources of value creation are no longer limited to the time and place of work but extend across all aspects of social life. The means of confining these social forces is intellectual property law. It allows the attribution of products of a

collective social process to a single person and transforms them into commodities that can be produced or acquired by capital. The hours invested in the production process are no longer the basis for the value of the product. The assignment of value becomes more fluid, allowing the high-skilled labor under cognitive capitalism more freedom, whereas exploitation intensifies for low-skilled labor. However, intellectual property can confine, yet it cannot resolve the contradiction.

Building on an understanding that productive forces, at least partially, now depend on distributed cooperation, mass intellectuality, and social life in its entirety, a diverse set of social movements are working towards resolving this contradiction in favor of post-capitalist forms of production, a peer-to-peer economy based around the sharing of free knowledge, tools and social forms of cooperation. (Bauwens et al. 2017). The resurgences of the holistic notion of the commons, re-articulated in respect to knowledge resources and urban space, points to the ambition of these movements and the depth of their challenge by overcoming certain forms of private property and social organization built on top of it. (Vercellone et al. 2015). However, capitalist actors, too, not only try to confine but resolve the contradiction between collective sources of creativity and the private form of intellectual property necessary for its appropriation. They drop the distinction between production and reproduction. They do so by providing infrastructures that are enabling collective dynamics through “sharing” and “collaboration” across all domains of social life. These infrastructures, however, are optimized to extract data from unpaid social (re)production and to extract surplus by manipulating these dynamics (through advertising and platform design) in their favor. In effect, this doesn’t solve but merely displaces the contradiction from the area of intellectual property, to that of control over data.

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## Intersectionality

Birgit Sauer

Feminist theory since the 19<sup>th</sup> century criticized inequality and power relations between women and men, the exclusion of women from labour markets, from social and political citizenship, from political decision-making and from cultural organisations. The political aim of the women's movements around the globe was and still is to overcome structures, institutions, norms and discourses responsible for the discrimination of women. The gendered division of labour in capitalist societies, i.e. the inequality between wage labour and unpaid, privatised care work, but also inequality due to the generativity of women (for instance reproductive rights), family legislation and social policies, have been identified as sources of gender discrimination.

Marxist-feminist theories of the early second-wave feminism since the 1970s were aware of the "unhappy marriage" between Marxism and feminism (Hartmann 1979); Marxist theory has been side-lining women's political claims and women's interests by identifying them as secondary in the struggle to overcome capitalist exploitation and domination; patriarchy was seen as a "side", or secondary, contradiction of capitalist societies. Nevertheless, early Marxist-feminist theorists (e.g. Eisenstein 1979) paved the way to integrate gender domination in a critical analysis of capitalist production and class struggle by highlighting the role of the family in

capitalist reproduction. These concepts stressed the analytical interconnectedness of class and gender and demanded an emancipatory strategy targeting both class and gender for tackling their domination.

Black feminists in the US since the 1980s criticized race discrimination and claimed that anti-racism is important for any emancipatory theory and strategy (hooks 1982; Combahee River Collective 1995/1978). Referring to this literature, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) coined the term “intersectionality” by using the metaphor of intersecting axes of inequality. The concept of intersectionality suggests the inextricable interconnectedness of different forms of discrimination and oppression – due to gender, race, class, but also sexuality, age, and religion. These structures of discrimination – and privilege – are mutually constitutive and impact on identities and social positions of people. To move beyond a “mono-categorical perspective” (Collins 2015, 5) and to develop strategies of emancipation, the interrelatedness and reciprocity need to be recognized, conceptualized and analysed. Prioritizing one of these structures of domination and social inequality – be it sexism, patriarchy, racism, classism, capitalist exploitation, or homophobia – prevents a full understanding of power constellations. Patricia Hill Collins (1986, 20) refers to this complexity as a “matrix of domination”.

Hence, the concept of intersectionality highlights the concurrence of structures of domination without claiming that they can be reduced to one cause. However, feminist theories of intersectionality claim that discrimination due to gender, class, race, and sexuality are shaped in new ways in western modernity, i.e. since the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the emergence of a capitalist mode of production and bourgeois societies. Intersectionality also points to differences between women and challenges the notion of a homogeneous group of women with similar interests.

While by the early 2000s a “blizzard” of publications on intersectionality occurred, one of the burning questions remained unanswered: *how* do the different structures of domination and inequality interact? In order to develop intersectionality as an analytical concept Leslie McCall (2005) identifies three different approaches: an anticategorical or deconstructive approach, an intracategorical approach, which

analyses only intersections within one category, and an intercategorical approach to interlocking systems of discrimination and power, focusing on the whole complexity of intersections. While the latter is the most advanced approach, the others are also able to highlight how domination and inequality interact.

Politically, the concept of intersectionality criticizes identity politics and suggests alliances between different emancipatory and social justice movements – women’s and queer movements, anti-racist movements, and organisations of the worker’s movements such as trade unions and leftist parties. Political intersectionality therefore also suggests that ‘sisterhood’ as a political strategy of different groups of women is possible.

However, recently also exclusionary forms of intersectionality are used in political discourse – especially in order to exclude migrants in western societies: the intersection of gender and religion, for instance, is instrumentalised by right-wing actors for blaming Muslim men who are constructed as not fitting to western societies due to their patriarchal attitudes.

Moreover, the concept of intersectionality is reflected in anti-discrimination policies, such as the European Union anti-discrimination directives, implemented since the turn of the century. EU regulations target the “big six” forms of discrimination – gender, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, age, race or ethnic origin. Class is missing in the EU world – as social equality is seen as a problem of the member states. Criticism of intersectionality uses this example to suggest that the concept serves a neoliberal agenda and side-lines feminist and class struggles – a just critique especially in times of austerity and authoritarianism in the EU and some of its member states.

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## Jacobinism

James Ingram

What are we to make of the stubborn association, even confusion, of Marxism and Jacobinism? From Jacob Talmon to François Furet, enemies of the two tendencies have long insisted on conflating them in order to condemn them together (Talmon 1952; Furet 1991). This equation of Jacobinism with Marxism – extended to their historical trajectories, so that Robespierre equals Lenin equals Stalin – has been wielded by critics to discredit not just Communism as a continuation of the Revolutionary Terror, but, beyond that, any project of radical social transformation (Losurdo 2015). Pointing to Marx's many explicit criticisms of the Jacobins has never been enough to dispel this error. My proposal is that the misidentification persists because it contains deeper truths concerning Marx the author and Marxism as a historical-political project, which always remained, despite themselves, in a sense deeply Jacobin.

A basic difficulty in refuting the misidentification of Marxism with Jacobinism is that the latter existed *sensu stricto* only from 1789 to 1794, with the Society of the Friends of the Constitution and the Friends of Liberty and Equality. Ever since, Jacobinism has lived on as a ghostly inspiration, a recurrent desire to take up the spirit of the French Revolution that has assumed diverse and sometimes contradictory forms, from conspiratorial radicalism (Babeuf, Buonarroti, Blanqui) to the

triumphant republicanism of the Third French Republic (Vovelle 1999). While the outlines of a Jacobin political philosophy can be assembled from the writings of Robespierre and Saint-Just, its canon consists of occasional writings composed on the fly, under the pressure of events. Reconstructions by its many critics and fewer supporters nonetheless converge on a number of core commitments.

As a doctrine, Jacobinism is rationalist, individualist, and humanist. It combines ethical idealism and a belief in the paramountcy of citizen virtue with republicanism and patriotism, a basis in natural law and natural rights (including the right to property) with legalism and constitutionalism, and strong universalism with an equally strong insistence on popular sovereignty. Jacobinism seeks the broadest possible freedom and equality *now*, with the state as the indispensable agent of the popular will. As a politics, it represents an attempt to conquer the state and use it to transform society on behalf of the people (Guilhaumou 2002). In its content as well as its tactics, Jacobinism is an expression of what Marx in *On the Jewish Question* called ‘political emancipation,’ carried to its most radical conclusions. Insofar as Marx’s work, beginning in 1843, develops out of a critique of the limits and contradictions of this political emancipation (along with natural rights, bourgeois citizenship, civic equality, etc.), Jacobinism represents the negative foundation on which ‘Marxism’ was built.

Yet it would hardly be Marxist to stop at criticizing this ideology and program in ideological or even programmatic terms. For Marx and Engels, Jacobinism, and indeed the French Revolution as a whole, were of interest as historical phenomena and incomplete anticipations of the communist revolution to come. They accordingly considered these phenomena diagnostically, finding in them lessons for future struggles. In the references to ‘Jacobinism’ scattered throughout their texts of the 1840s and after, the term functions as shorthand principally for two things: the ‘bourgeois revolution,’ undertaken to throw off the feudal estates and the absolutist state; and the attempt to force by political means a revolutionary change for which the social bases have not yet been laid – a usage often conjoined with, or replaced by, ‘Babouvism’ and, after 1848, ‘Blanquism’.

In both respects, Jacobinism amounts to what could be called *politicism*: the (false) belief that politics alone, in the form of state power wielded by a revolutionary elite, can impose freedom and equality on society from above. Jacobins (Babouvists, Blanquists, etc.) identify with the cause of ‘the people’ and aim to wield state power on their behalf, yet they cannot do so because they lack a proper understanding of, and practical relation to, the social forces on which, as Marx discovered, all politics is based. Thus, even when these revolutionaries in a sense speak for the popular classes and seek to advance their interests – in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* Marx calls the Blanquists the “only real leaders of the proletarian party” (Marx 1990, 15) – they will do so in vain, ending at best in the violent flailing against society that marked the original revolutionary Terror (Higonnet 2006).

This is why for Marx Jacobinism, however left, popular, radical, or democratic it becomes, remains ‘bourgeois’: it envisions a messianic redemption of the popular classes through the heroic intervention of a revolutionary elite, a wise and virtuous force outside and above the masses. As great as Marxism’s ideological and programmatic distance from Jacobinism is, the underlying divide between them concerns the relationship of politics to history. Contra Robespierre or Saint-Just, Babeuf, Buonarroti, or Blanqui, Marx understood the coming revolution as consisting not simply of seizing the helm of a bourgeois revolution and steering it further, as the Jacobins had tried and failed to do, but of making a revolution on new social bases. The crucial Marxist departure from the Jacobin tradition is the idea that revolution must somehow grow out of society itself. Politically, this means that the emancipation of the proletariat can only be the work of the proletariat.

Yet critics like Talmon and Furet are not entirely wrong to associate Marxism and Jacobinism, even if they are, textually speaking, incorrect. This is not because of any doctrinal filiation between the two projects, whose understandings of rights, nature, individualism, and the state are irreconcilable. What they have in common is rather a *problem*, which Marxism inherits from Jacobinism and neither has been able to solve: the problem of conjugating politics and history, of making a revolution not simply *within* but *ahead of* history. For, despite all the efforts of Marx, Engels, and their later interpreters to turn Marx’s thought into a philosophy or a

science, its revolutionary element always consisted in the imperative of *accelerating* history, of standing at the limit of present possibilities and giving history a push.

For this reason, the depiction of Lenin as the growth of a Marxian seedling that had been germinating since Robespierre – essentially the analysis that Furet inherits from a century of anti-Marxism – is not just the expression of an anti-revolutionary ideology, even if it is that as well. It points to the question of *revolutionary politics*, and specifically of using force and vanguardist agency to bring about social change. This is why it is ultimately insufficient to draw a line between a good (democratic) Marx and a bad (Jacobin) Lenin, even if this, too, is not exactly wrong. To be sure, Luxemburg and Trotsky denounced the Bolsheviks' 'Jacobinism,' as did Gramsci in the early 1920s (even if he reversed his position under the sign of Machiavelli in the 1930s), while Lenin was happy to don the Jacobin mantle (Löwy 2005, chapter 4). But it is clear that Marx himself was quite open to overthrowing the old society by political means, with the quintessentially Jacobin instruments of a party (even if it was to have no interests other than those of the working class) and a state (even if it was to be swiftly converted into a dictatorship of the proletariat, and then to wither away once its work was done).

Marxists have never entirely disarmed the question of Jacobinism, then, because this question, precisely as that of the *political* form of a *social* revolution, has always been internal to Marxism as a revolutionary project. What makes Marxism in most of its varieties 'Jacobin' is its *untimeliness*, its commitment to a transformation for which society has never been ready. To the extent that 'forcing' such a transformation on society by means of a party and a state was for Marx the deeper content of Jacobinism, he never ceased being, despite himself, a kind of Jacobin. It is therefore hardly surprising that Marxist or Marxian thinkers today who seek to revive its revolutionary impetus (Žižek in Robespierre 2012; Dean 2015; Hallward 2009) have done so by taking up such Jacobin motifs as sovereignty, the party, virtue, and the will of the people.

This is the deeper truth behind the last major public battle waged over Marxism, Jacobinism, and the legacy of the French Revolution, which took place between

Furet and Michel Vovelle, the distinguished Communist historian and Chair of the History of the French Revolution at the Sorbonne, on the bicentennial of the French Revolution. Since 1989, commentators have awarded a decisive victory to Furet, as seems to be confirmed by the global hegemony of (neo)liberalism over the subsequent decades (Kaplan 1995). Yet here the sort of historical reserve Zhou Enlai counselled concerning the French Revolution is advisable. For what was really at stake in this contest, as both Furet and Vovelle saw, was not simply Jacobinism but rather the question of revolution *as a question*. Furet sought to close the question, to put a definitive end to the Revolution; Vovelle sought to keep it open. The current state of the ideology and world order Furet hoped to enshrine as an unsurpassable horizon, liberal capitalism, may be enough to suggest that it is still too soon to say who will turn out to have been right.

Where the Jacobin and anti-Jacobin agree is that a sort of Jacobinism will persist in Marxian politics as long as there is a will not to submit to the logic of evolution and reform, but to use political action to escape the apparent fatalities of history. But any attempt to revive the link between Jacobinism and Marxism – in Vovelle's sense, as a question that can and must remain open – must be subject to a distinctly Marxist kind of critical-historical labor. Latter-day Jacobin Marxists cannot simply reverse the signs and dig up the legacy of the French Revolution where the liberals would bury it. Instead, they should follow Marx and draw all the lessons from the Jacobin (Bolshevik, Maoist...) failures. For Marx the task was to explore how and why Jacobinism was unable meet the challenges of its day and ill-equipped to meet those of his. There are good practical-historical as well as theoretical reasons for not trusting the party or the state as the expression of a unified popular will, believing in natural rights that need only be given constitutional form, or imagining a neat reconciliation of national sovereignty and universal emancipation. If the question of revolution is one we inherit from Marx as he did from the Jacobins, it is one for which twenty-first century answers will have to be found.

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## Judenfrage

Ido de Haan

In the Spring of 1843, the Young Hegelian Bruno Bauer published two articles on "Die Judenfrage", which were an intervention in a then current debate on the promise and limits of Jewish emancipation, as well as a step in the critique of Hegel's ideas on the state, religion and civil society (Bauer 1843a; 1843b). Responding to Hegel's idea that the state had replaced organized religion as the embodiment of ethical life, the Young Hegelians tried to overcome the Hegelian limitation of a sacralized state without an ethically organized civil society. Bauer and his pupil Karl Marx were therefore first of all concerned with a critique of religion. In order to enjoy a truly rational freedom, humanity should reject not only the Christian state, but also the religious prejudices within society. Their aim to propagate these ideas in a new journal, devoted to atheism, came to nothing, and in 1842, shortly after Marx had followed Bauer to the University of Bonn, the latter was dismissed from the university because of his subversive ideas, leaving Marx without a mentor and forcing him out of academia. Marx accepted a position as an editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* which made him the pivot of radical thought in Germany. It brought him into conflict with the Prussian censor, but also led to a growing distance from Bauer as a result of the latter's support to *Die Freien*. This was a group of radical critics of religion, whose manuscript Marx refused to publish, not only because Marx no longer believed in religion as a subject in its own right,



but also because he feared anti-religious tracts would anger the authorities and endanger the *Rheinische Zeitung* (Rosen 1977, 131-132; Stedman Jones 2011, 564). Marx's response to Bauer in "Zur Judenfrage", published in February 1844 in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, confirmed that mentor and pupil had gone different ways, but it also revealed a crucial divide between a cultural and a social-economic critique that remains a festering wound in leftist thought to the present day.

First of all, "Zur Judenfrage" was a highly controversial contribution to the debate on Jewish emancipation. The essay still preoccupies Marx commentators today. Some see it as testimony to the messianic core of the Marxist program. In this vein, Karl Löwith argued that it "is the old Jewish messianism and prophetism – unaltered by two thousand years of economic history from handicraft to large-scale industry – and Jewish insistence on absolute righteousness which explains the idealistic basis of Marx's materialism" (Löwith 1949, 44). This interpretation was first presented by the French Bernard Lazare, who in *L'antisemitisme. Son histoire et ses causes* (1894) had argued that Marx was a "talmudiste qui fit de la sociologie [...] animé de ce vieux materialisme hébraïque." (Lazare 1894, 346). As a Jew, he occupied one of the two poles of capitalist society: "À Rothschild correspondent Marx et Lassalle; au combat pour l'argent, le combat contre l'argent, et le cosmopolitisme de l'agitateur devient l'internationalisme prolétarien et révolutionnaire." (Lazare 1894, 343). Even though Lazare and others after him were right to point out that many Jews were attracted to the socialist movement, there is according to Enzo Traverso, one of the more recent commentators on Marx and the Jewish Question, nothing in Marx's predominantly Lutheran and liberal cultural background that would justify the assumption of some millenarian *Wahlverwandschaft* between his program and Jewish eschatology (Traverso 1997, 38-9).

However, the reference of Lazare to two poles of Jewish involvement in capitalism points to another interpretation of Marx's "Zur Judenfrage", as a manifestation of leftist antisemitism (and in so far as Marx had adopted this position, a symptom of Jewish self-hate). Especially in the final part of the essay, in which he claimed to reveal "the actual, worldly Jew, not the *Sabbath Jew*, as Bauer does, but the *everyday Jew*", Marx uses classical antisemitic tropes: "What is the worldly religion of the

Jews? *Huckstering* [der Schacher]. What is his worldly god? *Money*." (Marx 1843, 169-170). The final sentence of "Zur Judenfrage" sounds positively horrifying: "The social emancipation of the Jew is the *emancipation of society from Judaism*." (Marx 1843, 174). With this position, Marx fell into step with earlier socialists, like Charles Fourier, who had argued that "the Jew is, so to speak, a traitor by definition" (quoted in Silberner 1946, 248). It had an ominous resonance in the work of later social critics, such as the German Otto Glagau, who in the 1870s blamed the Jews for the collapse of the European stock exchange markets in 1873, and in *Deutsches Handwerk und historisches Bürgertum* (1879) argued that "die soziale Frage ist die Judenfrage", calling upon all working men to unite against exploitation and the degradation of human labor, particularly against the hateful domination of "a foreign race" (Volkov 2012, 86). Together with Wilhelm Marr, who had introduced the term 'antisemitism' in *Der Weg zum Siege des Germanenthums über das Judenthum* (1880), Glagau became a central figure in the antisemitic movement of the 1880s, described by the leading German socialist, August Bebel, as "der Sozialismus der dummen Kerls" (Battini 2016, 7).

At first sight, though, Marx appears to sketch a more benign perspective for Jews, at least more promising than Bauer's outlook. The latter's essays were a response to the spread of Jewish emancipation decrees in the German lands. After the Austrian Toleration Patent which Emperor Joseph II issued in 1782, and the emancipation of the French Jews in 1791, Jews had received equal citizenship (*Staatsbürgerschaft*) in the French-occupied Confederation of the Rhine, but also in Prussia (1812), Württemberg (1828), Hessen (1833) and Hannover (1842). Each of these decrees were contested: in 1808, Napoleon issued his so-called Infamous Decree, restricting their rights, no longer on the grounds of religious intolerance, but on the basis of public order, which Jews were said to disturb by their role as money lenders and their apparent nuisance to non-Jewish society. At the Congress of Vienna Jewish emancipation was also a controversial issue, leading to an article in the constitution of the German Confederation of 1815 declaring that its "Federal Assembly will deliberate on how in the most uniform way possible the civic improvement of those confessing the Jewish faith in Germany is to be effected", yet until an agreement was reached "those confessing this faith will retain the rights already

granted to them in the individual federal states” (translation by Vick 2014: 185). The formulation of the article indicates the influence of Christian Wilhelm Dohm’s *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (1781), which gave a strong impetus to Jewish emancipation, yet framed it in terms of their “civil improvement”, suggesting that emancipation could only succeed in combination with a civilizing mission.

Bauer intervenes in this debate with a scathing criticism of the ambition to emancipate the Jews by granting them equal citizenship. While Christianity was able to adapt to the separation of state and church by privatizing religious practices, Jews could only be emancipated by rejecting Judaism altogether. The reason was that Christianity, notably in its Protestant manifestation, was based on faith, which was ultimately private, while the Jewish religion was based on law and therefore irreducibly public: “Der Jude z.B. müßte aufgehört haben, Jude zu sein, wenn er sich durch sein Gesetz nicht verhindern läßt, seine Pflichten gegen den Staat und seine Mitbürger zu erfüllen, also z.B. am Sabbat in die Deputiertenkammer geht und an den öffentlichen Verhandlungen teilnimmt.” (Bauer 1843a, 65). Reminiscent of contemporary arguments against dual nationality and of the suspicion that Muslims in Western Europe would give priority to the Quran over the constitution, Bauer argued that Jewish emancipation is a sham, because Jews would be unable to prefer the state laws over their own Covenant without giving up their Jewishness.

Marx criticized Bauer for presenting a theological argument, differentiating between Jews and Christians, yet failing to reflect on the notion of ‘political emancipation’ as the separation between a public sphere of the state, and a private sphere of civil society. Marx proposed to “break with the theological formulation of the question” (Marx 1843a, 169) and to understand the Jewish question as an expression of the “general question of the time”, namely the relation between political and human emancipation (Marx 1843a, 149; see Peled 1992). Political emancipation, expressed first of all in the separation of Church and State, makes religion an instance of “the spirit of *civil society*, of the sphere of egoism, of *bellum omnium contra omnes*. It is no longer the essence of *community*, but the essence of *difference*.” (Marx 1843a, 155). Political emancipation is therefore only a halfway-house: the

Hegelian ethical state remains incomplete as long as civil society is divided by both privatized religion (already initiated by the Reformation) and by private interest. The “Jewish question” thus revealed the “sophistry of the political state itself”: political emancipation resulted in a bourgeois, dressed in “the political lion’s skin” of the “citoyen” (Marx 1843a, 154). Political emancipation covered the material inequality of civil society, which only could be overcome by a truly human emancipation.

The arguments in “Zur Judenfrage” have often been interpreted as contributions to Marx’s general intellectual development, preparing his *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law* (1844) and his *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845), both written shortly after “Zur Judenfrage”. From that perspective, Marx’s remarks on Jews were merely illustrations of a more general point, or as Marx states: the sophistry of the state is “not personal” (Marx 1843a, 154). However, it seems that more than a simple illustration of a philosophical point is going on in Marx’s poisonous remarks, such as his claim that “the Jew has emancipated himself in a Jewish manner, not only because he has acquired financial power, but also because, through him and also apart from him, money has become a world power and the practical Jewish spirit has become the practical spirit of the Christian nations.” (Marx 1843, 170).

Firstly, these qualifications belie the claim that Marx wants to analyze the Jewish question from a social point of view, that is, of the material interests within civil society. As Traverso observes, Marx took a very partial view of the role of Jews in European society, assuming that all were rich merchants, disregarding the millions of poor rural Jews in Eastern Europe. The *Ostjuden* not only failed to fit the picture Marx drew, but also developed their own brand of “Bundist” socialism, which entertained more messianic elements than Marxism ever did (Traverso 1997, 60-76).

Secondly, the centrality of the Jewish question in Marx’s analysis of the sophistry of the political state draws the attention to a persistent tension in leftist thought between cultural identities and social interests. This has always been a contested issue, from Otto Bauer’s rejection of a “naïve cosmopolitanism” in the socialist movement, drawing attention to “the fact that the workers are also *national*” (Bauer

2000, 417–420), to Tony Judt’s lament that the leftist movement since the 1960s had abandoned their social responsibility by allowing “identity” to colonize public discourse: private identity, sexual identity, cultural identity. From here it was but a short step to the fragmentation of radical politics, its metamorphosis into multiculturalism.” (Judt 2010, 88). The most recent debate around Mark Lilla’s (2017) critique of identity politics as the abandonment of the working classes by the left is only a last instance of a controversy that started with Marx’s “Zur Judenfrage”.

However, Marx’s analysis can also inform us of the pitfalls within this debate. While most, and perhaps in the end also Marx, saw this as an either/or issue, forcing a choice between a theological and a sociological approach, between the politics of class and the politics of identity, in “Zur Judenfrage” Marx still treats the relationship between culture and class on more equal terms. One has to swallow the antisemitic tinge of a remark like “the monotheism of the Jews is therefore in reality the polytheism of the many needs, a polytheism which makes even the lavatory an object of divine law.” (Marx 1843a, 172). But it points to a vision that sees both religious pluralism and social egoism as two instances of the division of civil society. For Marx the failure of political emancipation was its disregard of a privatized civil society, in which both cultural enmities and social inequalities were treated as private matters that only could be solved through competition. In the most charitable reading, Marx’s argument in “Zur Judenfrage” is that in overcoming egoism, both in a cultural and in a social sense, truly human emancipation is possible.

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## Juridification Bianca Tavorali

Attempts to understand how Karl Marx comprehends “juridification” most certainly lead to dead ends. The concept – or even the noun – does not appear throughout his works. But this absence is not a surprise. First, Marx did not see law as a privileged battlefield for the unfolding of the class struggles. Quite the contrary. Whereas in “On the Jewish Question” citizenship rights are presented as an obstacle to human emancipation because they assume the egoistic property-owner, the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* asserts that legal relations cannot be apprehended in themselves, but only tied to life’s material conditions. Law and rights are, therefore, epiphenomena of the political economy. But there is a second reason why *Verrechtlichung* is not thematized at all in Marx’s works. The concept is formed alongside the political and legal debates on the Weimar Constitution. It was first mobilized in 1919 by Hugo Sinzheimer – one of the founders of German labor law – in order to address the trade unions’ struggles to self-regulate collective labor agreements and arbitration of labor conflicts, legal issues that were not recognized by formal law at the time (Sinzheimer 1919).

“Juridification” points to a process of transformation: something that was not considered to be legal or integrated into law in a broad sense begins to be considered so. Therefore, there are as many concepts of juridification as there are different

conceptions of law. These different versions of the concept address more than the mere expansion or development of law in general. Its genesis is in Weimar for a reason: new legal fields that emerged at the time gave a new meaning to formal equality, recognizing an asymmetric relation not based on privileges as their starting point. Labor and antitrust law are the main examples. Employer and employee, the holder of economic power and those that do not have a dominant position in the market, are subjects of law in unequal relations. Those relationships demand a legal treatment that empowers the most vulnerable side and also present a claim for material equality. Weimar provided one of the first experiences of the legal recognition of such inequalities and of promoting legal and institutional measures in order to foster a new power balance. But juridification is also a specific concept in that it expresses a social tendency of this legal paradigm to all social fields. Talking about juridification is most of the time accompanied by an implicit social diagnosis of the present, and also by its normative evaluation.

At first glance, all those aspects may lead to the conclusion that there is no immediate link between Marx’s theory and juridification. However, if we take a closer look at how Otto Kirchheimer and Jürgen Habermas have formulated their concepts of juridification, we will be able to shed some light on aspects of this specific relation.

Kirchheimer’s conception of *Verrechtlichung* is directly linked to the diagnosis of a profound change of function [*Funktionswechsel*] of the rule of law (Kirchheimer 1928). In his view the rule of law ceases to be a weapon of the bourgeoisie against the remnants of nobility. In a reading purposely influenced by *The Class Struggles in France* (Kirchheimer 1928, 32), Kirchheimer argues that its appropriation by the irrupting working class – who had gained a significant number of seats in Parliament – transformed the rule of law into a line of division [*Grenzscheide*] organizing the political dispute between the two classes. In Weimar, the rule of law constitutes the core of the formal democracy and, as a dividing line, it did not serve as an instrument for any class in particular: it stood *between* the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (Kirchheimer 1928a). This specific balance of power leads to a situation in which both classes intend to consolidate their conquests into law, especially

through the constitution. For Kirchheimer, the Weimar Constitution does not represent a compromise between two opposing *Weltanschauungen*, but rather a juxtaposition of liberal and socialist values, without any common ground among them. According to Kirchheimer, a very particular power balance is engendered in Parliament, in an account that echoes some of the remarks in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Schale 2006, 51). This is why, according to Kirchheimer, the Weimar Constitution does not present an underlying political decision (Kirchheimer, 1930). In this context, all the political decisions are cloaked with a legal form, and they all enter the legal terrain in order to be considered legitimate in a formal democracy emptied of any political common value. “*Man schritt auf allen Gebieten zur Verrechtlichung*”, says Kirchheimer in 1928 (Kirchheimer 1928, 36).

For Kirchheimer, juridification stands for a process in which the form of law colonizes every political decision. This totalizing tendency draws an analogy with the Lukácsian reading of the spreading of the commodity-form to all social relations (Teubner 1993, 509; Buckel 2015, 87-91). In direct contrast to Sinzheimer, for whom juridification should guide the labor movement's path, Kirchheimer's account of this tendency is eminently negative: juridification is a covering mechanism that displaces the spheres of decision from politics into law. There is no ambiguity here: there is simply no possibility of realizing the socialist values embedded in the Constitution, nor it is even possible to aim for a social democracy through law when politics is neutralized in this manner by formal democracy.

For Habermas, juridification only turns into an important topic in 1981, in the final chapter of his *Theory of Communicative Action*, as empirical evidence of the colonization of the life-world by the system. Although Habermas is analyzing the post-war welfare state, the legal paradigm that underlies the juridification processes he identifies has its roots in Weimar: he is talking about new legal fields that introduce compensations and recognize vulnerabilities, such as social security law, environmental law, consumer law, and the rights of children and adolescents in the family and in the school. Despite the fact that Habermas understands this type of law as the last movement of several waves of historical juridification, this is his point of departure (Habermas 1981, 522-547).

Habermas' account of juridification is intended to give concreteness to the overly abstract theory of communicative action and, at the same time, should show how he is updating Marx's and Lukács' conceptions of reification (Habermas 1981, 523). The colonization of the life-world by the system should be able to explain reification in late-capitalist societies – and law allows the passage from one side to the other. Law is *between* system and life-world: at the same time that it embodies systemic elements such as an instrumental *rationale* that limits freedom, it is also composed by communicative elements that grant spaces of freedom and of justification. At this point, Habermas emphasizes how law contributes to colonization by the system – and not the other way around. The metaphor of the siege [*Belagerung*] is an expression of that. So, although law is ambiguous – a conception that certainly relies more on Weber than on Marx –, the last wave of juridification is evaluated in a more negative tone. Habermas revised this position in *Between Facts and Norms*, stressing how law contributes to bringing life-world elements into the system as well.

Today, it might seem that the concept of juridification has become obsolete. There is no imaginable field of life where law can be absent – be it as bringing conflict into court, passing bills, regulations, policies, instituting autonomous self-regulations, or even simply thematizing social relations in the language of rights. When all social relations can be understood through law in its multiple meanings, juridification ceases to be comprehended as a tendency. Some see it as a process with social pathologies and some see it as paradoxical (Honneth 2011; Loick 2014). But the most important fact is that grassroots social movements are expressing demands for juridification in various forms, all over the world. How those struggles are connected to emancipatory potentials is the most important question for critical theory.

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## Living Learning

Lina Dokuzovic

The term *living learning* has borrowed from the accumulative experiences and knowledge production of numerous knowledge-based social and political movements in different parts of the world in recent years (Dokuzovic 2016). *Living learning*, although fluid and "living," is based on some recurring notions that have been developed by these movements, such as understanding lived experiences and struggles as knowledge, self-education, self-determination, acknowledging all knowledges as equal, focusing on capacity rather than lack, using that capacity to demand rights, and placing the most disenfranchised experiences at the center of struggles. *Living learning* has heavily drawn from the notion of *lokavidya* coined by the *Lokavidya Jan Andolan* (People's Knowledge Mass Movement) of India,<sup>1</sup> which is understood as a people's knowledge that includes skills, life experiences, culture, struggle, as well as knowledge disseminated in institutions. The *Lokavidya Jan Andolan* uses this notion for a struggle against conditions that separate people along knowledge-based hierarchies.

Another common practice of many knowledge-based movements, which seek equal access to institutional knowledge, is hijacking university knowledge. The *Abahlali baseMjondolo*, the shack-dwellers movement that has developed since a mass protest in 2005 in Durban, South Africa, has exemplified notions of hijacking

university knowledge by electing several members of the movement, along with members of the Rural Network, to attend The University of KwaZulu-Natal to bring back as much knowledge as possible to share throughout the shack-dwelling community in order to strengthen their continued struggles (see Figlan et al. 2009). They have, furthermore, claimed that “struggle is our school” (see Mdlalose 2012) and invite activists into their “protest universities” such as “the University of Kennedy Road” (see Abahlali 2006). Strategies such as self-education, knowledge-sharing, or hijacking university knowledge have allowed knowledge-based movements to develop more effective tactics for demanding rights, or even for basic survival, as in the two outlined examples.

In Europe, Australia, and the Americas, many knowledge-based struggles have fought for free access to universities as well as archives and other institutions of knowledge production. They have thus focused on fighting austerity measures, which have both introduced and raised tuition fees, as well as developing strategies for self-education and for creating self-determined histories, knowledges, arts, and cultural practices, or forms of hacking and hijacking to gain access to certain content. Some of the radical perspectives that have informed these practices and my use of the term *living learning* are *contrapoder*, the undercommons (Harney and Moten 2013), postdevelopment, radical pedagogy, co-research, translocality, feminist ecology, and social justice. These perspectives also closely relate to practices by the Zapatistas of struggles based in life, knowledge, and dignity that veer from explicitly Marxist-Leninist practices of previous struggles (Flood 1999).

The measures which have increasingly restricted access to institutions of knowledge production, such as the aforementioned austerity cuts, consist of a series of global reforms that have been implemented to differing degrees over the last few decades. These reforms have sought to transform education and knowledge by creating enclosures and forms of stratification in institutions that allow for a greater commodification of knowledge. Furthermore, these reforms have prioritized the more “profitable” knowledges, attempting to homogenize teaching/learning approaches and erase traditional, local, communal, or Indigenous knowledges. Consequently, as such reforms focus on economic profitability, one of their major driving forces

has been economic crisis, which has also been a driver behind the development of cognitive capitalism.

Many knowledge-based struggles have explicitly fought against tuition fees and many of the tenets of the cognitivization of capital and the accompanying precarization of labor and education. However, *living learning* has gone beyond the walls of the university, and official institutions of knowledge production, to question the links between life and knowledge in a transforming economic landscape, and the encroachment of capital onto that relationship. Therefore, Marx’s notion of the General Intellect developed in *Grundrisse* plays a major role in both critical theories of cognitive capitalism and in knowledge-based struggles. However, *living learning* also takes into account the role of production within the “social factory” – developed by the Italian autonomous Marxist *autonomia* as well as radical feminists during the 1970s – and applies it to the “knowledge factory”<sup>2</sup> In other words, *living learning* departs from the idea that knowledge production takes place well beyond the job site in cognitive capitalism or the walls of the university.<sup>3</sup> It acknowledges invisible labor, home-based labor, the productivity of peasants, displaced persons, etc. for a broader perspective for self-empowerment and unified struggle based in common knowledges. Therefore, recognizing the role of diffuse modes of knowledge production and starting out from people’s capacity rather than lack, *living learning* creates the potential for a stronger struggle based in constituent counter-power than some of its predecessors, whose struggles focused on the formal sector.<sup>4</sup>

## Notes

1] See: <http://lokavidyajanandolan.blogspot.co.at/>

2] The “knowledge factory” was developed within Aronowitz, 2001. Furthermore, Federici supports that without the lessons of the feminist movements, the perspectives developed by autonomous Marxists would disregard all of the invisible labor in the home and elsewhere. (<http://inthemiddleofthewhirlwind.wordpress.com/precarious-labor-a-feminist-viewpoint/>).

3] It is also worth noting that this goes well beyond the "communism" that many have claimed is being developed through peer-to-peer networks on the Internet, as it includes large masses of people with no access to electricity.

4] The *Lokavidya Jan Andolan* has been very important in India's landscape, where the Marxist-Leninist Left (Communist Party of India [CPI]) has been infinitely fractured and even appropriated by neoliberal practices, or radicalized to the point of taking up arms to fight state violence in the case of the Maoists (CPI[M]). The *Lokavidya Jan Andolan* thus attempts to integrate a broader portion of society into a unified struggle by borrowing from Gandhian non-violent perspectives where Marxist ones have failed to integrate workers that are not officially recognized in the formal sector.

<sup>1</sup> As stated most clearly in the *Communist Manifesto*.

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## Lukács Archives János Weiss

The Lukács Archive in Budapest was founded after the death of György Lukács (June 1971) in the former home of the philosopher. The apartment was, and still is, owned by the Municipality of Budapest, the inheritor of the Lukács estate. First, let's take a look at the archive and its history before considering the present threat.

The archive's library contains the books owned by Lukács. The approximately eight-thousand-piece library is a uniquely rich collection of German, English, and French philosophical and aesthetic works, and a collection of world literature from the 18-20th centuries. The value of this collection stems from the fact that these books contain Lukács' annotations, cards, and remarks. Further, Lukács' published books and review-publications in various languages, as well as works about his oeuvre, his historical and philosophical environment, are also available in the archive. In addition, the archive contains a huge number of unpublished manuscripts. Particularly worthy of note are the contents of a suitcase which has been kept in a safe of the Bank of Heidelberg. This suitcase contains Lukács' manuscripts from before 1917, including the original of his German-language "Heidelberger Ästhetik" (1912-1914). Furthermore, the archives house Lukács' almost complete pre-1917 correspondence with Leo Popper, Paul Ernst, Ernst Bloch, Emil Lask, and Max Weber; and, most importantly, his post-1945 correspondence with Thomas and



Heinrich Mann, Heinrich Böll, Erich Fromm, Max Horkheimer, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Jürgen Habermas.

The archive experienced a golden age from the mid-80s to mid-90s: during this time it was working with eight to ten researchers, librarians, and archivists; it maintained close contact with the direct students of Lukács and the members of the Budapest School, who still lived in partial exile. At this time, the archive took over the editing from the Hungarian publisher Magvető and worked closely with the editors of the German publishers Luchterhand. Then the *Aus dem Nachlaß* series was slowly set in motion, in which significant books and documents appeared, such as the 1910-11 diaries, the pre-work of *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*, notes for a planned book on Dostoevsky, a large study written after the Soviet entry into Czechoslovakia in 1968 titled, "Demokratisierung heute und morgen", and notes and sketches for a work ethics from the later period of his life. Without these publications, we would have much less knowledge about Lukács; today however, these books have been fully integrated into Lukács' research.

The working conditions of the archive began to deteriorate in the mid-90s, and this has intensified markedly since 2010. In 2012, research institutes of the Hungarian Academy of Science (*Magyar Tudományos Akadémia* or MTA) were reorganized, whereby the archive lost its infrastructure. Since then there has only been one librarian working at the Lukács archives. It became impossible to maintain the standards of work carried out previously so that scientific research, contacts with foreign partners, and research consultations requiring scientific backgrounds, ceased to exist.

We might think that the worsening fate of the archive is a consequence of the philosophical reception of Lukács' works: the strong anti-Marxist mood in the years before the regime change of 1989, and even more so afterwards, undoubtedly colored the view of Lukács' philosophy. We also know that Lukács himself was very critical of his youthful work (which secured his world-wide fame). Lukács' late works, especially those published after his death, received such a significantly negative reception (more people were talking about "nationalization"), that

sentiments about his late works were also transferred to his early ones. But this was shown to be an entirely incorrect view once Lukács' closest students began to explore the early thoughts of the "master". The Archive closely followed this tradition and did a lot to keep the books of Lukács' early career as well as his later works available. If the reception of Lukács' would be handled by a professional framework, we would probably be able to continue this kind of research, but Lukács reception has been subjected to intense politicization since the mid-nineties.

Perhaps it is worth commencing with the fact that many of the leading figures of the democratic opposition, who prepared for the change of regime in 1989, belonged to Lukács' second-generation students, called the "Lukács Kindergarten". They created the most affirmative western-oriented democratic party in Hungary, Free Democrats Alliance (*Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége* or SZDSZ). Dissatisfaction with the change of regime and its attitude towards philosophy began to emerge in the second half of the 90s. At first, an incumbent prime minister said in the second half of the 1990s, in a residential forum: "There are too many philosophers in Hungary". Many people objected to this statement and its possible implications (such as writer Péter Nádas). Nevertheless, Lukács became the "ancient philosopher" under attack by this regime, and the Archive was the headquarters of this "ancient philosophy".

The Fidesz government, which came into power in 2010, not only took up this tradition but also brutalized the attack on the Lukács Archive as well as the person of György Lukács. It is well-known that this party's goal is a complete cultural-political rearrangement of Hungary, where such re-organizations have both right-wing and left-wing traditions. However, the true goal of Fidesz' ideology is a nationalistic course. Therefore, government departments and media sometimes engage in a fierce attack against Lukács and his students: such as the "philosophical scandal" of 2011 (cf. Bohannon 2011; Hockenos 2013), which in fact meant the persecution of, and threats to, philosophers. But its symbolic peak was reached in the spring of 2017 when the statue of Lukács was removed from the Szent István Park in Budapest (despite widespread protests).

It may well be that the fate of the Archive will be the extension of the fate of the sculpture; the advocates of closure refer to technical arguments above all: archival materials need to be digitized (and this requires them to be transported, while their return is not guaranteed), and the expense of maintaining its former home. The struggle is still ongoing, but it is possible that the political intentions and justifications of these arguments will lead to Hungary losing one of its most significant philosophical and scientific institutions and monuments. The moment I am finalising this very entry (May 24th, 2018) I receive the bad news that all locks of the Lukács Archive have been replaced by the Hungarian Academic Library so that the Archive's former employees can no longer enter the building. I am afraid that this is the end of the famous archive.

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## Lumpenproletariat

James Ingram

Marx's famous portrait of the lumpenproletariat is one of the most celebrated set-pieces in a work (*The Eighteenth Brumaire*) and an oeuvre that at times approaches contemporaries like Dickens, Balzac, or Hugo in its social-literary verve:

Alongside ruined *roués* with questionable means of support and of dubious origin, degenerate and adventurous scions of the bourgeoisie, there were vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged convicts, runaway galley slaves, swindlers, charlatans, *lazzaroni*, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, procurers, brothel keepers, porters, literati, organ grinders, rag-pickers, knife-grinders, tinkers, beggars; in short, the entirely undefined, disintegrating mass, thrown hither and yon, which the French call *la bohème*. (Marx 1990, 75)

But Marx's evident glee in depicting the lumpenproletariat is untainted by sympathy. In the *Manifesto* he and Engels had already warned that this "passive decaying matter of the lowest layers of the old society," even when it is "thrust into the movement by a proletarian revolution," "is more likely to sell out to reactionary intrigues." (Marx and Engels 1967, 92). So it was no surprise that in the chaos of 1848-49, the corrupt and thuggish Louis Bonaparte, "Chief of the

Lumpenproletariat,” was able to organize this “scum, offal, and refuse of all classes” behind him (Marx 1990, 75).

Marx coined the word lumpenproletariat in response to Max Stirner’s characterization of the lower social orders as “*Lumpe*,” a term that was at once *social* (from “rags” or “ragged” – whence picturesque contemporaneous renderings of lumpenproletarian as “ragamuffin”) and *moral* (*Lump* meant “knave”) (Draper 1978, chapter 15). Stirner’s dismissive characterization of the masses stood in a long tradition, from the Roman *proletarius* to Burke’s “mob” and Hegel’s “rabble” (*Pöbel*). Marx of course sought to redeem the masses, but he did so by hiving off the potentially heroic proletariat from the dregs below. In so doing, he gave *Lumpen* a third meaning beyond Stirner’s descriptive and moral senses: it came to designate a *remainder*, the residuum of the lower classes once the cream of the proletariat had been skimmed off. Shorn of this political-historical core, the detritus emerges as even less redeemable and more dangerous than it had appeared in its original theorization. Thus, even if Marx introduced an important innovation by extending the lumpen to the highest reaches of society – in *The Class Struggles in France* he refers to the corrupt finance aristocracy as “the lumpenproletariat reborn at the very pinnacle of bourgeois society” (Marx 1978, 39) – it is hard not to agree with those who detect in his animus against the lumpenproletariat echoes of the fear and disdain the propertied had always directed toward their inferiors (Bussard 1987).

Marx’s division between an organized, redemptive proletariat and its disorganized, unreliable remainder lies at the heart of the war waged over the concept ever since. Its first and best-known battle was of course opened by Mikhail Bakunin – the “lumpen prince,” according to Engels – who sought to claim for his own cause “that great mass, those millions of the uncultivated, the disinherited, the miserable, the illiterates, whom Messrs. Engels and Marx would subject to their paternal rule”:

that eternal ‘meat’ (on which governments thrive), that great *rabble of the people* (underdogs, ‘dregs of society’) ordinarily designated by Marx and Engels in the picturesque and contemptuous phrase *Lumpenproletariat*. I

have in mind the ‘riff-raff,’ that ‘rabble’ almost unpolluted by bourgeois civilization, which carries in its inner being and in its aspirations, in all the necessities and miseries of its collective life, all the seeds of the socialism of the future, and which alone is powerful enough today to inaugurate and bring to triumph the Social Revolution. (Bakunin 1971, 294)

Bakunin in effect accuses Marx and Engels of what we might today call ‘victim blaming’ and ‘respectability politics,’ and of abandoning what should be the left’s true constituency. He feasts on their leftovers, promoting these cast-offs to the role of popular-revolutionary subject, the people of the people. He thereby outflanks Marx on the left, presenting himself as more popular, democratic, and inclusive – a mantle taken up not just by anarchists but by all those who align themselves with the plebs and the subaltern.

In the long debate between Marxism and anarchism, the question of the lumpenproletariat has most often been understood as a choice of revolutionary subject: those constituted by the movement of capital or those cast off by it, the industrial working class or the wretched of the earth. This is how the question was usually taken up in the twentieth century, especially by revolutionaries who lacked recourse to a large, organized working class. Lenin and Mao viewed the lumpenproletariat strategically, stressing the importance of the floating class of paupers who had not been absorbed by capitalism, but also recognizing its need for revolutionary guidance (Löwy 2005, chapter 4). Frantz Fanon, whose *Wretched of the Earth* contains the most important twentieth-century discussion of the lumpenproletariat, accords it a special place in anti-colonial struggle. Given its numbers in the late (now post-)colonial world and its motility – the fact that it could furnish either shock-troops for the revolution or foot soldiers for its repression – the mass of deracinated peasants thrown into the cities would decide the fate of national liberation: “the pimps, the hooligans, the unemployed and the petty criminals, urged on from behind, throw themselves into the struggle for liberation like stout working men. These classless idlers will by militant and decisive action discover the path that leads to nationhood” (Fanon 1991, 130).

But we should observe that Bakunin, Fanon, and others who sought to redeem the lumpenproletariat were not only exercising strategic flexibility or developing a new revolutionary politics. They were also seizing on a central ambiguity of Marx's theorization of the proletariat. For the universal revolutionary significance of this class is at bottom a function of its special relationship with capitalism: the industrial proletariat is uniquely placed to overthrow the bourgeoisie because it is its determinate negation, positioned at once to overcome and to conserve the system it has built, which it alone can destroy while preserving its technical advances. This status as capitalism's victim as well as its creation pushes the proletariat in contradictory directions, as is clear in the divergent senses in which the bourgeoisie is said to be producing its own grave-diggers in the *Manifesto*: on the one hand, the imperatives of profit and competition force the bourgeoisie to drive the proletariat into penury, to the point that it has nothing to lose but its chains; on the other, the imperatives of production force the bourgeoisie to *organize* the proletariat, preparing it to take over (Marx and Engels 1967).

The proletariat thus oscillates between two poles, neither of them propitious for its world-historical role: an absolutely immiserated working class would be too weak to make a revolution; a thoroughly organized one would be too integrated to want one. Both of these possibilities have been borne out historically. Again and again, capitalism, especially during periods of crisis and at its margins, has reduced those subject to it to poverty, emigration, and even starvation, rendering them indistinguishable from the lumpenproletariat. In *Capital*, Marx would depict the continuous production of an 'industrial reserve army' – a notion already developed by Engels in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845) – as intrinsic to capitalism (Marx 1976, chapter 25). Yet the development of the working class as an effective force depended on its discipline, organization, and integration into capitalist production. There can be no better illustration of the political implications of this than the history of the party that can claim direct descent from Marx, the German Social Democrats. From Bernstein's revisionism to Bad Godesberg to its latest internal debates, the SPD has always had to balance the workers' interest in overcoming capitalism with their more immediate interest *in* capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

This oscillation was meant to be resolved as the proletariat became aware of its position, interests, and opportunity. This typically takes the form of a conversion experience, as, for instance, in the self-creation of Malcolm X or Ali la Pointe. Without their rebirth and self-transformation, performing, as it were, on themselves the same hiving-off that Marx effected in theory, they would have remained Malcolm Little and Ali Ammar – directionless petty criminals rather than the revolutionary heroes and martyrs they became. Yet this suggests that the difference between the lumpenproletariat and the proletariat rests not just on circumstances, but on a *choice*. Would it be too much to extend a version of this analysis to Marx himself? As portrayed in Raoul Peck's *The Young Karl Marx* and reported by visitors to his London households, the shabby gentility that Marx and Jenny never managed to transcend was always essentially *bohemian* – the impoverished, provisional, dislocated condition that for him epitomized the lumpenproletariat, but that Enzo Traverso argues has characterized the lives of revolutionary artists and intellectuals from Courbet to Trotsky, Benjamin, and Marx himself, in their uncertain anticipation of a coming revolution (Traverso 2016, chapter 4).

The 'lumpen' can thus serve to designate not only, as in Marx's original theorization, a remainder the proletariat and its agents will shed on their way to revolution, but also a double that will continue to haunt them so long as the revolution remains unachieved. This situation, where the boundary between the revolutionary classes and their unsettling shadow is at the margin undecidable, can be expected to persist as long as capitalism continues to give birth to new forms of wealth and squalor, organization and chaos. For the time being, then, there is no reason to imagine that the progressive classes will cease merging with, and emerging from, their miserable, dangerous, lumpen Other – or that revolutionaries and intellectuals will transcend their 'bohemian' existence on the fringes of the capitalist order, however comfortably 'bourgeois' it may at times be.

The recent ascendancy of the 'plebs' and the 'multitude' over the 'proletariat,' and of 'revolt' and 'insurrection' over 'revolution,' suggests that we have crossed over from a Marxian period to, at best, a democratic or anarchist one. There is now a proliferation of lumpen status, as formerly secure employees are pushed into

precarious careers as ‘self-entrepreneurs’ – a form of disorganized organization, and the First World equivalent of the ‘informal sector’ that has long held sway in the economies of the global South. Today it is surely easier to identify with Marx’s fears of the lumpen elements at all levels of society, along with the political swindlers that feed on them, than with his hopes for transcending the conditions that produce them. If there is anything encouraging to take from the concept’s history, it may be that this need not rule out a revolutionary change for the better, even if it assuredly cannot guarantee one.

## Notes

1] If we follow a Bakuninite or Trotskyist interpretation of really existing socialism as never having transcended ‘state capitalism,’ this verdict can be extended to Communism.

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## Marxist Critique of Post-colonialism

Nikita Dhawan

One of the most enduring and oft-repeated criticisms against postcolonial theory is that in objecting to the universalizing categories of Enlightenment theories as Eurocentric and inadequate in understanding the practices, experiences and realities in the non-European world, postcolonial critique is ontologizing the difference between the West and the East. If, as claimed by proponents of theories of universalism, humans share common needs and interests independent of historical, cultural and economic differences, then the postcolonial effort to “provincialize Europe” (Chakrabarty 2000), and provide particular histories of different contexts, is rendered questionable. Furthermore, any critique of the Enlightenment and its violent legacies is read as symptomatic of forfeiting emancipatory politics, while justifying an exoticization of the East as different.

Against the claim that the non-European world simply follows in Europe’s footsteps, postcolonial scholars seek to understand disparate operations of modernity by tracing the divergent emergence of cultural, political and economic practices and institutions globally. They argue that the non-Western world does not simply mimic Europe, so Western theories of studying capitalism and modernity, although relevant, are nonetheless inadequate in understanding the postcolonial world (Chakrabarty 2000). Although profoundly inspired by Marx, many postcolonial

scholars critiqued the universalist assumptions of historical materialism which claimed that colonial capitalism would expand from Europe to the rest of the world and function uniformly worldwide. It emphasizes the point that taking the West as the norm for the rest of the world, onto which Enlightenment and Marxist categories were projected, disregards and silences the realities and experiences in the postcolonial world. However, in highlighting the distinctiveness of the postcolonial world, postcolonial theorists are charged with denying the universal validity of emancipatory norms such as justice, democracy and human rights, which are presumably underpinned by common universal interests shared by all human beings irrespective of culture, race, gender, sexuality, religion, or other differences.

The recent accusation by Vivek Chibber that postcolonialism is anti-Enlightenment repeats this gesture. His book *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (2013) can be read as yet another attack on postcolonial theory in the defense of Marxism, along the lines mounted by Aijaz Ahmad (1992), Arif Dirlik (1994), San Juan, Jr. (1996), and Benita Parry (2004). Chibber (2013, 2) accuses postcolonial scholars of trying to replace Marxism in providing an adequate theory for a radical political agenda, while perpetuating Orientalism in their claim that capitalism and modernity developed differently in the postcolonial world.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, in Chibber’s view (2013, 101ff.), rejects a “universal history of capital” because the distinctive forms of power-relations that emerged in the post-colony were not the same capitalist power-relations that emerged during European modernization. Chakrabarty exemplifies this by focusing on disparate political domains, particularly among the subaltern classes of India, which are different from the normative model of European capitalist cultures and political systems. Challenging Chakrabarty, Chibber retorts that capitalism’s universalization does not require homogenization of social diversity or cultural differences, but rather that capitalism can accommodate and sustain cultural or religious diversity (2013, 130-131). Chibber further argues that the claim that in resisting capitalism subjects draw on local cultures and practices, does not imply there are not shared basic needs like food, housing and shelter which motivate all people universally (ibid, 199-200). In Chibber’s view, in arguing that when peasants in India engage in collective action

they have a unique “psychological disposition” which is culturally different to that of Western peasants, the Subalternists<sup>1</sup> are endorsing the same kind of cultural essentialism they accuse the colonizers of perpetuating (ibid, 179; 192; 208). In his view, in treating indigenous and tribal communities as being motivated by traditional and cultural differences instead of by basic needs, one risks exoticizing them, and threatens the Enlightenment notion of universal interests. Chibber firmly believes that upholding a universal theory of human agency, as offered by both the Enlightenment and Marxism, allows anchoring democratic politics in shared global norms, while circumventing orientalism (ibid).

In his response, Bruce Robbins (2014) points out that while making the Marxist case against postcolonialism, with a sole focus on cultural diversity, Chibber disregards economic diversity, thereby failing to explain the different varieties of capitalism. In his rejoinder Partha Chatterjee (2013, 74-75) argues that the problem addressed by Subaltern Studies is not the difference between West and East, whether psychological or cultural, as claimed by Chibber, but rather that the dissolution of the peasant classes in capitalist Europe was contrary to their continued reproduction under capitalism in the non-European world. Chatterjee explains that despite seeming similarities, Subaltern Studies is different to the Marxist project of “History from Below”, for unlike the disappearance of the peasantry in the period of the rise of capitalism in Europe, the inevitable dissolution of peasants in agrarian societies in the non-European world took another trajectory (ibid). Capitalism did not universalize in contexts like India because, rather than abolishing semi-feudal practices of labour, these were harnessed by the colonial state, subsequently generating capitalist formations quite distinct from that of free wage-labour. Thus Western capitalist modernity did not universalize itself because it failed to fundamentally transform antecedent modes of production in the non-European world. Challenging Chibber, Chatterjee explains that getting one’s European history right is not going to help solve the problems of historical change in the non-Western world (ibid, 75). Chatterjee further warns that in claiming political action derives from basic universal human nature, Chibber uncritically endorses the principles of the contractarian school of liberal political thought (ibid, 74).

Chibber, following universalists like Nussbaum, claims that human aspirations are not culturally constituted, but rather that common interests and basic needs, like the universal human need for physical wellbeing, are fundamental characteristics of human nature (2013: 197). This completely disregards the incisive critique, made particularly by postcolonial feminists, that such universalizing gestures disregard disparate historical configurations of family, community, society, and state that differently frame practices, vulnerability, as well as agency, in the postcolonial world. Furthermore, by arguing that in the future, subalterns, who in his view share a common political consciousness, will inevitably fight for “liberal democracy” in order to preserve or enhance their physical well-being (ibid, 179), Chibber ignores the question of ideology and the discontinuity between interests and desires, a key issue addressed by Gayatri Spivak in “Can the Subaltern Speak?”.

As pointed out by Hall (1996), postcolonial studies drew on poststructuralist ideas of difference and contingency precisely because of certain shortcomings in Marxist theories, a point which is conveniently disregarded by Chibber. The biggest fault in Chibber’s text is that he stages postcolonial theory as *necessarily* antagonistic with Enlightenment rationality. If, as claimed by Chibber, the logic of capital is indeed universal and its proliferation in post-feudal and postcolonial societies produces a “universal history of class struggle”, then how can one explain the great many *varieties* of capitalism with very different contexts and historical experiences of political economy? One also needs to account for how the same commodities are produced and consumed under different conditions, but which also simultaneously compete in local and global markets.

In her review, Spivak (2014, 188) points out that, from Antonio Gramsci’s writings on the Risorgimento to W.E.B Du Bois’ writings on the Pan-African movement, the very notion of subaltern social groups was not intended to describe an “international proletariat”, but sections of society which capital’s universal logic failed to assimilate. “Class” differences intersected with racial, religious, gendered, and historical differences resulting in varied proliferations of capitalist systems. Spivak further points out that Chibber’s claim of “race-free” and “gender-free” resistance across cultures disregards the relationship of the internationalism of the labour

movement to colonialism (ibid). In contrast to Chibber's universalist romantic utopian leftist narrative, Spivak, drawing on Gramsci, argues that subaltern social groups are not unified and cannot unite until they become a state (ibid, 193). In heroizing the subaltern classes and making them part of the universal proletarian class, Chibber seamlessly integrates them within "the same history as Europe" (ibid, 197). Spivak, moreover, diagnoses Chibber's position as part of a larger tendency to allow only for a Western-focused Marxism (what Spivak calls "Little Britain Marxism"), which delegitimizes other Marxisms (ibid).

Finally, the larger question is not one of "Marxism or Enlightenment versus post-colonialism", but is rather one of how to use the categories developed by Marx, or for that matter Kant or Hegel, to analyze situations these thinkers neither experienced nor foresaw. This would entail being a Marxist or Enlightenment scholar in divergent ways under conditions of geopolitical and historical difference; as Spivak puts it: "The sun rises at different times upon the globe today" (ibid, 195).

## Notes

1] The Subaltern Studies Collective is a group of Indian and South Asian historians and scholars, who, inspired by Antonio Gramsci, focus on non-elites, namely, subalterns, as agents of political and social change.

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## Master-Slave Dialectics (in the Colonies)

Mariana Teixeira

I did a complete diagnosis of my sickness.  
I wanted to be typically black – that was out of the question.  
I wanted to be white – that was a joke.  
And when I tried to claim my negritude intellectually as a concept, they snatched  
it away from me.  
They proved to me that my effort was nothing but a term in the dialectic.

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

The conservative, and even reactionary, potential of Hegel's philosophy has been frequently brought to the foreground. It is patent that he espoused highly detrimental views towards women, African and Asian peoples for example, and his overall philosophical project is seen by some as aiming at a justification of the status quo. It is equally indisputable, however, that Hegelian thought was quite often relied upon (if not uncritically) by thinkers eager to transform the existing social order – Marx and the Marxist tradition being arguably the most remarkable case. But the critical appropriation of Hegelian philosophy is not the prerogative of advocates of a proletarian revolution. Representatives of anti-colonialism<sup>1</sup> and feminism, for example, have also relied upon a reshaped dialectic to formulate their own approaches to social domination and resistance. Within anti-colonialism, the work of Martinican psychiatrist, philosopher, and revolutionary Frantz Fanon provides a remarkably rich and pregnant broadening of traditional interpretations of both Hegel and Marx.

The figure of the Master-Slave (or Lord-Bondsman) relationship, as presented in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, holds a privileged place in this respect.<sup>2</sup> In Hegel's famous passage, the achievement of an independent self-consciousness is seen not only as an *intersubjective* process, motivated by a desire for recognition by the other,

but also as an essentially *conflictual* one: each consciousness strives to assert its self-certainty, initially, through the exclusion and elimination of all that is other; each thus seeks the death of the other, putting at the same time its own life at stake. This struggle to the death can lead either to the complete annihilation of one consciousness (or both), whereby the process of mutual recognition will never be complete, or to one consciousness surrendering to the other in the face of fear of imminent death, thus becoming the slave (*Knecht*). The other becomes the master (*Herr*), since he showed no fear of death and thus has not degraded himself to the level of mere physical existence. The master however *depends* on the slave – not only for the satisfaction of his material needs, but also for his recognition as an independent being. His self-sufficiency is hence only apparent. The slave, by contrast, becomes aware of himself as an independent self-consciousness by means of the transformative, fear-propelled labouring of the natural and material world.

The fact that this passage has so often appealed to subversive, critical thinkers can be referred not least to Hegel's assertion that the slave has a (*potential*) advantage over the master. While Marx did not address this specific passage in detail,<sup>3</sup> a reading of such a figure *inspired by Marx* is certainly recognizable in the works of, among others, Kojève and Sartre, two key figures in the intellectual climate of post-war France – and for Fanon as well. Central to this approach is an analogy between the Hegelian slave and the worker under capitalism. If for Hegel the slave's cultivating labour is what makes him an independent being, so the proletarian, analogously, can only free himself from class domination upon the realization that he is the real subject of production. Beyond Hegel, however, this approach requires that the proletariat *act upon this realization*, enforcing, through class struggle, the recognition of his independent being by the ruling class – hence leading to a classless, emancipated society.

For Fanon, however, "a Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched when it comes to addressing the colonial issue" (Fanon 2004, 5). In line with this remark, his reading of the Master-Slave dialectic brings new elements to the foreground. The conflictual and intersubjective model of human subjectivity-formation developed in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is recast by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*,

but the Hegelian Master-Slave dialectic works in his 1952 book as a *contrasting foil* rather than as a *model* for the relation between the settler and the colonized, the white master and the black slave. And this is for at least two reasons. First, Fanon notes that the black man has been freed from slavery and recognized as a person *without a struggle to the death*: “The black man is a slave who was allowed to assume a master’s attitude. The white man is a master who allowed his slaves to eat at his table” (Fanon 2008, 194). The black man’s recognition is merely legal, thus formal and incomplete. Solely through struggle, in Fanon’s view, will the black man achieve real recognition. The only solution for the black man working in the sugarcane plantations in Martinique is to fight, “because quite simply he cannot conceive his life otherwise than as a kind of combat against exploitation, poverty, and hunger” (ibid., 199). Fanon thereby gives an emancipatory twist to social struggle: for Hegel, the struggle is what posits the asymmetrical relation between the self-consciousnesses in the first place; for Fanon, on the contrary, the power asymmetry is prior to the struggle that can lead to real reciprocal recognition.

If the only way to liberation is struggle, the second sense in which Fanon departs from Hegel can help in explaining what *prevents* such struggle from taking place. While Hegel’s slave turns *away from the master and towards the object* (i.e. his creative work), the black man turns *away from the object and towards the master*; he wants to be like his master, which makes him even “less independent than the Hegelian slave” (ibid., 195). The colonized black subject is socialized in a world where the white man is the identification model of everything that is good, pure, and active, and thus shares the collective unconsciousness of the European. Hence, “[a]fter having been a slave of the white man, he enslaves himself” (ibid., 168). Fanon thereby introduces a psychoanalytically construed ideological dimension, that he calls ‘alienation,’ which under the social-historical circumstances of colonialism *blocks* the dialectical movement from developing toward the struggle that could lead to reciprocal recognition.

By pointing (1) to the structural-objective inequality between white settler and black native that exists prior to any emancipatory combat, and (2) to the ideological-subjective distortion of the black man’s sense of personhood that tends to block

the very onset of social struggle and dialectical movement, can Fanon be said to have solely ‘slightly stretched’ Marx’s theory?

Fanon’s criticism of Sartre in *Black Skin, White Masks* encapsulates, as it were, the complex relation between anti-colonial activism and Marxism, and can shed some light on what is at stake here. In his 1948 ‘Black Orpheus,’ Sartre takes the notion of race as *subjective, relative* and *particular*, as “the weak stage of a dialectical progression” that will only resolve itself in the *objective, positive* and *universal* notion of class (Sartre *apud* Fanon 2008 111, 112). Fanon is left exasperated with his friend, this “born Hegelian” who “had forgotten that consciousness needs to get lost in the night of the absolute, the only condition for attaining self-consciousness” (Fanon 2008, 111). Sartre forgets moreover, says Fanon, “that the black man suffers in his body quite differently from the white man,” adding that “[t]hough Sartre’s speculations on the existence of ‘the Other’ remain correct [...], their application to a black consciousness proves fallacious because the white man is not only ‘the Other,’ but also the master, whether real or imaginary” (ibid., 117).

While in his preface to Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* Sartre rejects his earlier downplaying of anti-colonial activism,<sup>4</sup> the tensions between the latter and the official Left in France grew even stronger during the Algerian War of Independence. In the conclusion of his last and most influential book, Fanon states that workers in the metropole were reticent in supporting the liberation of the colonies because they “believed they too were part of the prodigious adventure of the European Spirit.” Fanon then exhorts his fellow anti-colonial militants to – literally and metaphorically – leave Europe: “Comrades, let us flee this stagnation where dialectics has gradually turned into a logic of the status quo” (Fanon 2004, 237). In this sense, Fanon is urging colonized peoples to turn their backs on their masters and to engage in an experiment of creative protagonism and radical imagination. His book’s last sentence hence reads: “For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must make a new start, develop a new way of thinking, and endeavor to create a new man” (ibid., 239).

It is crucial to note, however, that Fanon does not argue for the abandonment, from a particularistic perspective, of the Marxist account of dialectics and class struggle. Quite the contrary: he insists that Marxist intellectuals and activists live up to their universalistic claims, expanding their scope beyond the particular experience of the European, white working class. For this reason, Fanon cannot be considered an advocate of identity politics in any narrow sense, but rather a proponent of a strong humanist universalism, which inscribes him within the broad Left-Hegelian dialectical tradition.

In any case, more than a mere ‘slight stretch’ of hegemonic Marxism, Fanon’s oeuvre shows us that racialized colonialism is an integral, and not merely incidental, part of Western capitalism – a theoretical movement that critically destabilizes any stage-like narrative of historical development. After all, capitalism without racism or colonialism has only existed in the thought-experiments of those who forget Marx’s admonitions against purely logical abstract categories. From this perspective, to *decolonize Marxism* does not mean to ‘add colour’ (quite literally, in this case) to an otherwise untouched framework. It means rather to be able to see that colour has played, from the outset, a key role in the very composition of that framework.

## Notes

1] I use the term ‘anti-colonialism’ to refer to the various critical approaches towards racialized colonialism, including post- and de-colonial theories.

2] While some argue that Hegel’s explicit racism in his philosophy of world history (Hegel 1902) cannot be separated from the remainder of his oeuvre – dialectics itself being a colonial method (Güven 2003), based on a racist anthropology (Bernasconi 1998; Tibebe 2010) –, others attempt to show either that Hegel’s philosophy, and even his *Weltgeschichte*, are not inherently Eurocentric (Buchwalter 2009, Mowad 2013) or that his Eurocentrism can be excused due to the historical circumstances under which Hegel penned his considerations towards Africa, Asia and ‘The New World’ (Harris 1991). Stone (2017) provides a welcome balanced stance towards this issue. Several authors have recently stressed the fertility, regardless of Hegel’s original intention, of Hegelian and Left-Hegelian dialectics for anti-colonial concerns (e.g. Bird-Pollan 2012 and 2015; Brennan 2014; Ciccariello-Maher 2017; Gibson 2002; Hudis 2017; Kleinberg 2003; Rabaka 2011). Besides Fanon,

C.L.R. James (1980), W.E.B. du Bois (1996), and Paul Gilroy (1993) have also famously engaged with the Hegelian or Left-Hegelian dialectical tradition with a critical, anti-colonial intent.

3] Few topics in Marx’s oeuvre are consensually interpreted, thus escaping controversy. The role of Hegel’s Master-Slave dialectic is no exception. Besides Sartre (1956) and Kojève (1969), other prominent authors – such as Marcuse (1954), Hyppolite (1974, 1969), and more recently Honneth (1995) –, as well as an extensive secondary literature, seem to take it for granted that Marx was profoundly influenced by it. Others have tried to counter what they see as a gross misinterpretation by pointing out that Marx hardly mentions that famous passage in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, let alone gives it a central place (cf. Arthur 1983, McLellan 1971). Putting to one side the question of whether the author of *Capital* really took the Master-Slave relationship as a pivotal figure in his theoretical framework, the very fact that this (‘mis’)interpretation could be so widespread suggests that the Master-Slave dialectic has at least a considerable *affinity* with Marx’s thought.

4] Sartre now regards decolonization movements (rather than class struggle) as “the last stage of the dialectic” (Sartre 1961, lxii; cf. also Ciccariello-Maher 2006).

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## Militant Research

Tania Herrera

It is time to stop seeing the different roles we may play in social movements as a divide between activists and academics, and see it instead as an important and necessary division of labor.  
(Mitchell 2005, 454)

Militant research is defined as “the place where academia and activism meet in the search for new ways of acting that lead to new ways of thinking” (Bookchin et al. 2013, 4). This search would require innovation in order “to write a new story without falling into the old patterns” (ibid. 31). Different voices using the concept (several with ties to the visual-arts world) provide accounts of participation in different *tasks* within social organizations and movements. The essence of militant research is to make visible a group identity and/or a commitment. For some, the concept is about introducing epistemic or methodological changes to ordinary academic practice. In this sense, the range of dualities involved in the academia-activism distinction (thinking versus acting, passive versus active) contributes to the illusion of apparent incompatibility or mutual isolation. Thus, while direct action would be possible only through activism, intellectual work appears as the exclusive task of the academy, without intervention in practical problems. Assuming the polarity of such spheres leads to a series of arguments that must be contested, as the absence of intellectual work within social organizations and movements, or the invalidity or nullity of work carried out by university researchers and professors in order to achieve radical social change. This dichotomy avoids a fundamental issue: how work is divided either in society or within social movements. For Marx and Engels, the allocation of labor and its products (like property) is

obviously unequal and oppressive: individuals do not choose what they would like to do because these tasks are fixed by the social class to which they belong. Only through revolution is it possible to eliminate the conditions of class society, which means ending private property and work under the current division of labor (Marx and Engels 1998, 51–54). In the following, I argue that we must understand academic and activist work not as something divided, but as different aspects of the revolutionary praxis (Mitchell 2005, 450), complementary and mutually needed, as well as *undetermined by the subjects themselves*.

The notion of *theaters* posed by David Harvey is useful for distinguishing the multiplicity of spaces *of thought and action* from which one may work towards society's radical transformation (Harvey, 2000). This implies influencing different scales and spaces of life, from individual actions to the collectivization of the desire for change. In this regard, interconnections between different theaters are necessary to reinforce insurgent political practices, looking for universal alternative referents in order to transcend particularisms. As a theater, the university would be a *mediating institution* between the particular and the universal (ibid. 243–244). Collective understanding that the precarious conditions result from budget cuts to public educational services may turn into social movements. Because of its several impacts in everyday life, direct action is motivated by the socialization of the experience of exploitation of university professors and research workers (the so-called *academics*). Direct action may consist, for instance, in the occupation of university places and goods, with active participation of the students.<sup>1</sup> Other practices will also require unmasking uncontested logics, a project involving time and dedication, which like other tasks carried out by academic workers, can be unpredictably urgent and time-consuming. As Marx and Engels wrote in 1848 (2007), taking education out of the hands of the dominant class will require enormous work. Accepting the importance of this work must involve considering both its scope and limitations. Such endeavor demands for the opening of spaces for social criticism.<sup>2</sup>

Undoubtedly, direct action in social organizations and movements is very important: there is a need to solve the urgent problems of real people.<sup>3</sup> But we must understand that many of these actions are exhausting and extend beyond the

programmatic purposes of activist groups. We must keep in mind that many of the tasks historically undertaken by organizations and social movements are the result of the outsourcing of the so-called 'social costs' to popular organizations, which are now supposed to provide welfare (Herrera 2017). In reaction, academic research must contribute to the *agenda-setting* of social struggle (Hassenteufel 2010), making the contradictions of daily life visible, and forcing the state and society to recognize them. Social criticism that aspires to a radical transformation requires empirical verification, data collection, and evidence, and it should also think about how to reach popular audiences.<sup>4</sup> Our work must anchor its roots in everyday life, it must be "a more mundane enterprise that reflects earthly interests, and claims" (Harvey 2001, 116). We may only aspire to a different order of things by starting from the existing materiality, not from idealistic speculations. Future alternatives must depart *from the earth to the sky*, they require disciplined work, firmly tied to research, in order to form ourselves and to educate – all of this, of course, in combination with other militant practices.

## Notes

1] Just to give an example, in May 2018, students of the National University of the Peruvian Amazon took four buses of the university, demanding that the authorities repair the existent buses and increase the fleet. The main campus is far away from the city and not connected by public transportation. Under actual conditions, the service only covers the need for transportation of the 30% of the alumni, but under unsafe and uncertain conditions. See: <https://larepublica.pe/politica/1241226-alumnos-toman-4-buses-universidad-loretana-exigir-unidades>

2] Academic neutrality is a liberal virtue which stands opposed to an activist self-positioning of an academic. For Iris Marion Young, the materiality of events is a powerful mobilizer of criticism which stands side-by-side with the adoption of normative judgments: "Normative reflection arises from hearing a cry of suffering or distress, or feeling distress oneself. [...] With an emancipatory interest, the philosopher apprehends given social circumstances not merely in contemplation but with passion: the given is experiences in relation to desire" (Young 1990, 5-6).

3] Take the example of "500x20", an association in Barcelona which fights for the right for non-market based social housing. One of their daily actions is to prevent people's expulsion from their houses (due to non-paid rents). See: <http://500x20.prouespeculacio.org/>

4] On the tendency of some academics to emphasize the complexity of reality, instead of striving to elaborate understandable explanations, see Mitchell (2014).

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## Moral Pluralism

Li Yitian

Marx and Engels were not moral philosophers, but they had a unique and firm point of view about morality, which would today be understood as moral pluralism. It provides a distinctive analysis and interpretation of morality, which distinguishes itself explicitly from moral monism, moral universalism, moral particularism, and moral relativism.

The moral pluralism of Marx and Engels claims that there exist plural and diverse moralities in human societies, rather than one single or simple morality. There are therefore various moral phenomena, moral opinions, moral principles and forms of moral knowledge in human history and in the world today. These are distinctive and differ from one another so dramatically that they cannot be reduced to, or depicted as the representatives of, one morality. Accordingly, moral plurality appears not only as the divergence of morality among different nations or ages – as Engels says in *Anti-Dühring*: “the conceptions of good and evil have varied so much from nation to nation and from age to age that they have often been in direct contradiction to each other” (Engels 2010, 86) – , but also as huge moral gaps between, and even serious moral conflicts among, different classes or social groups in the same nation or age. That is why Marx, in *The Critique of the Gotha Program*, raises the following set of inquisitive questions: What is ‘fair’ distribution? Do not

the bourgeois assert that present-day distribution is ‘fair’? And is it not, in fact, the only ‘fair’ distribution on the basis of the present-day mode of production? [...] Have not also the socialist sectarians the most varied notions about ‘fair’ distribution?” (Marx 2010, 84). If moralities in human societies are plural and diverse, rather than being one eternal morality, as Marx and Engels maintain, then it is impossible for people to come to a complete and comprehensive moral consensus in a class society; and also impossible to find or construct any universal moral principles in the current global system based on nation-states. According to Marx and Engels, there are no natural or eternal moral conceptions and claims at all. Those moral ideas or theories which used to be thought of as universal and absolute ones, such as justice, equality, property, and rights, are actually either representatives of class interests or products of transient and impermanent historical phases. Moral imperatives such as “Thou shalt not steal”, which seem to survive all ages, will disappear in a classless society without private property.

According to Marx and Engels, the plural and diverse moralities in human societies are not particularistic. Of course, from the perspective of Historical Materialism, the morality in a certain society which is regarded as the product of its existing economic relations and social structure, is a particular one that has been growing and functioning locally. While in a class-divided society any morality of a class is suitable only for the class itself and can be interpreted as a particularity, as an ideological form it always strives to be universal and to be accepted and recognized by all social classes. In this sense the morality of a class society is a particular one, but not a particularistic one. Moreover, for Marx and Engels, the class society was still open to the possibility of a non-particular morality, because they believed that the proletarian morality contained revolutionary forces and future orientations, which would historically endure. When and only when a society “has not only overcome class antagonisms but has even forgotten them in practical life”, “a really human morality which stands above class antagonisms and above recollection of them becomes possible” (Engels 2010, 88).

According to the moral pluralism of Marx and Engels, morality in human societies is plural and diverse, without giving rise to relativism. It is a common mistake to



interpret moral pluralism as moral relativism. One of the reasons for this confusion is that both concepts take the diversity and variety of morality for granted and place emphasis on them. However, in contrast to moral pluralism, moral relativism makes the additional claim that the various moralities are incommensurable and cannot be compared effectively to show which are better or worse. In this way, it is natural for moral relativism to assert that all moralities in human societies are equally good, or equally not good. But Marx and Engels were not moral relativists because they would not accept this assertion. According to their Historical Materialism there are plural moralities in different societies or ages, but there is only one dominant morality in each society or age, that which is established within its specific historical and local perspective. This means that the diverse moralities and their social backgrounds cannot be valued with equal weight, since the advocates for any specific morality have to stay within that one moral standpoint. For Marx and Engels, morality is not an independent idea or view, but one of the social phenomena in the superstructure that are based on relations of production and developments of the forces of production. Against this background the dominance of some kinds of morality can be justified by the progressiveness of their economic base and social background. In this sense, a capitalist morality may be argued by the bourgeoisie as being better, while a socialist morality would be championed by the proletariat; however, the real foundations determining which is better are not actually derived from these different arguments, but from the different modes of production represented and supported by them. From a Marxist perspective, there are rational grounds for seeing the proletarian morality as prior to the bourgeois one, and the socialist morality as prior to the capitalist one. There is, therefore, no space for any kind of relativism within the Marxist framework.

In the contemporary debate, moral monism and universalism are difficult to justify when encountering plural moral phenomena and facts in modern societies, and most people are not prepared to accept moral relativism or particularism as it does not contribute towards making a moral consensus in a global era. Therefore, new explanations have to be found for understanding the ways in which human morality exists. As a description and interpretation of morality, moral pluralism not only refutes moral monism and universalism, but also moral particularism and

relativism. It is possible for us to accept moral pluralism and, at the same time, show our morality as being better, as long as we unite in solidarity with the class which represents the progressive mode of production.

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## Municipalism – From the Commune to the Municipalist Movements

Niki Kubaczek and Gerald Raunig

“The Commune was the definite negation of that State power, and, therefore, the initiation of the social Revolution of the nineteenth century,” Karl Marx wrote in the first draft of “The Civil War in France,” (Marx 1974, 249) composed during the Paris Commune. The Commune of 1871 was not a sudden insurrectionary event, emerging from nothing, a spontaneous filling of state power after the Thiers government fled to Versailles. It was the “definite negation of that State power”, the rising of social unrest, strikes, and new forms of assembly over the second half of the 1860s. Hundreds of assemblies, each with up to a thousand participants, successively changed the social glue in the quarters, and transformed daily life and modes of living in Paris and other French cities into an ecology of social revolution.

140 years later, in 2011, another movement of assembly spread through a significantly larger geopolitical space, from Arab North Africa through the Occupy movement in the United States to later occupation movements in Istanbul, Yerevan and Hong Kong. The most sustainable development of this social ecology, however, occurred in Spain, that is, in one of those European countries in which the multiple crises of 2008 bore the most severe effects. May 15, 2011 (15M) occurred as a mobilization in almost all Spanish cities, as a direct consequence of a call to rally by Democracia Real Ya! (Real Democracy Now!). The demonstrators stayed on and

occupied the central square of their city, and they started camps. Not for a night, not for a week, not even for a month, but for longer, up to 90 days. Collective moderation, lasting care work, the further development of the specific sign language, and the methodology of radical inclusion created for hundreds of thousands of people an intensive experience of self-organization in multiplicity.

An important success factor of the camps of the summer of 2011 rested in the fact that even as the occupations and assemblies in the various cities dissolved after some weeks, this did not mean they simply disappeared: they took on a new form, and spread themselves out into the different parts of the city. And while in 2014 a new party, Podemos, focused on the EU, and subsequently more and more on the national space, from the beginning of 2015 platforms and confluences were created in which the social movements around 15M, the PAH (the platform of those affected by mortgage, which played a decisive role in the genealogy of the current Spanish municipalisms), the *mareas* and social centres set themselves up at the level of the city and city administrations. With a view to the June 2015 municipal elections in Spain, a municipalist movement from below was established that extended across the country. Despite various names (Barcelona en Comú, Ahora Madrid, Cádiz Si se Puede, Zaragoza en Común, Participa Sevilla, Málaga Ahora, etc.) and differing aims, these platforms shared their reference to the principles and methods of the 15M movement and some other concepts and preoccupations: the question of debt, the re-municipalization of services, city planning that would work against the gentrification and touristification of Spanish cities, and the guarantee of social rights, especially with respect to housing and education.

The way the municipalist movement relates to the municipalities cannot be described as a subject/object relation, as a revolutionary subject that seizes possession of its object of desire. At its best, it does not take over the vessels emptied through the hollowing-out of representative democracy, the corrupt parties, or bureaucracy. Instead it changes the institutional form itself, the modes of subjectivation and instituent practices. It is a “negation of State power” in the sense that it happens before and beyond linear notions of development from a social movement to its institutionalization.

Not only in Spain, but in such different places as Napoli, Zagreb or the municipalities of Rojava, more or less radical experiences are popping up when the interest in them and in a neighbourly discourse continuously increases: Rebel Cities, fear-less cities, sanctuary cities, Stadt für Alle, anti-gentrification and tourism-critical initiatives, urban commons and urban undercommons, the right to the city. These experiences are less about the sudden emergence of left parties and platforms, or about the strategic victories in concrete voting periods. Beyond the mere dichotomy of movement and institution, what was and still is at stake with the Paris Commune as well as the municipalist movements is not the taking over of the institution without further ado, but rather experimenting with a new institutionality, with instituent practices and constituent processes.

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## Needs

Max L. Feldman

According to Agnes Heller, the concept of needs "plays the hidden but principle role" (Heller 1976, 27) in Marx's thought. Marx never defines 'need', but uses it as a value category judged differently throughout his work. The most important category of value for Marx is 'wealth', which acts as the condition for the *unfolding* of human needs. It serves as the ground for the free development of all aspects of the self, so Marx criticises the capitalist mode of production through the positive valuation of a humanity "rich in needs" (Heller 1976, 43-7). Taking this as a starting-point avoids the too-easy division between the 'early' and 'later' Marx. As Heller points out, Marx's later critique of political economy *presupposes* the category of need from his earlier humanist philosophy (Heller 1976, 38). This suggests that Marx's anthropological distinction between 'natural' and 'socially produced' needs remains in place throughout his writing, but with different points of emphasis.

For the young Marx, the natural needs for food, warmth, clothing, and shelter differ from those of animals because humans and animals produce differently. Animals produce things only when physical needs compel them to. Human beings, however, produce even when it is not necessary. In doing so, we push back and socialize nature, but we only *truly* produce when we are free from physical need (Marx 1975, 329). Thus, capitalism unnecessarily reduces social needs to meet the

mere need for survival. Heller, however, points out that ‘natural’ needs have a socially-produced *character*, so *only* social needs exist, but nature remains “the existential limit to the satisfaction of needs” (Heller 1976, 33).

The mature Marx modifies the social/natural distinction, beginning with a circular definition of need. The commodity is a thing which “satisfies human needs” (Marx 1990, 125). Heller observes that “[s]atisfaction of a need is the *sine qua non* of any commodity” (Heller 1976, 23) because there is no value (exchange-value) without use-value (need-satisfaction), but use-values (goods) can exist without value (exchange-value) if they satisfy a need (which is what defines a use-value). Since use-values satisfy needs, workers sell *their* use-value (labour-power) to meet the systemic need for the production of surplus-value and the valorisation of capital. Capitalist social relations cease to exist if labour-power does not produce surplus-value and the capitalist does not buy labour-power. Thus, under capitalism, labour exists only to satisfy “the needs of self-expansion of existing values” at the expense of the labourer’s own needs for development (Marx 1990, 620-1).

Needs became a popular topic of discussion among ‘Marxist humanist’ thinkers working on Marx’s anthropological categories. The concept is used in various context-specific projects, such as defending the humanistic Marx against McCarthyite and Soviet distortions (Fromm), and criticising the false needs created by post-war consumer society (Marcuse), the ‘official Marxism’ of Eastern European regimes (Heller), and the welfare state (Nancy Fraser).

For Fromm, Marx’s highest aim is humanity’s spiritual emancipation and the full realisation of our individuality (Fromm 2004, 2). To illustrate this, Fromm distinguishes between ‘real’ and ‘artificial’ needs based on Marx’s distinction between fixed ‘drives’ and merely relative ‘appetites’ (Fromm 2004, 51, 24). Our drives (hunger, sexual urges) are an integral part of human nature, but their form and relation to their object is culturally determined. Appetites are not integral but tied to the mode of production of a given society. For example, the need for money generated by the expansion and production of needs in capitalist society becomes “the

*inventive* and ever *calculating* slave of the inhuman, refined, unnatural, and *imaginary* appetites” (Marx 1975, 358-9).

For Fromm, artificial needs for consumer goods restrict our individuality by playing on the appetites. This alienates us from our *real* needs by reducing our relation to the world to use and consumption, turning us into a “*self-conscious* and *self-acting commodity*” (Marx 1975, 336). Fromm thinks our real need to become fully developed human beings can only be satisfied socially. Our creative self-realisation – as individuals and species-beings – requires us to open ourselves to others and the world with love and solidarity. This reveals the inseparability of subject and object as we become reconciled with others and, by extension, humanity is reconciled with nature (Marx 1975, 347).

Like Fromm, Marcuse distinguishes between true and false needs (Marcuse 2002, 7), but with a slightly different emphasis. For Marcuse, the difference is between ‘vital’ (food, clothing, housing) true needs and ‘one-dimensional’ false needs. Meeting our true needs is the condition for satisfying *all* our needs, individually and collectively. False needs *seem* like they are tailored to us, empowering us to make autonomous choices by appearing to flatten differences of race and class. Really, however, false needs offer only “repressive satisfaction” (Marcuse 2002, 9), forcing us to conform to a repressive society. Their satisfaction allows capitalist society to equalise social distinctions and flatten critical thinking, reabsorbing all opposition to stabilise the system by satisfying the false needs it has itself created (Marcuse 2002, 10).

Marx denied that the working classes would identify with capitalism. Marcuse, however, thinks consumerism has integrated them into new forms of social control. This impedes the development of a truly rational social order by transforming the structure of the human personality so we *recognise ourselves* in the things we buy (Marcuse 2002, 11). To challenge this, Marcuse thinks that *individuals* must determine their own needs for themselves when they are free from repressive conditions. However, deciding on true needs requires us to know what they are without

being manipulated. Liberation involves recognising and rejecting the system of false needs, replacing it with a new system of true needs.

Agnes Heller certainly argues that we should reject manipulated needs, but she thinks that social change can only come through the development of ‘radical needs’ – basic needs for creative self-objectification and community. Capitalist society creates these needs, and they are necessary for it to function. However, radical needs are *essentially unsatisfiable* within capitalist society, which impoverishes our needs by reducing them to the “need to *have*” (Heller 1976, 57). This generates the antagonistic force of radical needs. The dominant classes experience the need for ever-increasing quantities of private property and money, while the working classes are deprived of every need in order to satisfy the need for survival. However, Heller thinks that working classes are no longer the exclusive bearers of radical needs. Nancy Fraser’s use of empirical data and case-studies houses an implicit theory of need (Fraser 1989). Fraser avoids *identifying* real, artificial, or radical needs. Instead, she focuses on ‘needs talk’, an ambiguous discourse *about* needs that is neither inherently emancipatory nor repressive. This allows her to distinguish between ‘thin’ basic needs and ‘thick’ service or policy needs that can only be debated in relation to thin needs. ‘Needs talk’ is the medium for political debate between groups unequally equipped with discursive and non-discursive resources. In liberal societies, these groups compete to establish their needs, legitimate them, and render them hegemonic. Thus, Fraser’s aim is to politicise the *interpretation* of needs in the face of two challenges: the ambiguous sphere of the ‘social’, and the welfare state’s ‘juridical-administrative-therapeutic’ apparatuses (JAT).

The ‘social’ is the space in which needs can be politicized. It has the advantage of expanding what counts as ‘political’ and encompasses ‘runaway’ needs that domestic and market institutions cannot define. However, the social is also where successfully politicized needs are translated into bureaucratically-manageable claims administered by the JAT. The JAT is an impersonal bureaucracy that interprets our needs for us by separating them from our rights. Welfare claimants are required to interpret their own needs in terms of predetermined criteria – often laden with gendered assumptions – and offered corrective ‘therapeutic’ solutions that privatise

socially-produced problems. Fraser’s solution is that we become able to interpret and retranslate our needs into social rights, struggling for the meaning and political status of our needs.

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## Non-citizens

Yolande Jansen

Marx's work abounds with people who are not citizens, neither *bourgeois* nor *citoyens*: slaves, serfs, day labourers, vagabonds, the colonised, proletarians. They have a prominent place in his analysis of capitalism's origins. In his famous part 8 of *Capital I* (chapters 26–33), Marx interprets these origins as a continuous process of 'primitive accumulation' whereby land was taken away from its original users, enclosed and appropriated as private property. The previous users of the land, in European history often tenant farmers, had to enter the urban labour markets, and in this way capitalism first manifested itself within Europe, and subsequently beyond Europe through colonialism. Only by looking at the fate of these non-citizens can we see the threads and stitches on the inside of the metropole's embroidery: "This subject' [primitive accumulation], said Marx, 'one must study in detail, to see what the *bourgeoisie* makes of itself and of the labourer, wherever it can, without restraint, model the world after its own image" (543).<sup>1</sup>

Marx himself had experience with the right of the state to give and take citizenship. National passports had not yet appeared by the mid-point of the nineteenth century, but the papers and decrees that held poor and bothersome people in their place, or expelled them, had. Indeed, *the border was everywhere* was the case for more people than the rosy liberal picture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century often suggests; this

was in many ways comparable to today's migrant experience that *the border is everywhere* (Rosenberg 2006). Marx, the social and political critic, was indeed a bothersome person in the eyes of many authorities and was frequently refused residence or employment, therefore becoming the 'glorious, sacred, accursed but still clandestine immigrant [as] he was all his life.' (Derrida 2006 [1993], 219).

As a young progressive philosopher around 1840 Marx found no place at a German university and he became a journalist for the radical *Rheinische Zeitung*. When it was suppressed in 1843 he left for Paris, from where he was ousted in 1845 after Prussia asked for his expulsion claiming high treason against the Prussian state due to his critical views of the Prussian political economy. He was allowed to settle in Brussels, but only after he renounced his Prussian citizenship. That citizenship had been secured by his father in 1815 by converting to Protestantism, because as a Jew, when the Rhineland became a part of Prussia, he could not remain in public service; his father gave up his religious tradition for citizenship, but Marx did not give up his political views, and lost it again. In 1848 he praised the Revolution taking place all over Europe, and became expelled from Belgium too. With his wife Jenny and four young children he emigrated to England. The family lived in poor conditions for years, with only three of the seven children attaining adulthood. Marx died without citizenship, but liked to sign his letters with "Citizen Marx" (Sperber 2013).

## The 'Jewish question' or the 'citizenship question'?

During his stay in Paris, just before his flight to Belgium, Marx had impeccably exposed the paradoxes of modern citizenship in his *Zur Judenfrage*. These did not concern passports or borders yet, but the right of 'everyone' to take part in political power. The core of Marx's argument is that the equality that arises between *citoyens* through political emancipation – that is to say through universal suffrage and the general right to political activity – is, on the one hand, a necessary step out of feudalism, but on the other does not end the inequalities in social life, and even exacerbates them in many ways. The *homme/man* part of the *Déclaration des droits*

*de l'homme et du citoyen* refers to social life, and Marx reminds the reader that the human with 'human rights' is in practice especially the individual with property rights who stands in opposition to others in the '*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*'/civil society. This individual tends to project equality (and solidarity) onto the state, as does the religious human onto heaven. A further phase of human emancipation is necessary, wherein human beings learn to recognise themselves in other humans as free beings, and as all forming part of a *Gattungswesen*, a *species being*, as social, relational beings.

Why did the elaboration of this view receive the title *Zur Judenfrage* - why did it seem that citizenship specifically concerned the Jews? Marx developed his view as a contribution to the debate on the emancipation of the Jews in Prussia which arose in reaction to the provision of civil rights to (property-owning) Jews in France in 1791. He especially reacted to the view of his former friend Bruno Bauer, who had also published a *Zur Judenfrage*.<sup>2</sup>

A profoundly saddening aspect of this debate was that the question of citizenship played out in terms of 'The Jewish Question', focusing on the minority that did not yet have civil rights, rather than on the elephant in the room, namely the Christian bourgeoisie and its political privileges.<sup>3</sup> This focus inextricably linked progressive philosophy to Christian antisemitism. Bauer did address the relationship between Christian privileges and political citizenship, and criticised the recovery of the political power of the conservative Christian bourgeoisie after 1815 during the Restoration, particularly in Prussia. His intended remedy was the secularisation of the State: France and the U.S. were his models. Bauer radicalised those models, however, for the tough Prussian context, and asserted that not only religious privileges and religious institutions but religion in general should be abandoned - he also thought this because, like Marx, he had been convinced, after reading Feuerbach, that religion should be seen as alienation.

Although the political problem thus primarily concerned the religious privileges of the Christian citizens, Bauer used lines from theology and the intellectual culture of the Enlightenment to explain Judaism as the core of the problem - and to refuse

the Jews citizenship rights. He set forth Judaism as a more dogmatic, directly political and ritualistic religion than Christianity, and Protestantism in particular. Like so many others Bauer adopted the differentiation between the 'particularistic' Old Testament and the 'universal' New Testament, between dogma/law and freedom/love, which he inherited directly from Christian theology and German Idealism. Judaism thus actually became a metaphor for the practically stronger political Christendom, and *in addition* became presented as an objective problem *itself*.

This happened not only in the work of Bauer, but in an entire nineteenth-century intellectual tradition which developed in the European context, in which Athens and Jerusalem, and/or Indo-European/Aryan and Hebrew/Semitic traditions were compared with each other on the basis of several stereotypes, which were endlessly rehearsed in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century (Olender 2002 [1994]; Leonard 2012). Thereby (constructed) theological difference became the problem, instead of the actual religious networks intertwined with the state which were dominated by precisely those Protestants who had defined their own religion as 'purely moral'.

This is an important genealogy for seeing the possible problems with how again today religion in general (and especially 'Islam') has been made the core problem of 'particularism' in the public sphere by liberal authors focused on the 'question of secularism'. We can learn how this hides real power differences and hegemony from view both from critical work on the role of (secularising) Christianity in political processes in twentieth century Europe (such as f.e. Samuel Moyn 2015), and from the work on the racial and class (or neoliberal) dimensions intersected with religious differences and secularism today (f.e. Meer 2012; Jansen 2013; Topolski 2018). In this fashion, today's debates, focused on 'religion in the public sphere' and Islam in particular, create their own implicit non-citizens on the grounds of 'religious difference', all promises of assimilation (or integration in today's jargon) notwithstanding, and thus firmly place themselves in the exclusionary tradition of Bruno Bauer (see Farris 2015).

## Marx

Marx made short work of Bauer. He asked the question that preceded the too-superficial diagnosis and exclusionary 'solution' by Bauer, and analysed what makes religion and religious privilege possible, what sustains religion, and what different forms it can take. Consequently, secularism itself becomes a problem because it does not question the conditions of religion, but takes religion as a given – and thus also the religious privileges connected to Christianity, capitalism, and colonialism. He sees the separation between church and state as an important development in Euro-American history because it eliminates the direct political inequalities of feudalism, but at the same time it gives rise to the idea that religious differences, which are actually in many ways the manifestation of social inequalities, are essential differences in religious conviction and an exercise of religious freedom. An example of this for Marx is the combination of the cultivation of religious freedom, with on the one hand the *wall of separation* and on the other the huge social inequalities in the US. A step back is necessary: "We do not turn secular questions into theological questions [as in Bauer and German Idealism, YJ], we turn theological questions into secular ones." (Marx 1978 [1843], 31).

Human emancipation then means overcoming secularism as well: the human is no longer divided between the private 'religious group-member/owner' *bourgeois/homme* on the one hand and the public, 'secular' *citoyen* on the other. The 'human' in emancipation therefore concerns something different than the 'human' in human rights. Where for Marx human rights mostly concerned private law and especially property rights, and the security (and closing off) of the individual, 'human emancipation' was precisely about the way in which the human and the citizen can be brought together, and the social inequalities overcome.

In the second part of the text Marx continues with his correction of Bauer and encourages the reader not to focus on the Sabbath-Jew, on faith, or on religious difference, but on the everyday Jew; he shifts from theology to social history (Peled 1992; for the ambivalences of this claim, see Newman 1994; Nirenberg 2013). About the everyday Jew Marx then writes terrible things, making the Jew an

emblem for what he will later call capitalism, but still speaks here of usury and the veneration of money. For Marx, just like for Bauer and the Christian philosophers/theologians, 'the Jew' remains a figure for the connection between power/authority/law and religion, something that in historical reality was much more connected to the Christian bourgeoisie (and nobility) of Europe. The Jews were, as Yirmiyahu Yovel puts it, a 'mirror' of the Europeans and their problems with modernity, whereby they could project their inequalities and discontent onto the religious and/or racialised 'other' (Yovel 1998; see as well Nirenberg 2013).<sup>4</sup>

Marx thus remains firmly rooted in the 19th century, from which so much 20<sup>th</sup> century political life inherits and which unfortunately appears to be alive and kicking in the 21<sup>st</sup>. He wrote about citizenship as Hegel did about history, as a participant in an intellectual world of overly bold men who thought they could grasp 'everything' and who were among the main inventors of racial theories and stereotypical ideas about religion, culture, and difference. But on a more ambivalent note, we may also be missing some of the élan of Marx's grand narrative of emancipation, in a time in which as 'humanity', we utterly fail to organise ourselves justly or freely, with a US government composed of billionaires and millionaires, and a Euro-American (and increasingly global) citizenry clinging to its imperial lifestyle (Brand and Wissen 2016) and taking their passports as birthrights.

Ironically enough citizenship as national or European membership has thus, in part, become something of which Marx thought was primarily contained in the 'bourgeois' part of citizenship: a source of privilege, supremacy and enduring inequalities. In this respect there can be no non-citizens without reminding contemporary citizens that, next to their being *citoyens*, they are also the inheritors of those cruel *bourgeois*, even of the preceding 'nobility', who built their wealth on colonies and exploitation. At present the many investments in other notions of citizenship unfortunately cannot compete with that – the 'we are here ... because you were there', or rather, 'because you are there'. But still, *we are here*: to have a voice, to act collectively – those are the other potentials of the citizenship traditions, and they are not dependent on papers; everyone is a citizen, even if borders are everywhere.



## Notes

1] The Dutch get a place of honour in *Capital*: “The history of the colonial administration of Holland – and Holland was the head capitalistic nation of the 17th century – “is one of the most extraordinary relations of treachery, bribery, massacre, and meanness” [...] Wherever they set foot, devastation and depopulation followed. Banjuwangi, a province of Java, in 1750 numbered over 80,000 inhabitants, in 1811 only 18,000. Sweet commerce!” (538). Marx is quoting English historian William Howitt 1838, 9). What a nice contribution to a genealogy of our own post-truth *LTI* with terms like “verschrikkelijke volksverhuizing” (“terrible migration”, minister Halbe Zijlstra about refugees), “kopvoddentax” (“raghead tax”, Geert Wilders proposing a tax to be placed on wearing *hijab*) and “dobbernegers” (“float-niggers” about African refugees in the *Mer Mortelle*, an invention from Annabel Nanninga, who became member of Amsterdam’s city council in 2018 for the new right-wing party Forum for Democracy). And we also have the European race-to-the-bottom tax reduction competition with Netherlands first...

2] Marx’s booklet first received the title *Bruno Bauer: Zur Judenfrage* (Nirenberg 2013).

3] In the Netherlands one speaks of an ‘elephant in the china cabinet’, because people here are especially worried about the possible wrecking of the tableware – (we took the riches imported from the colonies really seriously).

4] The metaphor of the mirror was also used by Edward Said when he was analyzing the figure of the Semite as a shared figure between Judaism and Islam mirroring Christian-secularizing Europe, see further Massad 2015).

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## Non-simultaneity of the Simultaneous

Mauro Basaure

The non-simultaneity of the simultaneous (*Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen*) refers to the complex idea – put in formal and abstract terms – of a coexistence, in a same time (the simultaneous), of things that express or represent different times or that have different dynamics of development (the non-simultaneity). This idea is associated with Marxism and has had repercussions in many areas of knowledge, from structuralism – where a debt is recognized not only vis-a-vis Marx but also vis-a-vis Hegel and Bakhtin – and its attempt to introduce a dynamic dimension into language as a system, up to the sociology of generations and the sociology of modernization, passing through aesthetics and political thought, among others.

The phrase itself was coined at the beginning of the 20th century by the German art historian Wilhelm Pinder, and later introduced into the Marxist tradition by Ernst Bloch. Pinder refers to the coexistence, at the same time, of different generations and artistic styles. With this he recovered the intuition of Wilhelm Dilthey, who sought to rehabilitate – against the reduction of time to the purely quantitative and external (that of simultaneity) – the qualitative and internal or experiential time, which admits of non-simultaneity. In this tradition can be inscribed the sociology of generations, developed by Karl Mannheim, who, against Marx, sought to understand the emancipatory ethos no longer through the struggle

of social classes, but in terms of conflictive interaction and mutual influence between social generations, whose birth supposes the connection between age groups, conformation of a common identity and socio-structural conditions. The elementary intuition that brings together this tradition is that the present is fragmented; that not all contemporaries live the same present.

Bloch can appropriate this idea from a Marxist perspective because Marx, within the framework of his materialist dialectic, effectively deals with issues such as the unequal degrees of development of the modes and relations of production, between countries and within them. This was also a key reference point for Leon Trotsky and his theory of combined development, present in revolutionary Russia, in which archaic forms were amalgamated with contemporary forms of development. For Bloch, a typical case of the non-simultaneity of the simultaneous was Germany before the Second World War: a country in which – despite having a high degree of capitalist development – there existed enormous archaic, pre-capitalist, anti-democratic, anti-capitalist and also anti-Marxist tendencies and groups, on whose fertile ground the Nazi regime was nourished. The internal non-simultaneity of Germany also put it into a relation of non-simultaneity with respect to the rest of Europe, heir to the bourgeois revolution. The discussion about the difficulties of Germany's orientation towards the democratic West, instead of the authoritarian East, did not lose vigor in the 20th century, especially in the work of Jürgen Habermas.

Certainly, the notion of "concrete utopia", which Bloch develops in his *The Principle of Hope*, feeds on the notion of a fragmentary present, which not only inhabits the past but also includes prefigurations of a better future; in this case as concrete utopias. Anchored in the Marxist tradition and conserving its emancipatory ethos, Bloch affirms that the fragmentation of the present, as such, is insurmountable, and that in it there coexist past and future, and heterogeneity in the forms of developments. This has several key consequences in the development of Marxist thought.

The Hegelian dialectic of the development of spirit in history and the materialist dialectic of Marx coincide in identifying the non-simultaneity of the simultaneous as a moment that the dialectical movement seeks to overcome; that is, to reestablish the simultaneity of the simultaneous. The non-simultaneity between productive forces and relations of production is overcome by a revolutionary process. Non-simultaneity is the motor of history because it is conceived as a contradiction – between forces (expressing different historical times) – that impels development and, with it, its overcoming. Overcoming the contradiction is translated here as a regeneration of simultaneity. Marx's early awareness of different degrees of development is accompanied by a moment of overcoming, conceived as a restoration of unity or simultaneity. This teleological representation is no longer accepted. The consciousness of the non-simultaneity of the simultaneous is rescued as an important inheritance, but not the moment of unity.

In the 20th century, the notion of unequal developments and the irreducible autonomy of the various social spheres increasingly came to be accepted, as well as the difficulty of attributing greater value to one stage of development in relation to others. This has been expressed particularly in the criticism of the classical theories of modernization and in a relative consensus, today, on the existence of different patterns of modernization, which are internally complex and mixed, and on the existence of multiple modernities. This is especially relevant for non-European continental and Anglo-Saxon cultures.

When it comes to contemporary social theory, theories of social differentiation – especially systems theory – have convincingly argued that the independent functioning of societal subsystems is not an epiphenomenon or a mere moment or stage in a linear path of progress, but an expression of their mutual irreducibility. This has a double valency for Marxism: on the one hand, it constitutes a relevant critique of the materialist dialectic, in the sense of a rejection of the idea of a moment of unification or "simultaneization" of what, until then, was not simultaneous. On the other hand, the thesis of irreducible social differentiation strengthens the already old criticism of the orthodox reading of Marxism, according to which spheres such as law, art, education, or science, reflect the relations of production (according

to the base-superstructure metaphor). Against this orthodox interpretation, the figure of non-simultaneity and relative autonomy of the different spheres of social life is revitalized, initially by Marx himself in the *Grundrisse*.

A key result of this criticism is the openness to different ways of conceiving emancipatory developments, in culture or politics, for example. The recognition of the insurmountable character of non-simultaneity has led Marxism towards a conceptual path often conceived as post-Marxist. One of its starting points is the highlighting of politics and the political as autonomous from the economic as a last instance. The social struggle of the left moves away from any essentialism and the credit of an ontological privilege, and must be understood both as an anti-hegemonic struggle and a struggle for another hegemony; that is, to impose a progressive model of social cohesion against others, equally legitimate, proposed by its adversaries. The recognition of the insurmountable and irreducible character of non-simultaneity, whose intuition is largely due to Bloch, thereby also finds a conceptual habitat in the Marxism of Antonio Gramsci and the Post-Marxism of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. There is no doubt that, until now, the idea of non-simultaneity of the simultaneous belongs to the vocabulary of the margins of Marxism; margins that are little explored or known even to specialists. Its implications, however, as can be seen, are far from marginal, and we might therefore expect it to be part of the language of a Marxism for the 21st century.

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## Post-colonial Critique of Marxism

Nikita Dhawan

“Marx is all right, but we need to complete Marx” (Aimé Césaire 1972, 70).

The Eurocentrism of Marx’s materialist conception of historical progress has long been a serious bone of contention for many postcolonial theorists. By considering Western capitalist societies as more “advanced” than non-Western societies, Marx’s developmental model reinforces a Eurocentric mode of production narrative because it defines “primitive” forms of accumulation such as the “Asiatic mode of production” to be at a “lower” stage to the industrial capitalist economies of nineteenth-century Western Europe (Morton 2007, 74). Marx’s writings on British colonialism in India are a good example of his Eurocentric vision of world history: “England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindostan, was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfil its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.” (Marx 1853).

While on the one hand Marx bemoans the dissolution of family communities and domestic industry in rural Indian villages, he also claims that the idyllic village

communities form the foundation of Oriental despotism (Morton 2007, 74). Edward Said accuses Marx of reproducing an image of Asia as “backward” and “despotic” and rebukes him as follows: “Marx’s economic analyses are perfectly fitted thus to a standard Orientalist undertaking, even though Marx’s humanity, his sympathy for the misery of people, are clearly engaged. Yet in the end it is the Romantic Orientalist vision that wins out.” (Said 1978, 153-4).

Contesting Marx’s claim that “advanced” modes of production simply replace more “primitive” ones, Gayatri Spivak suggests that the “Asiatic mode of production” does not completely disappear in the era of global capitalism (1999, 91). Spivak outlines how the conditions of industrial production and labour in nineteenth century Western Europe, which were the focus of Marx’s analysis, have been increasingly substituted by a flexible, non-unionized and causal form of gendered and racialised workforce in the global South (Morton 2007, 73). Spivak thereby rethinks Marx’s labour theory of value in terms of the geographical dynamics of the international division of labour to outline the enduring relevance of the “Asiatic mode of production” for the contemporary global economy. Indeed, Spivak (1999, 167) praises Marx for anticipating the increasing importance of women’s labour power in modern industry and highlights new forms of superexploitation of non-unionized, subcontracted, precarious female labour under contemporary global capitalism.

Along similar lines, Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000, 93) questions Eurocentric historical narratives claiming unity and universality by contesting their assumption of subaltern labour as “primitive”. By focusing on disparate histories of subaltern labour, Chakrabarty thwarts the understanding of “pre-capitalism” as simply a “primitive” stage in the linear history of global capitalist accumulation (Morton 2007, 94). Spivak as well as Chakrabarty urge western Marxists and global justice activists to adopt a more critical vocabulary that considers heterogeneous registers of subaltern labour. Furthermore, Spivak’s focus on the reproductive bodies of subaltern women in the global South pluralizes and diversifies the narrow definition of productive labour proposed by Marx’s labour theory of value.

At the same time, although Spivak is invested in labour movements and the social redistribution of capital towards economic justice, she questions whether a programmatic socialist alternative to capitalism is feasible (Morton 2007, 89). Spivak rethinks socialism as the *différance* of capitalism as opposed to its overcoming or sublation. In contrast to Marx's belief that capitalism would inevitably give way to socialism because it contains the seeds of its own destruction, Spivak proposes socialism as the persistent and enduring ethical and political task of undoing capitalism: "a constant pushing away – a differing and a deferral – of the capital-ist harnessing of the social productivity of capital" (1999, 430). This moves away from an evolutionary linear narrative to a more indeterminate understanding of post-imperial futures.

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## Precarias a la deriva

Julia Tirler

Precarias a la deriva is a feminist initiative situated between research and activism, active in and around Madrid from 2002 onwards. In June 2002 Spanish unions organised a general strike in response to changes in the labour legislation. A group of women, most of them active in the feminist social centre *La Eskalera Karakola* in Madrid, were unsatisfied with the lack of representation for addressing concerns about their unstable, flexible and precarious working and living conditions, and doubted the effectiveness of strike mobilization as a resistance tool. With these considerations in mind the group spent the day of the general strike on the streets asking women if they were striking, and what were their views regarding the strike and their precarious conditions. The initiative *Precarias a la deriva* (literally: Precarious women adrift) arose from this experience and organised its first *deriva* (literally meaning 'drift') in October 2002. The method of *deriva* is appropriated from the Situationist International, a group of artists and activists active between 1957 and 1972 mainly in France, that used purposeless wandering in the city – *dérive* (French for 'drift') – as a performative and subversive technique for experiencing the urban space differently and to provoke social change. In *Precarias a la deriva*'s version the situationist *dérive* is released from its bourgeois and masculine connotation of the *flâneur* in order to be used as a situated, "open and multisensorial"<sup>1</sup> (Precarias a la deriva 2004a, 26) method in the regular everyday space of the

participating women. For several months an open and flexible group of women met almost weekly to wander around the relevant places constituting their precarious working and living conditions in the fields of communication work (translation and language teaching, call centres), domestic work, catering, nursing, and in a later stage also sex work, scholarships, advertising, mediation and education. The *derivas* were inspired by the idea of coming together to create a cartography of these feminized precarious working and living conditions by exchanging experiences, sharing reflections, and taking the self as a starting point for common struggle and resistance (Precarias a la deriva 2004a).

Feminist critique of the general strike as a resistance tool is already mentioned in the 1970s in the context of a general critique of Marx' analysis of capitalism, which points out that Marx failed to consider the importance of unpaid reproductive work carried out by women, and the role reproductive work plays in the (re-)production of labour-power (Federici 2009). *Precarias a la deriva's* analyses and practices were inspired by (Marxist) feminist critiques and took them a step further. They were interested in reproduction in a broad sense and found contemporaneous rearticulations of a feminist critique on reproduction in the works of Donna Haraway (1991), Chela Sandoval (2000), Anna G. Jónasdóttir (1995), Rosi Braidotti (2002), Cristina Carrasco (1999), Jane Flax (1995) and Cristina Morini (2001). Following Michel Foucault, Judith Butler and Carole Pateman they took analyses of multiple forms of power relations into consideration, such as the “sexual division of labour, control of sexuality, normative heterosexuality and family socialisation” (Precarias a la deriva 2004a, 22-23).

*Precarias a la deriva* stressed the importance of an analysis of contemporary capitalism which takes reproduction as well as the history of colonialism, patriarchy and domination based on racism into account. With regard to post-Marxist approaches on immaterial or affective labour (Lazzarato 1996; Hardt/Negri 2000) *Precarias a la deriva* pointed out that some approaches deriving from immaterial or affective labour theories did not consider the effects of racializing and patriarchal domination (Precarias a la deriva 2004a, 23). Moreover, they made the body as “a place of the expression of domination and exploitation” (Precarias a la deriva 2004a,

23) a subject of discussion and referred to feminist theories on the public and the private, stressing the importance of public visibility and linking precariousness with «questions of care and sexuality» (Precarias a la deriva 2004b).

Based on this theoretical framework, *Precarias a la deriva* analysed precariousness not as just confined to wage labour but as an ongoing, heterogeneous process that affects the whole existence, and as a tendency which is not new – most of the work carried out by women and people outside of the global north is and always has been precarious – and is affecting hitherto secured sectors of society (Precarias a la deriva 2004a). They defined precariousness as “a juncture of material and symbolic conditions which determine an uncertainty with respect to the sustained access to the resources essential to the full development of one's life”, an approach which aims at “overcome(ing) the dichotomies of public/private and production/reproduction and to recognize the interconnections between the social and the economic” (Precarias a la deriva 2004b).

Even though today Precarias a la deriva are no longer active under this name, their theories and practices continue to inspire and stimulate militant research practices and initiatives within as well as outside of Spain.

## Notes

1] All translations from Spanish: JT

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## Precarization and Credit

Isabell Lorey

### Credit as exploitation of existence

In his 1844 text “Comments on James Mill”, Marx thinks about credit in a way that helps to understand the politico-economic entanglement of debt and precarization in the present. Already in his critique of Mill’s *Elements of Political Economy* Marx formulates thoughts that would become his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*. Marx problematized the logic of credit and debt as separating the individuals from one another, destroying social connectedness and blocking common political action.

In the logic of credit, Marx makes clear that it is “man’s *moral* existence, man’s *social* existence” that is at stake and which becomes valued. In the relation between the creditor and the debtor “a man *recognises* another man by advancing him a certain quantity of value.” It is a relation of trust and distrust: the creditor should not be a usurer or a swindler, the debtor should be “a “good” man [...], a man who is “able to pay.”” It seems that the main relationship in debt economy is one in which “a rich man gives credit to a poor man whom he considers industrious and decent.” But this, Marx emphasises, is nothing but “the romantic, sentimental part of political economy”. The creditor passes a moral judgement on ‘the poor’,



assessing his creditworthiness. As return it is not the social capacities that count but the 'blood and flesh', the 'morality' and the 'existence' of the 'poor': "That means, therefore, that all the social virtues of the poor man, the content of his vital activity, his existence itself, represent for the rich man the reimbursement of his capital with the customary interest." For Marx, it is not the labour that is exploited by the credit but the ethical action of the 'poor', the work of self-constituting, the way of life (Lazzarato 2012, 54-5). The aim is not to allow the 'poor' a better life, but to not let him pass by: "It is the death of his [the creditor's] capital together with the interest."

In credit, however, money is not the medium of exchange, it has "returned out of its material form and been put back in man, but only because the man himself has been put outside himself and has himself assumed a material form. Within the credit relationship, it is not the case that money is transcended in man, but that man himself is turned into *money*, or money is *incorporated* in him. *Human individuality*, human *morality* itself, has become both an object of commerce and the material in which money exists. Instead of money, or paper, it is my own personal existence, my flesh and blood, my social virtue and importance, which constitutes the material, corporeal form of the *spirit of money*. Credit no longer resolves the value of money into money but into human flesh and the human heart.

#### *Governing Through Precarization*

For over two decades now in Europe, in the ongoing hegemonic of financialized capitalism, a form of governing has been established that does not legitimise itself by guaranteeing social protection and security for the majority of citizens, but is rather characterised by social insecurity and precarization.<sup>1</sup>

Governing through precarization means that the precarious are no longer solely those who can be marginalised to the peripheries of society. Due to the individualising restructuring of the social welfare state, the deregulation of the labour market, and the expansion of precarious employment conditions, we currently find ourselves in a process of the normalisation of precarization, which also affects larger portions of the middle class. In this normalisation process, precarization has

become a political and economic instrument of governing.<sup>2</sup> Social security, and also therefore social reproduction, are being increasingly de-collectivised; they are again being privatised, but this time handed over to the self-responsibility of the individual and capitalised. As a result, more and more people are only able to fund retirement provisions, healthcare, and education by taking on debts. At the same time, the productivity of the self and of sociality in low-wage or unpaid positions leads directly to indebtedness. De-collectivisation and its accompanying individualisation of risk, self-management, and self-responsibility, as well as the capitalisation of reproduction, are the central anchoring points in the current neoliberal regime of precarization for an economy of guilt and debt.

#### **Guilt and Debt**

Precarious living and working conditions and the privatisation of protection against precariousness are conditions of both a prospering financial capitalism and its concomitant debt economy. As Marx has already pointed out, this economy is based on the expansion of productivity that involves less work in the traditional sense than subjectivation. A subjective figure is needed to assume responsibility, to take on debt, and to internalise the risks both as guilt and as debt: a personality that is doubly indebted and responsible for oneself. This personality plays a decisive role in enabling and stabilising neoliberal governing through precarization and insecurity, for there is no longer an outside of debt. Everybody is indebted in one or another way: "If it is not individual debt, it is public debt that weighs, literally, on every individual's life, since every individual must take responsibility for it" (Lazzarato 2012, 31). As Maurizio Lazzarato reminds us, Marx was one of the first to expressly link the debt economy with morality, that is, with specific modes of subjectivation. In the Christian genealogy, becoming indebted cannot be separated from burdening oneself with guilt. Incurring debt results in guilt through the promise to repay creditors. The indebted person promises to continuously behave in such a way that they are able to give back what was given to them, so that they can pay back their debts. In the debt economy, this financial exchange constitutes subjectivation. The obligation to pay back debt corresponds to that disciplinary

self-governing that ensures not only subjectivising and social productivity, but also compliance. To place one's behaviour at the service of repaying debt means to place life and sociality at the service of debt and to make oneself even more governable.

To understand the governmental intertwining of precarization and debt, it is important to bear in mind that precarization means dealing with the unforeseeable, with contingency, of acting without being able to predict what the near or distant future will bring. It is precisely this ability to deal with contingency that is exploited by the loan contract, preventing agency that might start something new or refuse to work under the given conditions. The financial promise of the repayment of debt must go on, even if it requires something decidedly paradoxical of the indebted person: in their precarization they must estimate something inestimable, namely, the future. The logic of credit means not only controlling the future in the present, but also through self-governing to make precarization and the precarized person calculable in the incalculability of their life and to hold them under control – yet doing so primarily on behalf of the creditor.

In self-precarization, however, this paradox of calculating the incalculable is reversed, the temporality of debt is phantasmically inverted: by investing the self in what is supposedly one's 'own' future, the doubly indebted personality consciously accepts precarization in the present. The fantasy of shaping the future means accepting precarization in the present. For the illusion of a predictable and better time-to-come, self-precarization appears to be a necessary investment above all amongst the northwestern European middle classes. What is abandoned in this self-investing projection of a future is the agency that might start something new in the present. Taking action, as Marx already pointed out, requires forces that emerge from sociality, from connectedness with others, from precariousness: trust in oneself, in others, and thus in the world. And it is precisely this trust – this ethical relationship – that gets exploited by credit and indebtedness. In the normalisation of precarization what becomes apparent precisely in the crisis of the debt economy is that there is no future, and that at the same time a new present simultaneously opens through this in which people care about how they want to live *now*.

## Notes

1] In *State of Insecurity*, I draw distinctions between three dimensions of the precarious. The first dimension, *precariousness*, denotes the dependence of every form of life on the care of and reproduction through others; on connectedness with others, which cannot be shaken off. Bodies remain precarious and need environments and institutions that provide security and support. The second dimension corresponds to the hierarchization of this necessity. I call historically specific forms of insecurity – which are politically, economically, legally, and socially induced – *precarity*. These forms of insecurity are upheld by modes of governing, relations to the self, and societal positionings that in turn shape the third dimension of the precarious, which, drawing on Michel Foucault, I call *governmental precarization* (cf. Lorey 2015).

2] At the same time, people continue to be legally, economically, and socially marginalised and excluded through structural inequality, through precarity. Legal status and mobility are being hierarchised in order to facilitate extreme forms of exploitation.

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## Prefiguration

Mathijs van de Sande

In 2011 and the ensuing years, the world witnessed a global wave of assembly movements such as *Occupy Wall Street*, the Spanish *Indignados*, the Turkish Gezi Park protests and *Nuit Debout* in France. What distinguished these various movements is that they often did not seek to acquire state power, and in many cases refused to even engage with the existing institutions and procedures of representative democracy (Mouffe 2013). Also, they did not often have a comprehensive programme. Instead, within the confined space of an occupied square, these movements created a miniature version of the kind of society that they sought to realise on a grander scale. They experimented with alternative forms of decision-making and new forms of movement organisation and mobilisation, and they established alternative networks of redistribution, education, and communication (Graeber 2013; Howard and Patt-Broyden 2011). This particular form of political activism, which prioritises the experimental realisation of a future ideal in the ‘here and now’, is often described as ‘prefiguration’ or ‘prefigurative politics’ (Van de Sande 2013).

Where exactly does this concept of ‘prefiguration’ come from? Its introduction in the academic literature on radical politics is relatively recent. Stemming from the tradition of biblical exegesis (Auerbach 1984; Gordon 2017), it was first introduced in studies of anarchist and syndicalist workers’ movements in the late 1970s (Boggs

1977). But, arguably, the term refers to a particular view of revolutionary change that has divided the international workers’ movement since the 1860s (Graham 2015). In those days, the ‘First International’ was split between anarchist and Marxist factions, which had very different views on what revolutionary strategy their respective movements should pursue.

According to Marx and his followers, the acquisition of state power was an important step in the establishment of a ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ (Marx 2010a, 355). The state would gradually dissolve only *after* the proletariat’s rise to power (Marx and Engels 2010, 86-7). Until then, it should function as a revolutionary instrument – an instrument that, it should be noted, would change significantly in the hands of the proletarian class. Marx’ great opponent within the International, the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), insisted instead that the social revolution must be established immediately, and thus cannot be preceded by a distinctive *political* revolution. The state had to be abolished “on the first day of the revolution” (Bakunin 1992, 130). This insistence was much to the annoyance of Marx, who objected that the revolutionary struggle must be directed against the structural basis of capitalism and private property – not its superficial workings and mechanisms, such as the state or hereditary capital (Marx 2010b).

It is clear who ‘won’ the debate eventually: in 1872 the anarchists were expelled from The International, and Bakunin – who in his own days was no less prominent than Marx – went down in the books as a marginal figure in the history of the international workers’ movement. Nevertheless, I hold that some important lessons can be learned from Bakunin today.

First, Bakunin held as a principle that the means of revolutionary struggle must be consistent with its ends. He foresaw that the use of state power as a revolutionary instrument would only lead to a reproduction of its inherent injustices (1990, 178). One simply cannot expect to establish equality or freedom on the basis of inequality and oppression: liberty, Bakunin claimed, “can be created only by liberty” (idem, 179). Thus the workers’ movement should already try to embody its ideal image of a future, decentralised and federated social order: “having for its objective not the

creation of new despotisms but the uprooting of all domination, [it should] take on an essentially different character from the organization of the State" (1973, 255). This insistence, that the means of radical change be consistent with its ends, has continued to inform the anarchist tradition ever since (Goldman 1924; Franks 2003), and can also be encountered in the practices of recent assembly movements, such as *Occupy Wall Street*.

Second, it follows that the struggle against the existing order, and the formation of a radical alternative to it, are complementary parts of the same revolutionary process. One does not follow upon the other, as Marx held, but they always presuppose each other (Van de Sande 2015). Anarchists have therefore always maintained that revolutionary movements should not only seek to topple the capitalist order, but should also gradually give rise to the political and organisational structures that could eventually *replace* it. Whereas Bakunin's contemporaries called this strategy 'embryonism' (Nettlau 277-8), later syndicalist movements would describe it as an attempt to 'build a new society in the shell of the old' (Schmidt and Van der Walt, 2009, 21). In today's activist jargon, finally, the term 'prefiguration' is used in reference to the same strategic rationale (Graeber 2013, 232-3). This indeed is precisely what recent assembly movements sought to establish in the long term. Ideally, the prefigurative miniature society that was erected in Zuccotti Park would eventually serve as "a stepping-stone toward the creation of a whole network of such assemblies" (idem, 43), which would make the current order redundant.

One may argue that this prefigurative approach is not necessarily incompatible with a Marxist analysis of capitalism or revolutionary politics – especially given that both the state and the structure of capital have changed significantly since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Autonomist Marxists such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, for example, tend to describe the *multitude's* resistance against capital precisely in terms of 'building a new society in the shell of the old' (Hardt and Negri 2009, 8; 301). John Holloway, in turn, has demonstrated why a militant strategy against everyday alienation in capitalist society entails the prefiguration of a radical alternative (2010, 153-4). Besides, there *are* places in his oeuvre where Marx seems to realise the relevance of a prefigurative approach – for example in his reflections on the Paris

Commune of 1871, which "could but betoken the tendency of a government of the people by the people" (2010b, 217). But he, and many followers in his wake, also hastened to add that durable and radical transformation of society would always require the seizure of state power (Lenin 1987) and a centralist party as the platform of organisation (Dean 2016). More generally, the question of how exactly a prefigurative politics must lead to successful political change in the long term, remains open for debate.

In any case, the prefigurative experiments of anarchist movements in the past, and of assembly movements such as *Occupy Wall Street* in the present, do pinpoint at least two blind spots in Marx' thought. First, they illustrate that the aim of revolutionary politics cannot be reduced to matters of social-economic equality or divisions of labour. Political equality, democratic participation, and freedom of association are equally important objectives that a radical politics worth its salt must address. Second, the emergence of prefigurative movements and strategies suggest that it is not sufficient to pursue a vague concept of revolutionary change in a distant future. We also want to acquire at least some idea of what it might mean to live in a radically different society *today*.

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## Queering Capitalism

Gundula Ludwig

In addition to exposing capitalism as a social system based on exploitation of humans and nature, Karl Marx also pointed out that capitalist societies produce, and fundamentally rely on, a fetishism that is the veiled yet crucial effect of commodity production where social relationships *among people* are transformed into *economic relationships*. In this way, commodities are no longer perceived as embedded in social relations or as products made by people, but instead appear as objects that have an intrinsic exchange value. The “commodity-form, and the value-relation of the products of labour within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material relations arising out of this. It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy we must take flight into the misty realm of religion. There the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race. [...] I call this the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour as soon as they are produced as commodities, and is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.” (Marx 1867/1966, 165).

In this light, Marx’s analysis of capitalism can be read as an urging to fold political and epistemological dimensions of critique into one other. Inspiration can be taken from Marx’s critique of political economy to call attention to *forms of knowledge* and *social relations* that lie beyond what is assumed to be ‘truth’, ‘fact’ and ‘reality’. Marx’s encouragement to challenge these assumptions resonates with queer critiques. Applying a queer perspective holds the potential of deepening Marx’s critique by expanding this epistemological-political interrogation to include bodies, sexuality, subjectivity, and desire, which are realms Marx never addressed.

A queer perspective on capitalism brings to light that commodity fetishism is not the only fetish that capitalist societies are built upon. Commodity fetishism is accompanied by what one might call biopolitical fetishism. Michel Foucault has urged us to delve further than Marx and demonstrated in his own work that biopolitics is “an indispensable element” of capitalism (Foucault 2007, 140). Capitalism not only oppresses people, bodies and (certain) lifestyles, it also requires technologies of power that exert “a positive influence on life, endeavor[ing] to administer, optimize, and multiply it” (ibid., 137), and it also relies on technologies of power that incite and produce certain lifestyles, bodies, and subjectivities. A merit of queer theory is that it has fleshed out Foucault’s insights into capitalism and shown how sexuality and heteronormativity are crucial technologies for biopolitics. Queer theory has unpacked sexuality and heteronormativity showing how they enable – albeit in a very subtle way – subjects and bodies to be constituted, governed, normalized, and rendered ‘natural facts’ that, as such, play a key role in the (re-)production of capitalist society. Heteronormative social relations together with the heteronormative knowledge-power nexus create fictions of coherent identities and bodies that have a ‘natural’ sex. These fictions of ‘natural’, ‘coherent’ bodies, subjects, and identities are necessary for a capitalist mode of production, because this “imperative of coherence” is “infused in the needs of capitalist reproduction” (Cover 2004, 304). The wage worker not only has to be considered doubly ‘free’, but also be rendered a subject within the heteronormative knowledge-power nexus, which makes the ‘free wage worker’ intelligible in the first place. Wage work, the spheres of production and consumerism, require what Pauline Boudry, Brigitta Kuster and Renate Lorenz call “sexual labor” (1999), which produces coherent and

intelligible, embodied and sexual subjects, and simultaneously allows the social character of bodies and subjects to disappear.

Furthermore, a queer critique of capitalism unmasks how sexual politics are deployed to organize consent to capitalism as a social system. Despite being a system of exploitation and domination, capitalism's stability is not solely engendered by "the silent compulsion of economic relations" (Marx 1867, 899) but also by a consensus of the majority of the population, as Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci highlight. Desire and sexuality are key technologies of power for organizing such a consensus. The rigid heteronormative sexual politics of Fordism not only mirrored mass production and mass consumption, they also helped to organize consensus to an overarching social order built upon stability, orderliness, and predictability. In addition, the rigid sexual politics of Fordism brought forth a nation state with a strict heteronormative sexual regime that would supposedly set them apart from non-western nation states whose populations were framed as 'backward' and ascribed 'perverse' sexualities and gender roles. The neoliberalization of capitalism has made sexual politics more 'open', inclusive, and 'tolerant' by integrating individuals with certain non-heterosexual lifestyles who act in accordance with heteronormative normality. These transformations of sexual politics are key to organizing consensus to a social order based on a flexible mode of production, the precarization of wage-work and modes of living in general. Framing sexual plurality and diversity in terms of a society comprised of self-determined, free and self-responsible subjects is a technology of power that helps to make neoliberalism's principles of "privatization and personal responsibility" (Duggan 2003, 12) desirable. Moreover, neoliberalized sexual politics incite a desire to belong to a national 'we' and to a nation state that now frames 'sexual tolerance' and 'sexual diversity' as hallmarks of western modernity, democracy and civilization, while simultaneously constructing non-western societies as 'backward' due to their assumed lack of tolerance toward non-heterosexual lifestyles (Puar 2007). Thus, sexual politics are not just 'side-effects' of political economy, they are fundamental technologies of power that secure the reproduction of capitalism. They do so in a subtle manner by deploying heteronormative and racialized phantasms of 'sexual normality' and by inciting a desire for organizing consensus to the capital mode of production and the state.

*Queering Capitalism* is a project that draws on Marx's radicalism while offering decisive twists to his insights. It proposes that the economic sphere is inseparable from the sphere of sexuality, bodies, desires and that these do not constitute 'the other' of the capitalist mode of production. Instead they are key forces and "a motor of economy" (Dhawan et al. 2015, 3). Sexuality, desire, and bodies are infused with economic needs and conditions, while at the same time sexual politics are used to secure the reproduction of a capitalist mode of production, the sphere of consumption, labor relations, and the state. Consequently, *Queering Capitalism* shows that capitalism not only has an impact on sexual politics, but that sexual politics are technologies of power that help organize consensus and incite a desire for historically concrete modes of production and statehood.

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## Queerness

Sudeep Dasgupta

Indifference, if not outright hostility, have marked the relations between the disciplinary formations around the study of sexuality (including feminist, gay and lesbian, and queer theory) and engagements with Marx's writings and Marxist thought in general. The seeming lack of fit between critiques of sexual normalization in queer theory, and materialist analyses of capitalist exploitation and domination, can be approached through juxtaposed terms such as need vs. desire (Morton 1995), recognition vs. redistribution (Fraser 1995), sexuality vs. class, domination vs. exploitation, identity vs. class (Butler 1998) etc. I do not mean to imply there is no intrinsic relation between the terms. However, within the disciplinary domains of Marxist materialist approaches and queer critiques of sexuality (and gender), these terms have formed points of organization around which sometimes strident articulations of fundamental opposition are constructed. Take for example the introduction to the anthology *The Material Queer* which claims that queer theory opens "a new space for the subject of desire, a space in which *sexuality becomes primary*" (Morton 1996, 1, emphasis in original). He further argues that postmodern theorizations of queerness assert "the *primariness of sexuality/libidanimity, the autonomy of desire, and the freedom of the sexual subject from all constraints*" (ibid., 2).

Morton claims to speak from a specific form of *Marxist* materialism which analyses sexuality from the vantage point of the "mode of production", in opposition to the postmodern queer focus on "mode of signification" (ibid., 3). This stark opposition frames queer theory too simply. Firstly, one would be hard put to find any queer theorist who would assert "the freedom of the sexual subject from all constraints". In fact, as the sociologist Steven Seidman argues, queer theory and politics aims at a sustained critique of all forms of "normalization" of sexuality precisely by attending to the discursive and material resources through which institutions constrain sexual subjects (2001, 326). The overlap of interests between Marxist and queer analyses of sexuality can be articulated precisely by asking *how* both approaches understand, analyze and critique the constitution of the sexual subject. Two examples which help address this question illustrate the possibility of such an overlap. The historian John D'Emilio's (1983) now canonical, if controversial, essay "Capitalism and Gay Identity" provided a compelling historical and materialist analysis of how shifts produced by the introduction of capitalism provided the conditions of possibility for the emergence of a gay male sexual *identity*. Rather than arguing for a *causal link between capitalism and homosexuality*, his analysis articulated the *relation between economic transformation and the naturalization of sexual identity*. The essay was not an example of economic reductionism (sexuality is an effect of capitalism) but of a conjunctural understanding of how forms of sexual selfhood (identity) emerged through changes in the economy. It demonstrated precisely the sort of materialist understanding of how sexuality as an object of discourse is converted into an identity, and later a form of identity politics. In other words, the relevance of Marxist analyses of capitalism for the formation of *sexual identity* (rather than sexuality) was established with important implications for queer theory.

The overlap can also be seen in Danae Clark's (1991) essay "Commodity Lesbianism". Clark's analysis of the appearance of an ambivalently pitched "lesbian" in popular culture, including advertising, does not prioritize the "mode of production" over the "mode of signification". Instead, it tracks the relationship between the dominance of consumer culture in contemporary capitalism and the strategic deployment of depoliticized identity politics by the advertising industry



through a textual analysis of the discourses and images of “lesbians”. Modes of signification and production are analyzed together at a specific historical moment to produce an analysis of a queer subject, the “lesbian”, who can be consumed by niche audiences (such as lesbian subcultures) while also appearing suitably normalized and therefore palatable for heterosexual women.

The influence of Foucault’s *History of Sexuality: Volume 1* for queer theory, as well as the importance of Derridean deconstruction and Lacanian psychoanalysis in the formation of queer theory, however, clearly points to the possible problems for thinking Marxist and queer theory together, since these influences do not sit easily with an understanding of “materialism” within Marxist thought. The now widespread intellectual purchase of the concept of “matter”, from Judith Butler’s *Bodies that Matter* (1993) to the recent New Materialisms, have been understood as offering a quite different understanding of what a materialist analysis could be. However, particularly in the work of Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and others, the crucial importance given to analyses of the normalization of the sexed and gendered body, and of (homo)sexual desire can be related to the more historical-materialist analyses of sexuality. If, as Butler argues, the sexually-desiring gendered body is not natural, but is materialized continually through the discursive and institutional operations of a hetero-normative social matrix, then an analysis of the historically-specific constellation of economic, political and cultural forces which constitute sexuality would seem quite closely related to queer analyses of processes of normalization.

In Kevin Floyd’s (2009) book-length *The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism*, precisely such a rapprochement between queer theory and Marxism is substantially attempted. The conjunction of the terms “reification” and “desire” in the title already point to the inadequacy of Morton’s formulation of a stark opposition between materialism and idealism, need and desire, use-value and exchange-value (1996, 5). Floyd clearly states “in explicitly approaching the insights of queer critical practice from a Marxian perspective, my central objective is to indicate some of the ways in which this very move requires a fundamental rethinking of that perspective itself” (2009, 4). Rather than *overcoming* one

perspective by another, Floyd rethinks the central categories of “totality” and “reification” within Marxist thought, and that of György Lukács in particular, to understand how in different historical moments from the late 19th century in the United States, homosexual desire gets reified through discourses of masculinity, labour, consumption, and pleasure. By reworking, critiquing and deploying Lukács’ concept of reification, and substantially engaging with the work of Judith Butler and Michel Foucault, Floyd analyzes the shifting normalization of masculinity and homosexual desire in the context of post-Fordist modes of economic deregulation and the rise of consumer culture. At the same time, he expands on and fleshes out the discursive normalization of sexuality (his focus here is primarily Judith Butler’s work) by asking how at specific historical moments, economic transformations in U.S. capitalism, and political and social discourses on masculinity produce discourses of sexual normalcy and deviance. The psychoanalytical, deconstructive, and discursive approaches to sexual normalization within queer theory are integrated with materialist critiques of sexual politics by deploying *reworked* understandings of desire and reification. The transformation of central concepts in the fields of queer theory and Marxism is convincingly deployed to expose the poverty of both simplistic queer critiques of Marxism and of Marxist critiques of queer theory. Given these writings, one could argue that the stark opposition between the Discursive and Textual Queer Subject of Desire on the one hand, and the “Material Queer” on the other, misrepresents a potentially fruitful if fractious dialogue between Marxism and queer theory.

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## Religion as the Opium of the People

Zafer Yılmaz

"Religion is the opium of the people" is one of Marx's most well-known statements, as emphasized by many scholars working on Marx's ideas on religion.<sup>1</sup> However, the complexity and ambivalence of this metaphor are not obvious, even for careful readers of Marx. Marx's ideas on religion are mainly assessed as "marginal" in comparison to his comprehensive critique of political economy. Contrary to this general view, I argue that Marx's short writings on religion stay at the very center of his critique of modern political and economic relations, and of the dominant form of political community in modern society. His perspective provides crucial insight in understanding both the "insistent return of the religion to public space" and the sources of religion's enduring power in mobilizing masses in modern society (See Dobbs-Weinstein 2015). Marx believed that the secret of this power of religion lies in the constitution of political relations, suppression of human freedom, and organizations of capitalist social relations. However, Marx's analysis of religion goes beyond any functional analysis. I will discuss very shortly that this power of religion arises from, first, the affective and imaginary dimension of religion in the organization of communitarian social relations, and from its ability to mobilize conventional beliefs and opinions in order to structure mass psychology. Both of these powers are actually the result of the historically specific form of the political community and articulation between the political and economic fields in

capitalist society. Marx's analysis of religion does not depend on the negligence of the symbolic, imaginary or affective dimension of religion. Rather, he illuminates the nature of religion's transformation and its new form under capitalist social relations, and why the critique of religion is essential for the realization of human freedom.

In his introduction to *Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Marx declares that "religious suffering is at the same time an expression [*Ausdruck*] of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people."<sup>2</sup> It is a well-known fact that the first part of this paragraph is neglected on behalf of the last one. However, this selective reading does not shed light on Marx's approach to religion. For Marx, the question of religion is not a question of definition. He is interested in how religion works in historically specific contexts. More specifically, how does it work under the condition of a secular political and capitalist order? In this context, Marx provides deep insights into why religion has played such a crucial role in the organization of people's affection and imagination, explaining why this is an area for the condensed expression of human suffering, hopes and fears. This role of religion cannot simply be understood as a reference to the internal characteristics of religion. Religion structures the emotional dispositions of its believers as a system of belief, imagination and meaning. However, reasons for its function as an opium cannot be found within religion *per se*. On the contrary, to understand why religion functions as an opium, we should look more carefully into the political field, which conditions religion's function in modern society. Hence, we should change "theological questions into secular ones," as Marx did.

Religion cannot be understood just as a reified, self-alienated, or inverted existence of human essence. It contains strong imaginary and affective dimensions, both of which play a crucial role in the organization of both compliance and defiance of subjects in capitalism. However, the sources of this affective capacity must be sought in the organization of the political field (in its abstractly universal character) and the relationship/contradiction between the existence of humans in civil society

(egoistic individuals) and political society (abstract citizenship as an expression of species being). For Marx, if the existence of religion can be seen as the "existence of a defect, the source of this defect can only be sought in the nature of the state" (see Marx 200, 51). He underlines that a human individual is a just an "imaginary participant in imaginary sovereignty" in modern society (Ibid., 53). In a political community, where he/she "is valued as communal being," he/she is actually "robbed of his real life." In this abstractness, Marx discovers the religious presuppositions of the democratic state and political community. In the absence of any concrete relation within the political community, or due to the existence of political community as an imagined communal being against egoistic relations dominant in civil society, religion arose as the most important sphere for the canalization of affections and imaginations. This shows that there is a substantial link between the way religion functions in capitalist society and the organization of modern society.

As Michel Löwy has shown, the formulation "religion is the opium of the people" does not actually specifically belong to Marx (See Löwy 1996, 5). What is more distinctive in Marx's approach to religion is his postulation of the critique of religion as the *arche* of all critique.<sup>3</sup> But why is the critique of religion so significant for Marx? More importantly, what does the critique of religion mean in today's secular capitalist social order? Part of the answer lies in the bond between the critique of religion, political society, and economic relations, as incisively argued by Dobbs-Weinstein. The critique of religion cannot be restricted to the religious sphere. In that context, any critique that aims to displace and challenge generalized conventions, should start from a critique of religion, since religion contains an archetype of modern opinion formation, and management of mass psychology, as a sphere of belief, imaginations, and emotions. In its relation to human freedom and democracy, both Spinoza and Marx underline this character of religion, as succinctly discussed by Dobbs-Weinstein. For the emancipation of the human mind from generalized conventions, opinions, imposed prejudices, and reactionary emotional states, the link between religion, political economy, and politics should initially be discovered.

Marx's critique of religion has been generally reduced to a critique of ideology or one-sided analyses of religion. However, Marx's aim is not to overcome religion or to simply search for its material or spiritual sources in human society. Rather, he politically analyses how religion functions in a secular capitalist society to open the way for human emancipation. In that context, even if the critique of religion seems to play a marginal role in Marx's analysis of capitalist society, it actually plays a key role in his discussions of different sources of self-alienation in modern society. The subsumption of the imaginary and affective power of humanity within religion, and the conversion of these capacities into an "illusionary happiness", are directly related to the constitution of the political community. Insofar as political communal being continues to become an abstract entity, culminating in the idea of abstract citizenship and sovereignty, and insofar as there is a separation between humans' existence in civil society and their existence in political society, religion will continue to be a main resource for building an "affective community", expressing defiance and compliance. For these reasons, the true realization of human essence, the real overcoming of religion, cannot be reduced to the discovery of an inverted human essence within religion, as Feuerbach suggested; rather, it depends on the analysis of historical and political relations, which condition this process of inversion permanently.

As a result, Marx does not simply expose the dual character of religion, namely its role in the sustenance of relations of domination, and in containing unfulfilled desires and utopian promises as an "imaginary sphere of not-yet-being." This aspect of religion is comprehensively discussed and analyzed by Marxist authors such as Ernst Bloch, Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin and Michael Löwy. However, Marx's own attempt to formulate a critique of religion as the critique of modern society is still waiting for its followers to realize human emancipation.

## Notes

- 1] For a general analysis of Marx's ideas on religion, see Turner 1999.
- 2] I prefer McKinnon's translation of the paragraph, which is slightly different from the translation of David McLellan. See McKinnon 2006, 21.
- 3] This aspect of Marx's writings on religion is succinctly analyzed by Dobbs-Weinstein 2015.

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## Sabotage

Darin Barney

This much is certain: Marxists have never favoured sabotage as a form of political action capable of advancing the class struggle towards the goal of ending capitalism.

The fate of sabotage in the Marxist imagination was more or less sealed by Engels' and Marx's assessment of Luddite machine-breaking during the onset of industrial capitalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (See Hobsbawm 1952). In his path-breaking account of the working class in Victorian England, Engels concluded of machine-breaking and factory destruction that, "This form of opposition was isolated, restricted to certain localities, and directed against one feature only of our present social arrangements. When the momentary end was attained, the whole weight of social power fell upon the unprotected evil-doers and punished them to its heart's content, while the machinery was introduced none the less. A new form of opposition had to be found" (Engels 2009, 222). Two decades later, Marx would reiterate this assessment in Volume I of *Capital*, lamenting that the "enormous destruction of machinery" in England during this period served only to provide authorities with "a pretext for most reactionary and forcible methods" of quelling working class revolt. He continues: "It took both time and experience before the workpeople learnt to distinguish between machinery and its employment by capital, and to

direct their attacks, not against the material instruments of production, but against the mode in which they are used" (Marx 1978, 404).

Thus, the essential lines of the Marxist position on sabotage were established. Sabotage indulges the appetite for immediate, local and temporary relief from the symptoms of capitalist exploitation by destroying its instruments. It reflects the irrationality of an immature, undisciplined working class prone to self-defeating action in the absence of political leadership informed by a deeper theorization of material conditions and the dynamics of history. This appraisal set the stage for a history in which sabotage became the *bête noire* of organized working-class movements committed to a Marxist-inspired political trajectory of unionization, strike, party, revolution, and state power.<sup>1</sup> This antagonism was not limited to Europe and North America. In 1988, for example, the valiant South African trade unionist Nimrod Sejake decried the ANC's call for sabotage against the apartheid state and economy as "dangerous to the revolution, self-defeating and an act of desperation." Advocating for strike tactics that would culminate in seizure, not destruction, of the means of production, Sejake argued that sabotage signalled "the inability of workers in that place or at that time to unite and use their collective power...sabotage is the method of individuals or isolated groups who divert attention away from the real task – which is to organise and mobilise the working class to use its full social power in mass actions" (Sejake 1988, 86-7).<sup>2</sup>

Sabotage has been largely disavowed by Marxists, but it has nevertheless persisted alongside related forms of direct, disobedient and disruptive action in the history of militancy and social struggles everywhere (see for example Fox Piven 2006; Scott 1985). Within the context of workers' movements, sabotage has figured prominently in the anarchist, syndicalist and autonomist traditions in both theory and practice (see Pouget 1913; Negri 1979; Graeber 2009). Beyond workers' struggles narrowly defined, sabotage has also been a core tactic in slave resistance, anti-colonial liberation struggles, indigenous militancy, the women's movement, the militant liberalism of hackers and whistleblowers, and radical environmentalism.<sup>3</sup> Saboteurial tactics used in these contexts have exceeded those historically associated with the specific acts of machine-breaking that drew the scorn of Marx and Engels,

and have included forms – such as, for example, the general strike – that many would identify with the advance of the workers’ struggle. This suggests that those wishing to theorize the shape and potential of contemporary forms of militant political action would do well to pay more attention to the category of sabotage (and its analogues) than more narrow Marxist accounts might allow.

Among the many things to be learned from serious consideration of the history and philosophy of sabotage is that it cannot be reduced to violence and destruction, despite the tendency to do so by both the institutional left and the authorities of capitalist states. In 1916, legendary IWW organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn described sabotage as “the conscious withdrawal of the workers’ industrial efficiency” (Gurley Flynn 2014). The “conscious withdrawal of efficiency” can take many forms, most of which can be considered violent only from a perspective that equates disruption of capitalist value accumulation with violence. Indeed, as most critical accounts of sabotage have pointed out, if sabotage is the conscious withdrawal of efficiency, then capitalist business owners are the greatest saboteurs of all.<sup>4</sup> This suggests that sabotage – the strategic disruption of established regimes of accumulating value and power by subtracting from their efficiency – might provide insight into the basic logic of politics in capitalist settings, across the multiple relationships of inequality that structure them.

This is the implication of Evan Calder Williams’ observation that sabotage “is not an operation with a definite content, but an exacerbated relation” (Calder Williams 2016). In Williams’ account, “sabotage is not just present in but is constitutive of capitalism,” and all that stands between sabotage that consolidates capitalist hegemony and sabotage that unravels it is a “fine thread of deviation” (Ibid.). To make sabotage the name for transformative political potential in the context of contemporary capitalism – across the multiple relations of inequality and domination characteristic of capitalist societies – is to affirm the tendency of systems to produce the energies and harbour the agencies of their own undoing. We might recall Marx and Engels here: “not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons... What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own

grave-diggers” (Marx and Engels 1972). Marx also taught that in order for political action to be historically effective, it has to take forms appropriate to the material conditions with which it is confronted. Actually-existing capitalism no longer produces the forms of effective working class action – trade unions, strikes, working-class parties – associated with its earlier periods. Multiple social, economic and technological factors have contributed to this condition. But, what about the saboteurs – those who are positioned to pull fine threads of deviation in order to exacerbate relations (exploitation, racism, sexism, etc.) that already compromise the “efficiency” of the system in a decisive way? Those whose sabotage actions might produce erosion, if not revolution, particularly under conditions in which capitalism relies for its functioning on articulated infrastructures that it cannot police or secure perfectly? These grave-diggers are, potentially, everywhere.

## Notes

- 1] See Dubois 1979, especially Chapter 3 “Theories: For and Against Sabotage”, 97-126.
- 2] It bears noting that while the ANC’s sabotage campaign undoubtedly contributed to bringing down apartheid, it did not succeed in the establishment of anything resembling a workers’ state.
- 3] A list of references to works representing each of these categories would be too long. For one example that crosses several of them, see Ihonvbere 1992.
- 4] Thus, in a famous passage, Thorstein Veblen (1921) describes the capitalist economy as “a voluminous running administration of sabotage”.

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## Satire

Daniël de Zeeuw

Hegel, or at least this is the impression we get of him as we browse through the *Wissenschaft der Logik*, wasn't exactly your average funny guy, that much is clear. Yet there's actually a lot of humor and ironic wit to be found in notoriously difficult works such as the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Similarly, the work of Marx is considered solemn and serious, simultaneously a work of high theory and a moral and political condemnation of the grave injustices of the capitalist system. Yet throughout his work Marx also showed himself a great literary satirist of capital and its protagonist class, the *bourgeoisie*. In *To the Finland Station*, Edmund Wilson attributed to Marx "the satanic genius of the satirist" (1940, 256) and crowned him the greatest ironist since Jonathan Swift, whose *Directions to Servants* can be read as a user manual for domestic class struggle.

However, whereas Hegel's witty remarks appear at most as an aside - a brief moment of comic relief in between two twisting movements of the Dialectic and thus remaining external to the System - in Marx satirical deconstruction seems to penetrate much further into the method of critical exposition itself, marking an immanent and constitutive moment thereof (Gandesha and Hartle 2017). This immanence of satirical laughter in the practice of philosophical critique is one important characteristic separating the German *idealism* of Hegel and his younger

followers from Marx's *materialist* understanding of society. Given that literary form is never merely an ornament to thematic content, but is interwoven and expressive of it, just as the content in turn dialectically informs the mode of its presentation (or *Darstellung*), how does Marx's satirical rhetoric link up to the larger project of establishing a historical-materialist world view?

In an essay on the literary status of Marx's *Capital*, Keston Sutherland argues that style cannot be separated from the critical thrust of the work as a whole: "Marx was the author not simply of a theory of capital and of social existence under capital but also of an immensely daring and complicated satire of social existence under capital [...] in which risks and failures of style are arguments in themselves, irreducible to theoretical propositions." (2011, 5). Woven through the formal schemes of *Capital* are Marx's descriptions of the exploitation of labor as a Dantean inferno where "all is cruel discomfort, rape, repression, mutilation and massacre, premature burial, the stalking of corpses, the vampire that lives on another's blood, life in death and death in life." (Wilson 1940, 313).

The laborious cutting off of the scientific concept of capital from its satirical and bodily grotesque staging largely defines much of the subsequent reception of Marx, not in the least those committed to working out a proper "Marxist" method and theory, Sutherland argues. The impulse to arrive at the pure theoretical essence of *Capital* by thinkers such as Louis Althusser proceeds by filtering out and eliminating the rhetorical force of *Capital* qua literary performance intended to critically affect, shock, disgust and transform its readers. These readers are not abstracted as "rational persons" as in the liberal-humanistic tradition, nor idealized as principally open to the communist case as in orthodox Marxism – but rather as duped and malleable, two-faced actors in the capitalist tragi-comic play that Marx sets out to describe, in a way that presumes a post-naïve conception of theoretical discourse as part of a permanent conflict over the meaning and constitution of the social world, even when materialist critique rehearses social contradiction without pretending to resolve it.

In contrast to recognizing the import of literary style in *Capital*, the impulse to get at its pure conceptual essence by Althusser and others, Sutherland observes, is ultimately still a bourgeois and idealist desire that, neutralizing the uncomfortable uncanniness of reading Marx as he journeys through history and its various modes of production, succumbs to that philosophical desire for Form that Marx mocks, and that a materialist method was to overcome by forcing thought to turn against itself, to violently bend its Icarian upward movement, to face the dirt head on. Part of this violence is self-inflicted, in that critique cannot exclude itself from its own destructive, cannibalistic moment. Through satire it turns against itself, tearing at its own outside until it reaches philosophy's imaginary center, inciting "the hatred of philosophers for those blind realities that are as insensitive to philosophical categories as rats gnawing books" (Bataille 1985, 35).

Sutherland discusses several recurring instances of satirical invective in *Capital*. He analyzes at length Marx's use of the term *Gallerte* (which translates as "gelatinous mass") to provide a grotesque image of life under industrial capitalism as a supplement to the more scientific category of abstract labor time. The collectivized chains of laboring bodies represent a massive 'expenditure of human brains, muscles, nerves, hands, and so on'. *Gallerte* signifies this formless, monstrous mass of perfectly quantifiable and exchangeable commodities. Another concept Sutherland considers to be of an essentially satirical nature is that of fetishism (which is one of the concepts in *Capital* Althusser will attempt to downplay as pre-scientific). By showing that the modern world of capitalism is possible only through the establishment of the commodity as a fetish, Marx inverts the smug truism, in the false consciousness of the enlightened citizen, that he – and with him European civilization as a whole – has finally overcome the crude, cannibalistic and superstitious primitivism of non-western social forms; the infantile, speechless speech of the barbarian being the necessary counterpart to Kant's *Mündigkeit*, as the inhuman that negatively delineates the human from without. The work from which Marx borrows this term is representative of the misplaced superiority complex that Marx satirically undermines by applying it to the colonizers: de Brosses' *Du Culte des Dieux Fétiches* (1760).



For Marx, however, the fetish is real precisely insofar as it is an illusion. It would not do justice to this paradox of the “objective appearance” to attribute to the hidden abode of production more ontological primacy than the stage on which bourgeois ideology plays out. If anything, for Marx the latter is *more* real, given that what counts as real is always already a projection *by* the stage, *of* its supposed outside, such that the stage erases itself as excluded from the reality it constructs, a result of which being that the reality appears to retrospectively determine the stage as *its* illusory outside. But this is precisely why Marx’s own entrance on the stage of ideology counts: the literary trope of the hidden abode is one of his most powerful props, a theatrical asset in one of philosophy’s most influential productions. The mask is the metaphor or symbol that captures this curious epistemological threshold, where neither the image that the mask projects nor the underlying face that it hides is primordially real or given. Rather, it is only the structure of dissimulation that the mask in its inherent duplicity inscribes that is real. Just as, when unmasked, the mask stands exposed as projecting its own reality as external to itself, so any invocation of reality remains trapped in its own referential logic and can only be an effect of *another* mask.

One does not, to return to the first paragraph, simply “browse through” Hegel’s work as one would with an illustrated magazine at the dentist’s. Instead, such works are laboriously studied. Additionally, my choice to refer to the German rather than English titles of Hegel’s works satirically flags the German language as pompous and pretentious—mocking the ostensive display of cultural and academic capital implied in fetishizing the text’s language of origin. Marx’s choice for using “bourgeois” over the more conventional “Bürger”, besides signaling the crucial difference between *bourgeois* and *citoyen*, produces a similar effect from a German-English perspective, where French signifies the language of pretense and free-floating Philosophy *par excellence*.

This adds to the more general rule that words from languages other than the primary language of the text tend to invoke their own conventionality and, by implication, that of language as such, rather than acting as the self-erasing, transparent vehicle for their referent, as words are supposed to do for them to achieve any kind

of ideological effect. The same effect is achieved by the mixing of different genres and rhetorical repertoires. Most people think that the etymology of satire refers to the satyr, a Greek Dionysian mythical figure, but it actually traces back to *satura*, which means to *mingle* or *mix* (different artistic genres, forms of speech, etcetera). (Ullman 1913). Marx’s *Capital* is a satire in this etymological sense too, as factory reports, newspaper articles, long forgotten scientific tracts, philosophical systems, jokes, proverbs and anecdotes, ancient myths, are all dragged into the same whirlwind of chapters, sections and overly elaborate footnotes.

This deconstruction of the “signifying effect” of discourse – the magic convergence of words with things – by emphasizing the conventional and contingent character of language, forcing it to fold back onto and so partly undo itself, is also one of the main effects of satire, especially in its use of parody. Appropriating an established literary form from without, forcing it to become self-reflexive, and dismantling its magical powers of (dis)simulation, parody reveals any argumentative structure to depend on a seemingly infinite repertoire of rhetorical tropes, sophisms, metaphors and analogies. As such, parody is profoundly anti-philosophical, at least in the Platonist and Christian traditions, which assume as a necessary condition of truth the eradication of the materiality of language, its transcendence of rhetoric and style toward the Idea. Instead, satirical parody constantly invokes and lives off precisely this, its own materiality and that of the discourses it mimics and parasitizes.

Seen in this light, Marx’s use of the French *bourgeois* has the critical effect of showing that what this term refers to is far from given and must be constructed as an object of critique through the very satirical gesture that suspects its deflected existence. ‘It is tempting to doubt that the bourgeoisie was a definable entity at all’ – ironically, it is with this observation that Peter Gay concluded his massive five-volume work *The Bourgeois Experience* (1984–1998). But the bourgeoisie is an especially classless class in that it does not seem to need or want to recognize itself as a class, at least not in the way of the ruling classes that went before it. “I find it hard to understand why the bourgeois dislikes to be called by his name ... kings have been called kings, priests priests, and knights knights; but the bourgeois likes to keep his incognito.” (B. Groethuysen, *Origines de l’esprit bourgeois en France*, as

cited in Moretti 2013, 6).

But this refusal of self-identification as a class, I would argue, is paradoxically constitutive of its very identity and functioning as a class. The identification of the bourgeois with its own class is “displaced” in the psychoanalytic sense, either onto a fictitious middle class or onto the plane of generic humanity, so that when the bourgeois says “we” he never means “we, the bourgeoisie”, but “we, humanity”, “we, the people”. This displacement of one’s identity as the ruling class, and the concomitant evacuation of power from the realm of public representation, presents a unique problem for the practice of ideology critique. Although the task of critique is still to unmask the image the bourgeois falsely upholds of himself, here it is in fact the *absence* of a clear image, of a delimited class identity, that must be countered, by constructing such an image through which the bourgeois is forced to become, for himself, part of the class that he refuses to identify with. Always stalling reconciliation, satirical invective is one of many critical tools at Marx’s disposal for generously inviting the bourgeoisie to finally become what it is – and suffer from it.

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## Social Reproduction

Ankica Čakardić

If our task is to propose a theoretical and historical model best suited for understanding the origins of the oppression of women under capitalism, then we should without a doubt consult Marx. Although we cannot speak of a systematic analysis of the oppression of women in any of Marx’s work, his explanatory methodological framework is key for a feminist analysis of women’s oppression. Marx’s critique of the trans-historical assumptions of classical political economy, his definition of the specificity of capitalist societies as a “collection of commodities”, as well as his account of the circulation of capitalist production and reproduction as a whole, are fundamental elements of social reproduction theory (SRT). Starting from these theses developed by Marx in *Capital* (Marx 1982), SRT focuses on one specific aspect of the relation between productive and reproductive labour which is left under-theorised and undeveloped in Marx. What we are referring to are the implications of Marx’s famous theory of the circular course of capital, which describes how surplus value is created through the processes of production and reproduction. It is exactly this theory that serves as a starting point for SRT because it provides an entry into the “tacit” issue on the link between the market and household relations. Following from the above, the goal of SRT is to grasp also what is not “visible” in the process of production – it asks what kind of

processes enable a worker to show up at her workplace and examines the conditions of her existence and the social processes related to those conditions.

In order for society to survive it needs to reproduce. SRT points out that 'reproduction' may allude either to the process of the regeneration of the conditions of production which enable society to survive, or to the regeneration of humankind. Rosa Luxemburg in her *Theory of Accumulation* (Luxemburg 2015) explains that reproduction is repetition, a 'renewal of the process of production', hence implying that the regular repetition of production is the general precondition of regular consumption and human existence (Čakardić 2017). In what way do we use these kinds of Marxist premises while thinking in terms of SRT?

If we use the example of classic industrial labour in the capitalist mode of production, the capitalist secures through the market the means needed for the operation of a factory and the workers' wages. Wage labour enables the working class to secure/consume the items and services necessary for life – like food, clothes, covering household expenses – however, those needs are met in the household, not on the market. Moreover, in order to eat, one needs to take into account the preparation of food; if one buys clothes, they need to be washed and maintained; and, also, physical care needs to be provided to elderly members of the family or children. Unlike labour in the 'productive' sphere of society, domestic labour belongs to the 'reproductive' sphere. Both capitalists and labourers consume food, one way or another, prepared at home; their clothes must be washed, or they depend on some other kind of reproductive labour. Therefore, their life and work in the productive sphere is mediated through a range of activities belonging to the domestic sphere. SRT claims that this structural and spatial gap between the reproductive and productive spheres of society indicates the fundamental reason for the oppression of women in capitalism. On what basis can we make this claim? Following tradition, historically, the reproduction of the working class is undertaken by women outside the productive sphere, and is unpaid. It essentially refers to three interconnected processes: a) the regeneration of workers and their livelihood; b) the maintenance of non-workers which relates to the care of

children, the elderly and the unemployed in general; and c) childbirth as the reproduction of new labour force. This indicates the ontological level of the problem: activities not defined as labour (food preparation, cleaning, care, breast-feeding, giving birth), and lacking any market value, are not considered labour. The mathematics is clear here: if the labour in question is transferred to, for example, a capitalist with an employee, she would be obliged to organise a range of activities, investing time and money into procuring services which are traditionally free and a burden to the household.

Marxist feminism has tackled the problem of social reproduction in various ways and therefore we cannot speak about one unified SRT tradition. Feminists supporting the 'Wages for Housework' campaign, close to the Marxist autonomist tradition in a dual-system manner, offered one approach.<sup>1</sup> A second (materialist) approach is found in Christine Delphy's characterisation of social reproduction as a series of actions within the domestic sphere, which she sees as a separate mode of production (Delphy 1980). Finally, Lise Vogel offers a 'unitary' approach, in which social reproduction is taken to mean the simultaneous reproduction of both the labour force and class society (Vogel 2013). It is also worth recognizing that socialist-feminist approaches, for example that of Aleksandra Kollontai or Rosa Luxemburg, also offered an important account of the relation between productive and reproductive work.<sup>2</sup> The main difference between the autonomist Marxist-feminist tradition, based on dual-system theory, and the unitary approach suggested by Lise Vogel, is in the understanding of surplus value. Unlike dual-system theory, Lise Vogel rightly argues that reproductive labour does not produce surplus value, only use-values. Despite the afore-mentioned difference, it is important to note that even if the domestic-labour debate established a view of domestic work as productive labour and a process upon which the reproduction of capitalist society as a whole depends, this debate undoubtedly served as a springboard for establishing a 'unitary' analytical framework to theorise domestic labour as an integral part of the capitalist mode of production.

What is also important for SRT is that it treats the question of (multiple) oppression (gender, race, sexuality) in a direct relation to capitalist production rather than in the fashion of an "add-on" strategy which treats oppression through

a functionalist lens. To put it succinctly, SRT is a sort of methodology used to explain labour and labour power under capitalism, by which we further develop Marxist theory and use its implications for applying SRT to our current conjuncture.<sup>3</sup>

## Notes

1] Compare for example Dalla Costa and James 1975; Fortunati 1996; Federici 2012.

2] Compare for example Luxemburg 2004; Kollontai, “Communism and the Family”.

3] For a more detailed recent account on SRT compare Bhattacharya 2017.

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**Social Republic**  
Bruno Leipold

## Introduction

Marx refers to the social republic during two periods: the 1848 Revolutions and the 1871 Paris Commune. In both of these contexts, Marx uses it to refer to a republic where the working class holds political power. However, in the former context he uses the social republic to refer to the working class taking charge of the bourgeois republic and turning it towards social emancipation; in the latter context he adds the idea that the working class transforms the political institutions of the bourgeois republic in order for it to be an appropriate vehicle for achieving social emancipation.

Other terms used by Marx to distinguish his preferred republic from the bourgeois republic, include the “republic of labour” and the “red republic”. All of these terms should be seen as roughly equivalent to the better-known phrase “dictatorship of the proletariat”.<sup>1</sup> In the conclusion, I briefly consider some interpretive and political advantages of using the social republic compared to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

## The 1848 Revolutions

The term social republic came to particular prominence amongst radicals during the 1848 Revolutions. It formed half of the popular slogan “the Democratic and Social Republic (*la République démocratique et sociale*)”, which became the rallying cry for socialists and republicans fighting for a republic that would both institute universal male suffrage and go beyond political reform and address the social question (Agulhon 1983, 164–165; Jennings 2011, 56; Sperber 2005, 206–207; and Pilbeam 1995, 215–218).

Marx argues that when the French Republic was declared in February 1848 each class interpreted the republic in its own way. The working class wanted a “*social republic*”, the petty bourgeoisie a “*democratic republic*”, and the bourgeoisie a “*bourgeois republic*” (Marx 1979 [1852], 109, 181–182).<sup>2</sup> Marx argues that the underdevelopment of the working-class in 1848 meant that the workers’ social republic stood little chance against its competitors, and it was therefore decisively crushed during the June Days uprising. Marx thus claims that the “*social republic* [only] appeared as a phrase, as a prophecy” of things to come (Marx 1979 [1852], 181). Instead, the starring role in the revolutionary drama was played by the victorious bourgeois republic. Marx maintains that this republic secured the economic and political interests of the capitalist class, and thus merely replaced the rule of the king with the rule of the bourgeoisie. He condemns the “*bourgeois republic* [as] the state whose admitted purpose is to perpetuate the rule of capital, the slavery of labour.” (Marx 1978 [1850], 69).

## The Paris Commune

The events of the Paris Commune provided a striking example, for Marx, of the working-class finally being in a position to take political power. He thus notes that while the “cry of ‘Social Republic’” in 1848 could only signify a “vague aspiration after a Republic that was not only to supersede the monarchical form of class-rule, but class-rule itself”; in 1871 the “Commune was the positive form of that

Republic” (Marx 1986a [1871], 330–331). The social republic appears a number of times in Marx’s discussion of the Commune, most prominently in a short section of the first draft of *The Civil War in France* entitled “Republic only possible as avowedly Social Republic” (Marx 1986b [1871], 497), where he claims that,

a Republic is only in France and Europe possible as a “Social Republic”, that is a Republic which disowns the capital and landowner class of the State machinery to supersede it by the Commune, that frankly avows “social emancipation” as the great goal of the Republic and guarantees thus that social transformation by the Communal organisation.

Marx here makes four main points about the social republic: (a) political power is held by the non-capitalist and non-landlord classes;<sup>3</sup> (b) it aims at social emancipation; (c) the state is replaced by a Commune; and (d) social emancipation is facilitated by the state’s transformation into a Commune. It is this final point, that the social republic “guarantees...social transformation by the Communal organisation” that is the key innovation in Marx’s idea of the social republic. Marx argues that using the existing political institutions of the bourgeois republic would frustrate the aim of social emancipation. As he says, the “working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes”, since the “political instrument of their enslavement cannot serve as the political instrument of their emancipation.” (Marx 1986a [1871], 328; Marx 1986c [1871], 533).<sup>4</sup>

Marx argues that the social republic differs from the political institutions of the bourgeois republic, by (i) replacing representative government with popular delegacy, through imperative mandates, representative recall and frequent elections; (ii) subordinating the executive branch to the legislature; and (iii) placing the state’s organs under popular control by making them elected, accountable and deprofessionalised (Leipold, forthcoming). Marx argues that through these institutions the Commune had “supplied the Republic with the basis of really democratic institutions.” (Marx 1986a [1871], 334).

## Conclusion

I suggested in the introduction that ‘the social republic’ plays a similar role in Marx’s thought as the more famous term ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’. Viewed from contemporary eyes, there is some interpretive and political advantage to the social republic over the dictatorship of the proletariat, since the latter term has fallen prey to two subsequent developments that have obscured its initial meaning. First, the term ‘dictatorship’ has evolved from originally referring to the Roman Republic’s constitutional provision for an individual to be temporarily granted extensive (but still limited) power during state emergencies, to describing autocratic rule that is permanent and constitutionally unconstrained (Draper 1986, 3:11–16; Nippell 2012). Second, the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ has become inextricably associated with the one-party state and the restriction of political and civic freedoms. The social republic avoids this ideological and historical baggage. It allows us to see more clearly that Marx believed that achieving social emancipation required properly democratic institutions.

## Notes

1] Marx uses the terms interchangeably, writing (in reference to the peasant) “The *constitutional republic* is the dictatorship of his united exploiters; *the social-democratic, the red republic*, is the dictatorship of his allies.” (Marx 1978 [1850], 122).

2] Marx also refers to the bourgeois republic as a ‘pure republic’, a ‘constitutional republic’ and a ‘parliamentary republic’.

3] We might here detect a further change in Marx’s conception of the social republic, since it is now identified with a broader selection of popular classes (i.e. peasants, artisans and elements of the petty bourgeoisie) rather than just the working-class.

4] Marx and Engels present this as an innovation in their thought in their 1872 preface to the *Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels, 1988 [1872], 175).

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## Social Unionism

Sanem Güvenç-Salgırlı

The first attempt of workers to associate among themselves  
takes place in the form of  
combinations.  
Karl Marx, *Poverty of Philosophy* (1847)<sup>1</sup>

In capitalist society today, *the common names both the means of production  
and the forms of life*.  
Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, *Assembly* (2017)

Social unionism is a question of combination; and a combination is a matter of building alliances, coalitions between different entities that are unified around a common (cause).

*(In 1847, in the final chapter of the Poverty of Philosophy Marx made a case for worker combinations against Proudhon, socialists, and economists. Combination was how workers first connected among themselves, and permanent combinations in the form of trade unions acted as protective shields, both of which made combining a political act. And yet, Marx hesitated: unless a new society arises, there will be no real change. That hesitation, how the two moments are going to be, well, combined, is a foundational probe and it is where this entry takes its cue. After nearly two hundred years of unionism, and almost five decades of social unionism, with numerous attempts to unite labor movements together with social movements, the question of combination still lurks around Marx's initial hesitation. If the post-2010 movements of swarming multitudes and tentacular encampments on city squares were prefigurative of the-social-and-the-political-to-come, what role would combining play, if any?).*

Combination is an act of merging through the recognition of otherness. To combine presupposes discerning eyes, cuts, and separations. A consideration of who is

going to be combined with whom in order to achieve whatever desired result in whichever struggle is how a combination is made / assembled. As such, it is the product of an accumulative gesture accompanied by an anticipation that *more* and *variety* make combinations / assemblages better, stronger.

*(Thus combination grounds itself in preconceived identities (factory worker, sweatshop worker, housewife, student...), preformed spaces (shop floor, public square, cubicle...), and already existing groups (communities, unionists, political activists...)).*

Combinations embody deliberation, but, most often, calculation. Who is going to be combined with whom in which form. As such, they are integral to the world of strategy and tactics. But who is going to be the decision-maker; the combination-maker?

*(Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in their latest book Assembly, criticize social unionism on the basis that alliances between labor and social movements were formed as external alliances where it was the union leaders who decided on the political strategy; not the constituents, (read: combinants). Against this model they suggested that all organizational structures should ground themselves in social production, around the commons; where the multitude and not the union leadership should define what the long-term strategy is going to be. Resolving Marx's hesitancy with a pragmatic gesture, they do not dispense of social unionism: as of today it is where the precariat, the unemployed, and the community members could come together with the labor movement, reformulating the general strike as a social strike (Hardt & Negri, 147-150).)*

It is doubtful whether the multitude is in need of combining; or combination can be *the* operative concept for the multitude. It is the aleatory encounters, mutual aid and care, and communing together within the common that *gathers* the multitude; and a recognition of singularity and heterogeneity – “From each according to *its* abilities to each according to *its* needs” (Marx 1875).<sup>2</sup> Not because it is a more authentic, natural, ecological, and/or sustainable option of dwelling; or because this is *the* programmatic prelude for correcting all that is ill in the world; nor is there a specific combination to unlock all these. Multitude recognizes that in order

to thrive, it is no longer in need of a combinatory mentality that arrives either in the many shapes of the capital-form (combining labor-powers, labor- power with machines, machines with other machines, machines and labor-power with products, products with spaces, and so on...), or via the representative practices of political parties or union leaders, practices of *cutting and connecting*. Multitude as the centaur (the singular monstrous body) could (and should) decide upon the path it is going to set before itself. Social production, production of the social, production with/in the social is what signifies the livelihood of the multitude.

*(In trying to resolve his hesitation, one point Marx stressed in the Poverty of Philosophy was what Hardt and Negri refer to as the affirmation of the common in Assembly. Marx wrote, “Do not say that social movement excludes political movement. There is never a political movement which is not at the same time social”).*

We now know that combination is no longer on the table. Strategy is about deciding how to affirm the common, and how to gather the multitude. That is where the contemporary hesitation lies.<sup>3</sup>

## Notes

1] In the original French version of this text, Marx used the word *coalitions* not combinations. It was translated into English as *combination* by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, and was left untouched in the final editing (2009) for The Marxist Internet Archive by Matthew Carmody. I prefer to use this translation because of its relevance to the following discussion.

2] Emphases mine, and the posthumanist pun is intentional.

3] Hesitation as in: “Hesitation accompanies the phantom of action like a shadow, like a ruinous antagonist, and here one could speak of a ‘hesitation- function’: where acts are manifested and where chains of action are organized, a falter, a pause, a momentary stop, an interruption are marked. Thus an asymmetrical relationship of time and history is established”; “There is an interim space in which this act appears contingent, neither necessary nor impossible, a threshold at which action and non-action smoothly join one another.” (Vogl (2009, 134; 136).



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## Subaltern Studies

Sudeep Dasgupta

The historiographical intervention of the Indian *Subaltern Studies* Group took as their targets elite and nationalist accounts of the transition from colonialism to nationhood. However, they also included in their interventions a corresponding critique of Marxist analyses of the transition to nationalism. As Gyan Prakash argues "When Marxists turned the spotlight on colonial exploitation, their criticism was framed by a historicist scheme that universalized Europe's historical experience" (Prakash 1994, 1375). *Subaltern Studies* thus also found a place within the field of Postcolonial Studies' critique of Europe-centred analyses of history, politics and identity. The critique of Marxism targeted the Marxist reliance on "mode-of-production narratives" couched in terms of a "nation-state's ideology of modernity and progress" which resulted in an inability to take seriously "the oppressed's 'lived experience' of religion and social customs" (ibid., 1477).

At the same time, as the term "subaltern" indicates, the Group's relation to Marx and Marxist thought was also one of a critical engagement with Marx's historical and theoretical understandings of the political transformations in societies undergoing colonial exploitation. The place of Antonio Gramsci is crucial here, in particular his writings on Italian history during the complex political processes which constituted the *Risorgimento* (Gramsci 1992). Thus read more generously

and with nuance, *Subaltern Studies* could be seen as having a relation of *critical intimacy* with Marxist thought rather than an outright rejection of all of its analyses. This is clear in the Marxist and Leninist language employed by Ranajit Guha, the Group's founder, who argues that "the working class was still not sufficiently mature in the objective conditions of its social being and in its consciousness as a class-for-itself" (Guha 1988, 42), and the "*historic failure of the nation to come to its own* (sic)" (ibid, emphasis in original) is evidenced in the failure of a democratic revolution "under the hegemony of workers and peasants (ibid., 43). Similarly, Partha Chatterjee's influential "More on Modes of Power and the Peasantry" offers a historical and comparative analysis of the complex power relations set into motion among different classes (and class fractions) in which a Foucauldian analysis is combined with a reading of the *Grundrisse* to underscore the "differential impact on pre-capitalist structures" including "destruction, modifying them for surplus extraction, bolstering pre-existing social structures" (Chatterjee 1988, 388).

Two aspects of the relation between Marx and the *Subaltern Studies* group can be identified here. First, the explanations of historical *transformation from colonialism to the nation-state*; and second, the peculiar form of *identity of the subaltern classes* who are defined in opposition to the colonial and national elites. The first issue involved the necessity of transforming the "mode-of-production narrative" to include the complexity of transformations in pre-capitalist structures such as caste, religion and community which resulted in a sustained engagement with forms of "pre-modern" mobilization including magic, religion, rumour, and caste. Here however, the presumed split between Marxism's inadequacy with dealing with such issues, and the groups own interventions, must be nuanced by the fact that within the pages of the volumes of *Subaltern Studies* Marxist historians were invited to articulate their own understandings of the relation between caste, class and community for example. Asok Sen's reading of Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire* in Volume V of *Subaltern Studies*, for example, underscores that Marx's historical writings on the peasantry comprise a far more sophisticated understanding of the complex links between emergent power-blocs and strategic political alliances between the peasantry, the (petit-) bourgeoisie and owners of capital in the

transition from feudal to capitalist economies (Sen 1987, 207; see also Chaudhury). A wholesale rejection of "Marxist" thought implied in some formulations, such as by Prakash, seem thus unwarranted. Guha himself in his landmark essay "Dominance without Hegemony and its Historiography" deploys Marx's nuanced reading of the global expansion of capitalism in the *Grundrisse* to situate his own historiographical critique of elite histories of Indian nationalism (Guha 1992).

The second issue of subaltern identity, and its recovery through historiographical research, came in for sharp critique from many quarters including a feminist and deconstructive analysis by Gayatri Spivak, and from a more broadly materialist and Marxist perspective by Dipankar Gupta and Rosalind O'Hanlon (Spivak 1988; Gupta 1985; O'Hanlon 1988). Guha's understanding of subaltern resistance as "the politics of the people" occupying "an autonomous domain [which] neither originated from elite politics nor [whose] existence depend[ed] on the latter" (Guha 1988, 40) was problematic, because it seemed to foreclose a relational analysis of how subaltern politics operated through external constraints and opportunities, as well as strategic linkages with other forms of social power. In fact, Chatterjee's essay had foregrounded precisely this complex *relational* understanding of power which made claims of an autonomous subaltern identity problematic. Dipankar Gupta's critique of Guha underscored the dangers of ethnicized formulations of autonomous peasant identity which relied on the "*independent* organizing principle of the insurgent's mind" (emphasis added) as the motor of historical change (Gupta 1985, 9). Developing Gupta's critique, O'Hanlon argues that such an idealist claim to autonomous subaltern identity "shuts off the whole field of external structural interaction and constraint" within which the politics of the people operated (O'Hanlon 1988, 202). It is precisely here that a materialist and Marxist critique of identity becomes relevant since such a critique exposes the humanist and liberal conception of human agency often implied in formulations of subaltern identity. In O'Hanlon's words: "we are left with the unfortunate, and I think unintended, impression, that the historiographical issue at stake is that of man's freedom as against the determining power of his external world. But this very juxtaposition, of the free man as against the man determined, is itself an

idealist conception, in which the mode of existence of the unitary subject-agent is never called into question" (ibid.).

The problematic question of subaltern identity, and the complex processes of political transformation involved in the transition from colonialism to nationalism, thus emerge less as points of fundamental divergence between Subaltern Studies and Marx. Rather, a productive form of critical intimacy best describes how the limitations and opportunities of both strands of thought could contribute (and interrupt) each other.

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TINA

Christian Neuhäuser

The political slogan “there is no alternative”, also called the “TINA-Principle” or just “TINA”, is widely attributed to Margaret Thatcher. Some think it was coined by Herbert Spencer.<sup>1</sup> This might be true, but it does not matter. The slogan belongs to Thatcher. There is even one, mostly admiring (and quite boring), biography that goes by this slogan as a title (Berlinski 2008). Of course, there were uncountable thinkers in the history of political thought who subscribed to this idea long before Margaret was born. A student of this particular intellectual history could start with Parmenides’ idea that change is impossible and follow the probably rather boring story from there. However, there is one twist in this tale that amounts to a quite nice example of the irony of (intellectual) history. One prominent figure in the camp of advocates of TINA is none other than Karl Marx. Like Margaret Thatcher, Karl Marx seemed to believe that there is no alternative to certain political developments and outcomes that simply will take place – no doubt of it. Of course, Thatcher and Marx had rather different ideas about what it is that is without alternative and they also had different ideas about why it is that this is inevitable.

It is worthwhile to dwell a bit on those two subtle differences. To be sure, the reason for this is not that Thatcher will turn out to be a devoted Marxist in disguise

on a mission to subvert the political system and advance the advent of a revolutionary class. That would just be too good to be true. What is important is the way in which those differences reveal an even starker contrast to contemporary leftist critics of neoliberal globalization, who reject the TINA principle. It raises the question of how those critics relate to more traditional Marxism. Susan George, for instance, thinks that “there are thousands of alternatives” and the activist organization ATTAC used to adopt the slogan “another world is possible”, meaning that it is up to us, the people, to decide how the political world should look.<sup>2</sup> While the latter slogan does not directly oppose Marxism, it has a rather voluntarist and quite idealistic ring to it that contradicts classical Marxist historical materialism. In his rejection of idealism the original Marx might be closer to Thatcher than to some of his contemporary admirers. That alone makes it important to look at the two crucial differences between Thatcher and Marx.

The first difference between Marx and Thatcher is obvious. Thatcher thought that there is no alternative to neoliberal reform. She was an admirer of Friedrich Hayek and believed that only the chaotic working of maximally liberalized markets can bring stability and prosperity. Functionalistic attempts of government regulation are bound to fail and to lead to totalitarianism. Thatcher was also, and maybe contrary to Hayek, willing to accept the specific form of oligarchism that comes with neoliberalism. Marx, on the other hand, believed that there is no alternative to proletarian revolution.<sup>3</sup> The contradictions in capitalism create an antagonism between the two classes of, first, proletarians, the owners of nothing but their labor power, and, second, capitalists, the owners of all other productive factors. Once the proletarians, driven by their material deprivation, realize that they are exploited, they are bound to organize politically and overcome the resistance of capitalists to social change by revolution. This is all well-known and it is easy to argue that both Thatcher and Marx turned out to be wrong.

Thatcher is wrong in believing that stable political systems of welfare capitalism or market socialism are impossible. Quite obviously, the obstacles respective reforms are confronted with are politically created by conservative elites using their diverse powers to defend their privileges. This resistance can be overcome (Jones 2014).

Marx is also wrong, because there is not one form of capitalism and one form of communism, but a variety of political and social systems, and it is at least conceivable that societies can transform by political reform and civil struggles instead of bloody revolutions. So it seems that our contemporary critics of globalization are right and that it is possible, as Mao allegedly once said in a moment of clarity, to “let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred schools of thought contend”. This could be the end of the story, but it is not. It might be that the post-Marxist reformist critics of globalization laughed too soon.

It is still possible that Marx or, for what it is worth, Thatcher, are right in another respect. To see this, it is important to understand not only what they thought it is that is without alternative, but also why they thought so. In the case of Thatcher there is no real answer. She used the TINA slogan as a political tool, without any explanatory theory behind it. She might rely on the argument brought forward by Hayek that every kind of government intervention into liberal markets will inevitably lead to a totalitarian regime (Hayek 2007). However, empirically and conceptually this argument has been proven to be wrong, and more than this she does not offer (Schweikart 2011). To be sure, nowadays many people add more elaborated arguments, stating that competitive markets force market players to maximize their profits and political regulators to respect this natural or law-like functionality of markets. But in fact purely competitive and policy-directing markets are not forces of nature or expressions of transcendental laws. Maybe the existing social structure of market societies depends on giving them as much room as possible. But this existing social structure is also not a necessity. It can either be reformed or replaced.

Marx thought that labor is the only really productive factor and that therefore capitalists have to exploit it in order to generate a profit for themselves. This claim is contested, to put it mildly. But this is not the core of his argument for the inevitability of revolution in any case. All this argument requires is the weaker claim that there is an antagonism between capitalists and proletarians, that the former use their power to take unfair advantage of the latter, and that the only way to overcome this antagonism is by force, because capitalists will not agree to social

change, at least not to the degree that would be acceptable to proletarians. At first sight this particular TINA argument also seems to be wrong, because a more reformist social contract seems possible, as the example of the history of Europe and its welfare states shows. This, then, is also what contemporary post-Marxist critics of globalization aim for on a worldwide scale. So, was Marx as wrong as Thatcher?

The surprising answer, as the Chinese Communist revolutionary Zhou Enlai would say, is that it is too early to tell. The argument for a suspension of final judgement is obvious. Rosa Luxemburg has already shown that despite some international efforts, Marx and most bourgeois Marxists were too focused on Europe, on nation states, and on the agency of their own class (Luxemburg 2000). They simply were too impatient for change to come. However, maybe Immanuel Wallerstein and his world-systems theory is right in arguing that economic globalization is a necessary precondition for a truly proletarian revolution (Wallerstein 2004). Just think of the hundreds of millions of Chinese workers witnessing the rise of the new rich in their own country. Think of the hundreds of millions of excluded Indians forced to live under the oppression of the still functional caste system. Think of the hundreds of millions of exploited Africans and Latin Americans looking to the North and the fruits of their travails. When those billions embrace their political agency, then it might just be that there is no alternative for humankind to finally submit to the will of those who were dominated for centuries. And then who has the last laugh?

## Notes

1] In *Social Statics* (Spencer 1851), he uses this phrase fifteen times for all sorts of things.

2] Susan George writes: “People no longer believe that the unjust world order is inevitable. To Margaret Thatcher's TINA – “There is no alternative” – they are replying that there are thousands of them. Now it's up to us all, especially to Americans, to prove that, as we say in ATTAC, “Another world is possible. And urgent” (George 2002).

3] As stated most clearly in the *Communist Manifesto*.

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## University

Sina Talachian

When going over the remarkably few discussions of the university as an institution in Marx's writings, one is struck by how much importance he attaches to it as being tasked with forming and shaping the minds and habits of society's educated classes, who, due in part to their educational privileges, are destined to become members of society's ruling class. Marx is not particularly interested in a detailed examination of the university and how it fulfills its aforementioned role of producing and reproducing the ruling class. Rather, he ascribes that role to it by subsuming it under his categories of the economic and political, which are brought together in his conception of ideology. Put simply, universities produce the creators of ideology, which in turn are an expression of the ruling class' ownership of the means of production. As Marx states in *The German Ideology*, "[t]he class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it." (Marx 2010 [1845-46], 59). In a remarkable passage following shortly after, Marx describes a split in the ruling class emanating from this division between material and mental production. On the one hand, there are the intellectuals who occupy institutions of 'mental production' like the university, and on the other, there are those who work in the sphere of 'material production'. It is worth quoting this at some length, as it goes

to the core of Marx's conception of the university as an institution with a crucial functional, reproductive role within his broader conception of capitalism. Moreover, it also reveals the contemporary significance of it for debates concerning the university and its potential for being a site of radical emancipatory politics. Marx goes on to say:

The division of labour [...] manifests itself also in the ruling class as the division of mental and material labour, so that inside this class one part appears as the thinkers of the class (its active, conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), while the others' attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of this class and have less time to make up illusions and ideas about themselves. Within this class this cleavage can even develop into a certain opposition and hostility between the two parts, which, however, in the case of a practical collision, in which the class itself is endangered, automatically comes to nothing, in which case there also vanishes the semblance that the ruling ideas were not the ideas of the ruling class and had a power distinct from the power of this class. (Marx 2010 [1845-46], 59-60)

Marx's pessimistic view, that universities are essentially institutions of mental (re)production whose products are intellectuals perfecting the illusions of the ruling class about itself, is reiterated in his later work as well. While discussing the measures taken by the Paris Commune, he favorably refers to the establishment of "*free universities* [italics in original]" which are "no longer State parasites", that is, tools in the hands of the ruling class (Marx 2010 [1871], 474). This also provides a clue as to how he imagines the cleavage between the intellectual and its "active" other in the ruling class can be resolved: by cutting off the university from its functional, reproductive role in capitalist society and its ties to the state. But for Marx this requires a revolution from outside the ruling (and hence also intellectual) class, namely by the proletariat – which, while it may find allies among intellectuals, must remain wary of their fickle, collaborationist nature. After all, intellectuals occupy a structurally distinct position from the proletariat in capitalist society, with

the latter having no ownership over any means of production, while the former make their living from their ownership of the mental means of production. Marx's distinction between these two different kinds of means of production is not often commented upon, yet it offers a key insight into his pessimistic view of the role of the university, and by extension intellectuals, as a distinctive social class in the praxis of emancipatory politics.

Is this pessimism warranted, and what is its relevance for contemporary debates concerning the university and the intellectuals it produces? The pessimistic thesis derived from the structural position of intellectuals within the broader capitalist system has had prominent recent and contemporary adherents, notably Noam Chomsky (2008) and Pierre Bourdieu (1988).<sup>1</sup> But attempts have also been made to take a more optimistic approach, while maintaining elements of the structural critique of intellectuals and their institutional role. A prominent expression of this perspective can be found in Sartre's *A Plea for Intellectuals* (1975), wherein he accepts the structural impediments standing in the way of intellectuals – and by extension the university – to be on the side of emancipation, but argues that it is possible to transcend these by constantly working toward adjusting one's structural position, gearing it toward the subaltern (Sartre 1975, 261-262). How exactly is this to be achieved by the intellectual? According to Sartre, two elements are required, which directly engage with Marx's pessimistic account:

(1) *Perpetual self-criticism*: he must not confound the universal – which he practices as a specialist in the field of practical knowledge [...] with the singular efforts of a particularized social group to achieve universalization. If he poses as the guardian of the universal, he lapses at once into the particular and again becomes a victim of the old illusion of the bourgeoisie that takes itself for a universal class. He must strive to remain aware of the fact that he is a petty-bourgeois breaking out of his mould, constantly tempted to renourish the thoughts of his class. Thus an intellectual cannot join workers by saying: 'I am no longer a petty-bourgeois; I move freely in the universal.' Quite the contrary; he can only do so by thinking 'I am a petty-bourgeois; if, in order to resolve *my own* contradiction, I have placed

myself alongside the proletariat and peasantry, I have not thereby ceased *to be* a petty-bourgeois; all I can do, by constantly criticizing and radicalizing myself, is step by step to refuse – though this interests no one but myself – my petty-bourgeois conditioning.’ [...]

(2) *A concrete and unconditioned alignment with the actions of the underprivileged classes.* [...] How can a specialist in universality best serve the movement of popular universalization? Both in his capacity as one who can never be assimilated, and remains excluded even during violent action, and as a divided consciousness, that can never be healed. The intellectual will never be either completely inside the movement (thus lost within a too great proximity of class structures) nor completely outside it (since as soon as he begins to act, he is in any case a traitor in the eyes of the ruling class and of his own class, one who uses the technical knowledge they allowed him to acquire against them). Outlawed by the privileged classes, suspect to the under-privileged classes (because of the very culture he puts at their disposal), he can begin his work. (Sartre 1975, 261-262)

One could argue that the democratization of education over the course of the twentieth century, which greatly expanded access to the university for those with working-class and other subaltern backgrounds, along with the cultural revolution of the 1960s, which opened up space for more ‘radical’ intellectuals of the kind described by Sartre to join faculties and, at times, become influential within certain academic disciplines,<sup>2</sup> there may be good reason to be more optimistic about the role of the university today. Whichever view one takes on the university and its potential for acting as a site for radical emancipatory change, one has to engage and grapple with Marx’s powerful analysis on the subject.

## Notes

1] Though they do allow for some glimmers of hope, for Chomsky identified as the dissident intellectuals, and for Bourdieu, in his later work, the ‘collective intellectuals’ – yet these always remain exceptions to the (structurally imposed) norm.

2] Somewhat ironically perhaps, pessimists such as Chomsky and Bourdieu themselves attest to this shift by virtue of their own success and influence within the academy, but consider also the ubiquity of figures like Foucault and Derrida in certain parts of the humanities. Although it is important not to exaggerate this or mistake it for political influence: the contemporary neoliberal academy (see Collini 2017) is hardly a hotbed of far-left insurrectionism, facile and hysterical claims by conservative commentators to the contrary notwithstanding. As is noted by Neil Gross, a leading sociologist on the subject of academics’ political preferences: ‘On the question of change over time, academia is more liberal today than in the 1960s, but not dramatically so. And conservative commentators downplay the fact that professors my age, in their late thirties and early forties, are less likely than their predecessors to consider themselves radicals and are often critical of what they perceive to be the excesses of the 1960s-era academic left’ (Gross 2013, 8-9). These nuances of course bolster the pessimist’s case.

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## Vampirism

Dan Hassler-Forest

“Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks.”

Of the many colorful concepts and metaphors Marx used to articulate as vividly as possible the monstrous nature of capitalism, the vampire has remained one of the most frequently cited, especially as this stubbornly undead figure grew increasingly dominant in 20<sup>th</sup>-century popular culture. While a seemingly endless torrent of films, plays, novels, comic books, TV series, and video games fueled the vampire’s ubiquitous presence in pop culture, in the academic world an unrelenting series of monographs, edited collections, special journal issues, and conferences has testified to this particular horror trope’s resilience, and more particularly to the public’s ongoing interest in defining its social, cultural, and economic symbolism.

Perhaps it’s no coincidence that the vampire has remained so deeply embedded in capitalist narratives. Even to this day, it remains difficult to imagine a single figure that more perfectly encapsulates the most basic contradiction of our imagined relationship to capital. From early stage versions of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* via movie stars like Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee all the way up to more recent vampire heart-throbs like Robert Pattinson and Alexander Skarsgård, the vampire

represents a thoroughly decadent, depraved, and immoral parasite who is nevertheless thoroughly irresistible to middle-class audiences with their eternal dreams of upward social mobility. So even if Mark Fisher was certainly more accurate when he compared capitalism’s true nature to the disgusting alien in *The Thing* (1982), constantly mutating while absorbing everything it touches, the guilty attraction we almost inevitably feel for the vampire better captures our fundamental ambivalence about the workings of capital. With capitalism, as with vampires, our awareness of the mortal danger it poses doesn’t exactly make us better equipped to resist its tempting call.

The way in which these fantasies are informed and defined by questions of class becomes all the more obvious when we consider the vampire alongside its dialectical counterpart: the zombie. While both are supernatural beings caught in a perpetual state of “living death,” the vampire is traditionally connected to the most obvious signifiers of wealth, aristocracy, and individualism. The zombie, on the other hand, uncannily articulates modern fears of an uneducated, mob-like urban proletariat. The tension between these two archetypal horror tropes of the modern age illustrates vividly how our shared fantasies and fears are over-determined by more mundane and material questions of class and labor. Clearly, our guilty but unshakeable dream is to be invited some day to join the vampires’ privileged members-only club, while our nightmare is that we will be absorbed by the lower-class zombies’ monstrous horde. Or, to put it more bluntly: while nobody in their right mind would kiss a zombie, most of us would gladly fuck a vampire.

Beside the ham-fisted obviousness of this allegorical representation of imagined class identities, the vampire/zombie dialectic also illustrates another key weakness in capitalist narrative culture: its insistent focus on individualism. Originally a quite solitary being passing his time in exotic and remote castles, the 21<sup>st</sup>-century vampire has tended to be at least somewhat more sociable. In the massively popular *Twilight* franchise, for instance, vampires are even portrayed as functional members of a loyal and loving family group. Nevertheless, the vampire remains grounded in its basic form as an exceptional and identifiable *individual*, with consistent human traits and a compelling (and appealingly tragic) back-story. This helpfully allows us

to understand the very capitalists we both jealously abhor and secretly admire as sympathetic characters who are themselves also victimized by their own infection.

Zombies, on the other hand, are consistently presented to us as thoroughly abject, in the first place because their loss of individuality has made them part of a nameless collective. While we may be tempted to perceive the zombies' state of living death as a traumatic loss of individual agency, its most horrific aspect is the zombie's sudden inability to claim ownership of private property. Whereas the vampire not only comes to claim ownership of whomever he or she carefully chooses to infect, the zombie horde consumes indiscriminately, and – most importantly – without any conception of individual ownership. Through this clear juxtaposition, the vampire/zombie dialectic symbolically connects individualism to capitalist conceptions of private property, while the zombie's inherently collective nature is rendered grossly appalling through its very lack of any such concept. After all, what is more terrifying to the individual capitalist than the loss of those very consumer choices that shape one's precious identity?

Thus, even as shared conceptions of class identity have become more and more difficult to recognize for many in the era of global capitalism, Marx's use of the vampire has remained profoundly useful for understanding and expressing capitalist culture's continuing investment in narrative fantasies that remain grounded in traditional conceptions of class identity. So while neither vampire nor zombie offers the most nuanced expression of the workings of contemporary neoliberalism, they remain vital tools for recognising popular narrative tropes as ideological expressions of capitalism's most basic cultural logic.

## VOC

Pepijn Brandon

The Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*; VOC) was founded in 1602. It was a private company with extensive state support, monopoly rights to the Dutch-Asian spice trade, and far-reaching prerogatives to wage war and make treaties and alliances. The VOC became the instrument for the violent subjection of many parts of Asia to Dutch commercial interests until the end of the eighteenth century. It laid the foundations for the colonial regime of the Dutch in Indonesia that lasted well into the twentieth century. Without mentioning its name, Marx discussed the VOC and its legacy in a brief but powerful passage at the end of *Capital*, Volume I. After citing the British colonial administrator Thomas Stamford Raffles's judgement that the history of Dutch rule in Asia was "one of the most extraordinary relations of treachery, bribery, massacre, and meanness", Marx continues:

Nothing is more characteristic than their system of stealing men, to get slaves for Java. The men stealers were trained for this purpose. The thief, the interpreter, and the seller, were the chief agents in this trade, native princes the chief sellers. The young people stolen, were thrown into the secret dungeons of Celebes, until they were ready for sending to the slave-ships. An official report says:

“This one town of Macassar, *e.g.*, is full of secret prisons, one more horrible than the other, crammed with unfortunates, victims of greed and tyranny fettered in chains, forcibly torn from their families.”

[...] Wherever [the Dutch] set foot, devastation and depopulation followed. Banjuwangi, a province of Java, in 1750 numbered over 80,000 inhabitants, in 1811 only 18,000. Sweet commerce! (Marx 1990 [1867], 651-652).

Marx mentions the VOC explicitly in *Capital*, Volume III, as part of his historical observations on merchant capital. Here he says that if one wants an example of the way in which merchant capital operates in places where it directly controls production, one should look at “the colonial system”, especially “the methods of the old Dutch East India Company” (Marx 1967 [1894], 329). As in the earlier passage, it is clear from the context that Marx’s reason to single out the VOC was his perception of the cruel and exploitative character of this company.

The process of knowledge collection behind those passages in itself gives an interesting starting point for reading Marx ‘from the margins’. Marx took extensive notes from the first volume of Raffles’s 1817 *History of Java* (Raffles 1817) while in London in 1853.<sup>1</sup> At this time, he developed a great interest in colonial and semi-colonial societies, leading to his famous articles on India and China for the *New York Daily Tribune*. Many have rejected Marx’s articles on India from this period – or at least the years before the 1857 Sepoy uprising – for ascribing a ‘progressive’ role to colonialism. Nevertheless, it is clear from what Marx took from Raffles, that even at this early stage his willingness to see Western capitalism’s penetration into Asia as ‘necessary’ for future development was always circumscribed by his acknowledgement of the brutal and devastating impact that it had. In his “The British Rule in India”, Marx quotes a passage from Raffles saying that “The Dutch Company, actuated solely by the spirit of gain, and viewing their [Javan] subjects with less regard or consideration than a West-India planter formerly viewed the gang upon his estate, [...] employed all the existing machinery of despotism to squeeze from the people their utmost mite of contributions, the last dregs of their

labour”. Against Raffles, who berated the Dutch only to the advantage of the English, Marx pointed out that the British Rule in India is “only an imitation of the Dutch” (Marx 1979 [1853], 126).

Equally interesting is the special attention paid by Marx to slavery under the VOC. It should be kept in mind that the Dutch government abolished slavery in the East Indies as late as 1860, merely seven years before the publication of *Capital*, Volume I. Despite this late abolition, Dutch historians have all but neglected the role of slavery in the VOC empire until very recently (Van Rossum 2015). In contrast, Marx elevated it to a central plane. One simple explanation for his attentiveness to this issue is that it helped him to expose the violent origins of capitalist development, an objective that runs through Marx’s entire discussion of “the so-called primitive accumulation”: “In actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the great part. In the tender annals of Political Economy, the idyllic reigns from time immemorial.” (Marx 1990 [1867], 620). What better way to illustrate the hypocrisy of the capitalist, than laying at his doorstep the thoroughly discredited system of slavery? After all, this was not only the moment of abolition in the Dutch East and West Indies, but also, more epoch-making, in the American South through the Civil War, and of the emancipation of the serfs in the Russian Empire. An outspoken opponent of slavery, Marx never missed his chance to emphasize capital’s complicity in it.

Generations of readers after Marx have interpreted those famous lines of Marx primarily as comments on capital’s recent antecedents. However, an even more potent re-reading might be possible; for throughout the famous chapter in which Marx discusses the cruelty of Dutch colonialism and slavery, he leaves clues that suggest he did not see this type of violence merely as a stepping stone for ‘modern’, developed capitalism, but as one of its contemporary companions. Stressing this continuity, Marx writes: “Colonial system, public debts, heavy taxes, protection, commercial wars, etc., these children of the true manufacturing period, increase gigantically during the infancy of Modern Industry” (Marx 1990 [1867], 656). Simultaneity is also implied in his famous comment that “[w]hilst the cotton industry introduced child-slavery in England, it gave in the United States a stimulus to the

trans-formation of the earlier, more or less patriarchal slavery, into a system of commercial exploitation” (Marx 1990 [1867], 658-9). Is it a coincidence that when turning to the history of the VOC, Marx also especially highlighted the fate of “the young people stolen”? Starting from his sparse remarks on the VOC, we can see not only Marx’s acute interest in the global nature of exploitation and accumulation, but also his attentiveness to the threads that connected capitalism’s history to its present.

## Notes

1] For a wider discussion of Marx’s notes on Indonesia, see Anderson 2010.

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## Weak Resistance

Eva Majewska

A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath. He walks and halts to his song. Lost, he takes shelter, or orients himself with his little song as best as he can. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos. Perhaps the child skips as he sings, hastens or slows his pace. But the song itself is already a skip: it jumps from chaos to the beginnings of order in chaos and is in danger of breaking apart at any moment. There is always sonority in Ariadne’s thread. Or the song of Orpheus.  
(Deleuze and Guattari 1981, 311).

The most popular image of political agency has been shaped according to the Western, white, privileged, heterosexual, colonial, male Self, rightly criticized by Gayatri Spivak as a figure that not only always strengthens itself while promising its own dismantlement, but also – and perhaps more importantly – as one always producing its “others” in a catachrestic process of self-restructuring practice (Spivak 1999). According to this image, to which the Marxist historiography and theory of revolution is no stranger, resistance should be seen as a masculine, heroic form of agency, in which the right is unambiguously discernible from the wrong, and wins, usually in a “David vs Goliath” style. Contrary to this description, the weak – and here another strand in Marx’s texts comes to mind – are usually strong in numbers, their agency being far from heroic, their ethical qualities are precariously unbalanced and hybrid, their gender – a trouble, and their origins – unholy.

As depicted by James Scott, the weapons of the weak are ordinary, and demand persistence rather than strength (Scott 1985). In peasants’ protests, in long marches and peaceful sit-ins, articulation is rather basic and the pronouncement of postulates usually does not meet the highly bourgeois requirements formulated in the classical theories of the transformation of the public sphere (Habermas 1989). The weak sometimes constitute forms of counterpublics, they are genuinely “counterpublics of the subaltern” – of those whose emergence and marginalization take place

simultaneously. Nancy Fraser discussed feminist counterpublics as an example of what she called “subaltern counterpublics”, but she never mentioned the catachrestic structure of subaltern (Fraser 1990). The concept of weak resistance emphasizes the oppression and resistance, the appropriations and dissimulations always present in the process of the making of the subject of other. Weak does not mean impossible. It means resisting.

As we might remember, the new beginnings in Deleuze’s and Guattari’s thinking are not marked by heroic masculine figures claiming their rights by fighting for them (Deleuze 1977). They actually start in a Kafkaesque moment of deception and weakness, in confrontation with an overwhelming fear or danger, where what is scariest is perhaps the possibility of literally anything happening. The little song the boy depicted by Deleuze and Guattari starts singing marks a transformation, begins a new constellation, a new assembly. It is not a triumphant anthem of a new nation opposed to a clearly defined enemy. It is a silent tune aimed at survival, not at victory. And yet things unfold in an unprecedented way. These are risky practices, of a deeply ambivalent character – Deleuze and Guattari comment: “This synthesis of disparate elements is not without ambiguity. It has the same ambiguity perhaps, as the modern valorisation of children’s drawings, texts by the mad and concerts of noise.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1981, 350). They also suggest a particularly weak character of territorializing practices, arguing that “we can never be sure we will be strong enough, for we have no system, only lines and movements” (ibid.). Territory, here, refers to a new constitution, a response to fear, and initiates a new entity and agency without the hegemonic claim.

The new territory should be imagined as one beyond private and public. The new territory is still or “always already is” common (see Hardt and Negri 2009). This means it belongs to everyone, but it also means it is ordinary, not exceptional. In this, it reminds us of those always already situated in positions of precarity for the Western subject to emerge (Lorey 2015). Weak is also the connection between generations of the marginalized, as in Walter Benjamin’s *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, where the messianic image of redemption is hijacked to serve the disappropriated masses and to reinterpret the legacy of historical materialism. The weak

resistance is therefore one that presents itself as a new territory, as the unexpected reconstitution of the dark matter of the excluded suddenly presenting its agency on the stage of history.

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## Whiteness

Nicola Lauré al-Samarai & Peggy Piesche

Whiteness signifies a comprehensive social positionality within capitalist, racialized, patriarchal societies and is part of a structural equipment to dominate, categorize and order the world. The centuries-old system of racism has generated effective power structures and archives of dominant knowledge wherein whiteness is used to mark the so-called 'other' without marking the so called 'self'. (Cf. Piesche & Arndt 2011, 192). Since the unmarked marker defines him\*herself as 'neutral' and creates what is called the 'norm', whiteness remains unnamed in its processes to construct racialized 'other/s' and demarcates this void through explicit and implicit parameters. Bearers of whiteness benefit from discriminatory categories of differences which have been implemented as an increasingly globalized matrix of domination and norm/alization.<sup>1</sup>

In order to discuss socially established norms that cause or promote racism, *critical whiteness* serves as an important analytical category to detect and specify hierarchical constructions of whites and whiteness as 'self', '(f)actual', 'true' in relation to constructions of Black people/People of Color and Blackness/Brownness as 'other', 'bogus', 'invalid'. Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) aim at shifting the focus back to the unmarked marker. Combining an analytic approach and a conceptual as well as methodological apparatus, they provide the possibility to analyze racializing

processes in an intersectional manner by connecting the consequences of both epistemic *and* physical violence of categorical hierarchies acted out by white people.

Given the historical and regional background of CWS – an area of research that evolved as an offshoot from Black Studies and Critical Race Theory in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century mainly in U.S. academia – it is important to keep clearly in mind that critical whiteness first and foremost contains a Black collective knowledge of survival. From the times of enslavement on, Black people have shared and conveyed data, information and expertise “gleaned from close scrutiny of white people. It was not a way of knowing that has been recorded fully in written material” (hooks 1992, 338). It was, however, a crucial and fundamental knowledge about both the atrocities of colonialism and slavery, the power of ordering and categorizing, and the impact of racialization. The purpose of this knowledge “was to help black folks cope and survive in a white supremacist society” (hooks 1992, 338). At the same time it created a powerful foundation for theorizing the interconnections of race and social privilege, of “white ignorance” as a particular yet very influential group-based systemic miscognition, and of “white innocence” as a cultural paradox that describes the seemingly contradictory concurrence of denying racial discrimination and colonial violence on the one hand, and of acting out racism, prejudice and degradation on the other.<sup>2</sup>

As an intellectual intervention, a theoretical concept and a transdisciplinary field, critical whiteness has been pioneered by African American scholars and writers such as W.E.B. Du Bois (*Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil*, 1920), James Baldwin (*The Fire Next Time*, 1963) and Toni Morrison (*Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, 1992). Morrison's critical effort, especially, created a boom in this field. As a writer and a Professor in the Humanities at Princeton University she called on her own academic discipline to understand that 'race' does not simply 'occur' when Black characters or respective authors are discussed, but rather functions as an overall narrative matrix shedding an unerring light on power structures, hierarchies, positionalities, and imaginaries in current Western societies.

For the last decade, Critical Whiteness Studies have become more visible in Western Europe. Unfortunately though, corresponding intellectual and/or academic developments are not particularly promising. In contrast to the U.S., where the field is deeply rooted in and informed by a collective experience of Black diasporic people, and as such always has been a vital constituent of activism and political practice, critical whiteness approaches in Germany were either quickly shrugged off as irrelevant for local contexts, misinterpreted as 'elitist' and 'overly theoretical', or simply overtaken by white scholars who prefer to actively exclude Black activist-scholars and activist-scholars of Color.<sup>3</sup>

This holds partly true also for white leftist and white feminist circles which is all the more regrettable since an intersectional focus on whiteness – one that interweaves race *and* gender *and* class *and* other discriminatory social categories with reference to Marxism – was offered already as early as the early 1980s. Black feminist thinkers such as Angela Davis (Davis 1981) and Gloria Joseph have shown “why racism must be addressed specifically and consistently *as an integral part of any theory* of feminism and Marxism” (Joseph 1981, 93; emphasis added). They demonstrated how the material conditions of slavery have determined not only specific relations between Black men and women within white Western patriarchy, but also the relationship of Black male and female individuals to labor within the U.S. post-/enslavement society.

It is necessary and challenging to re-read intersectional Black feminist notions on both whiteness and Marxism. The critical and complex analytical approach might not only bring up a lot of novel political topics, it could also significantly shift the focus of Marxist discussions, help us to de-universalize generalizing notions about, for example, ‘the capitalist world’, ‘the working masses’ or ‘the character of labor’, and to originate a field of political thought that is informed by many perspectives and shaped by inclusive epistemologies and practices.

## Notes

1] For white benefits see McIntosh 1988; for the matrix of domination see Hill Collins 1990, 225-227; for the historical formation of white working-class racism see Roediger 2007.

2] For more details see Mills 2007 and Wekker 2016.

3] For an inclusive approach within the context of CWS in Germany see the seminal anthology by Eggers et al. 2005. For problematic developments see Wollrad 2005. For recent trends and their discursive and structural entanglement in the German academia see in particular the Community Statement “Black’ Studies at the University of Bremen” which in 2015 addressed the all-white efforts to implement Black Studies without Black (German) scholars.

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## Workerism

Roberto Nigro

The term *Workerism* (English translation of the Italian word *Operaismo*) refers to a political and cultural tradition that can be traced back to political and theoretical practices emerging in Italy in the early 1960s. *Workerism* is nowadays a globally well-known current of thought. The publication of prominent works such as *Empire* (2001), *Multitude* (2005), *Commonwealth* (2011), and *Assembly* (2017) by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri has contributed tremendously to it. Moreover, the publication and translation into English and other languages of seminal works by other workerists such as Christian Marazzi, Paolo Virno, Maurizio Lazzarato, Mariarosa Dalla Costa, and Silvia Federici, to name only a few, has established workerism on an international scale. Workerism is not a unitary political theory; it does not refer to a school of thought or to a single political subject. It is rather the encounter of multiple and diversified pathways in which we can recognize some common roots. Workerism pays specific attention to the function of subjectivity; it describes political and social processes as intrinsically ambivalent and considers the ideas of conflict, dissent, or transformation as crucial elements for interpreting the changes of our contemporary societies.

The attention workerists (*operaisti*) pay to the dimension of subjectivity can be traced back to the primary importance they have attributed to the notion of class



composition since the beginning of the movement. This dimension was already important in the Italian workerism of the early 1900s. This was a kind of workerism imbued with the anarcho-sindicalist positions of Georges Sorel and the experience of the newspaper “Ordine nuovo” co-edited by Antonio Gramsci. It referred to the subjective figure of the professional worker, in which the handcrafted skill with its know-how still played an important role, although this professional worker was about to be integrated in the factory.

When the term workerism is employed today, one immediately thinks of the kind of political and theoretical experience which emerged in the Post-War years, or more precisely, in Italy in the early 1960s. Crucial works such as *Workers and Capital* by Mario Tronti, and the political work around the Italian journal *Quaderni Rossi*, which counted among its founders Raniero Panzieri, Romano Alquati, and Danilo Montaldi, can be considered as the pillars of the initial experience of workerism. If, on the one hand, the question of class composition and of subjectivity were still crucial in the new form of workerism of the 1960s, on the other the new workerism broke with the previous form since it introduced a new concept and practice centered on the idea of the refusal of work. In the workerism of the early 1900s there was still an idea of the pride of producers towards their own activity. This pride could not but disappear with the theorization of the refusal of work. This refusal was not only a political theorization, but the acknowledgement that the working class refused the work discipline imposed in the factories. Through political interventions in the factories, based on the method of “con-ricerca” (co-research, collaborative research), workerists could show that workers hated their work and refused their condition as workers. This refusal of work functioned as an impulse for political and social transformation. In this connection workerism was breaking with an ideology based on an ethics of work that has been the ideological cement of all socialist and communist traditions.

Workerists paid special attention to the great transformation of the capitalistic mode of production. In the 1960s and throughout the 1970s there were important changes of the mode of organization of work in the factories. A new class composition and a new subjective figure was about to emerge. The traditional figure of

the professional worker was disappearing, since automated processes centered on the employment of machines were replacing it. The assembly line, a pillar of the Fordist mode of production, did not require a professional worker anymore, but rather an unskilled worker, who could perform repetitive, alienated and standardized tasks. This new figure of the worker, which emerged in this so-called Fordist stage of capitalism, was centered on the figure of the mass-worker, as the workerists called it.

While the transformation of the reality of capitalism was not at the center of the interest of the classical left wing political organizations, it was, in contrast, the main interest of groups of intellectuals, activists and researchers who conducted their first inquiries in the factories. These experiences contributed to the emergence of the current of Operaismo. The workerists looked at new forms of struggles that were invisible to traditional working-class organizations. Being unable to see the new forms of resistance, of alliances, of active struggle, the classical socialist and communist organizations could assume that struggles were simply not taking place, or that the working class was slumbering. On the contrary, the workerists were able to bring to light the multiplicity of new forms of struggle: refusal of work, sabotage, individual and collective resistance to the organization of the factory discipline. A new microphysical landscape of resistance was emerging. It was this new landscape that the irruption of 1968 couldn't but enlarge. In fact, 1968 was the irruption of a new cycle of struggles, which were no longer based only on the opposition between the working class and capital, but also on conflicts involving several other issues: culture, imagination, language, forms of life, reproduction.

Until 1968, while analyzing the form of class composition, workerists had focused on the figure of the mass-worker. Mass-workers were migrants mainly coming from the South. The cultural stereotype, still persisting today, consisted in depicting them as “poor guys”, victims of modernity and of under-development. But the inquiries of the workerists produced a completely different account of the situation. To be sure, workerists also described the suffering and the state of deprivation of the migrants. But they also drew attention to the fact that these migrants were forced to move in the search for new forms of life, by desires, needs and curiosity,

that gave them the power to flee from the misery of the peasant condition, even though this flight could also assume the guise of an illusory search for mass consumerism. These new subjects were not politicized and did not enter the classical political organizations. Reactionary forces as well as socialist and classical communist organizations targeted them as lazybones, opportunists, and reactionary subjects. In contrast, the workerists understood that behind these forms of “opportunism” there was a refusal of the work and its ethics, and also a refusal of the political and trade-union representation.

As a result, workerism was overturning a picture that had dominated the whole socialist and communist tradition. If the working class has always been presented as a victim, as a passive subject on which the development of capital imposes its own laws, if it has been reduced to an exploited labor force, the operaists were overturning this thesis by showing that capitalist development is subordinated to the working-class struggle. The logic is reversed. Movements, individual and collective resistance oblige capital to resist, to invent new forms of exploitation and new forms of organization of labor in order to bridle the force of living labor.

The mass-worker was a figure on the edge of a structural passage of capitalism. It was a thread stretched between two processes: if the professional worker had been replaced by the mass-worker through the processes which brought about the factory, the introduction of automated processes, the decentralization of factories, and the diffusion of production in the whole of society were contributing to the disappearance of the figure of the mass-worker and to its replacement through the figure of the social-worker, i.e. the worker who no longer works (or not only) in the factory, but is employed in different fields in the whole of society. This is what was at issue in several political interventions by Antonio Negri in the 1970s. In particular his long interview on workerism (*Dall'operaio Massa all'operaio Sociale*), published in 1979, brilliantly sums up the thesis. However, this new figure needed to be better defined. We could say that workerism becomes post-workerism when it starts reflecting on the passage from the social-worker to the definition of a new subject, a new class composition centered on the idea of the cognitive worker or cognitive labor. Post-workerism elaborated on this definition, involving the new characterization of labor activity as centered on cognitive labor. In this connection

post-workerism starts analyzing the capitalist passage towards a post-Fordist society. To some extent post-workerism was fueled by the Italian community in exile in Paris, which gave birth, among other projects, to the political experience of the French journal *Futur antérieur* starting in the early 1990s, which also converged with many other intellectual experiences coming from French philosophical and political discussion.

Post-Fordism appears as the age of capitalism which was able to metabolize the critique and the antagonistic charge of the movements which struggled against Fordist society: the critique of wage-labor, the flight from the factory-prison and from the assembly line, “flexibility” as a keystone of the critique practiced by political movements in the 1970s, were assumed and reversed by the capitalistic counter revolution which started in the 1980s and which brought with itself new forms of exploitation. If flexibility in the 1970s signified the possibility to conquer new spaces of freedom, to liberate oneself from the slavery of the factory regime, then in the 1980s it became a new regime of exploitation that took the form of precarity, a political attack on the conditions of life of people. The passage from Fordism to post-Fordism was orchestrated by the capitalist counterrevolution; but it was orchestrated as an answer to the struggles of the political and social movements.

If the mass-worker was the political subject who determined the crisis of the Fordist society, post-workerism is nowadays struggling in order to define the new political subject who will be able to determine the crisis of the post-Fordist system.

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## Working Poor

Dan Swain

In *Capital*, Marx suggests that labour-power, like all other commodities, has a value determined by the socially necessary labour-time required for its production and reproduction. Yet labour-power is a peculiar kind of commodity, which is inseparable from the living person who bears it, and so “the value of labour-power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of its owner” (1867 [1976], 274). Such maintenance goes beyond mere subsistence: if a worker receives only the value of their “physically indispensable means of subsistence” then the price of labour-power “falls below its value”, and “can be maintained and developed only in a crippled state” (1867 [1976], 277). Moreover, it is one of *Capital*’s key insights that capitalist exploitation does *not*, in general, rely on paying less than labour’s value. Rather, labour-power is bought at value, in a “very Eden of the rights of man”, (1867 [1976], 280) and it is only when it is put to work that exploitation begins.

What, then, are we to make of the existence of a substantial group of people who sell their labour-power, yet do not receive from it sufficient means to maintain and reproduce themselves and their families? This is the group labelled by the term Working Poor, an old concept, but one that has made a dramatic return to public discourse in recent years. Broadly defined, it refers to those classified as in work

but falling below the poverty-line. More specifically, in the European Union it refers to those living in households with at least one person in work but who earn less than 60% of the national median wage. In the UK, a 2017 report by Cardiff University academics suggested 60% of those in poverty were in work (Hick & Lanau, 2017), while a Manchester charity recently established a hostel specifically for the working homeless. While the British government insists that work is the best way out of poverty, tacitly denying that working poverty is even possible, its critics identify the working poor as a particularly urgent and egregious pathology. What could Marx say about this group's existence and the contemporary fixation on it? It is tempting to say: 'not much'. If it is possible for labour to be sold at less than its value, even less than the basic subsistence which he describes as its minimum limit, then perhaps this shows the paucity of his approach. Indeed, the assumption that the value of labour-power is a fixed constant, a "known datum", is part of what Michael Lebowitz (2003) calls the one-sidedness of *Capital*, a simplification that should (and perhaps would) have been abandoned in an adequate study of wage-labour. Yet, as Lebowitz insists, this one-sidedness does not mean that Marxism is completely blind to such questions. Crucially, Marx's emphasis is on the social determination of the value of labour-power, that it "contains a historical and moral element" depending "on the conditions in which, and consequently on the habits and expectations with which the class of free workers has been formed" (1867 [1976], 275). Such habits and expectations are not static, and, Lebowitz argues, cannot be easily held in check. Capitalism creates a world of new needs and desires in workers, which can only be met through demanding, and struggling for, higher wages. As Tithi Bhattacharya puts it (2017, 82), the worker is "always-already produced as *lacking* in what she needs." In this sense, all workers under capitalism are poor, or at least poorer than they believe they should be, and could be.

This should not, though, distract from the specific phenomenon of those for whom wages fall to, or even below, a basic minimum, but a focus on the reproduction of labour-power might help here too. The report cited above made three substantive recommendations for addressing working poverty: tackling high rents, reversing cuts to in-work benefits, and improving the availability of free or affordable childcare to enable more than one parent to work. The third of these is particularly

striking, since it points directly to the contradictions Nancy Fraser (2017) has identified in the latest manifestation of capitalist production's tendency towards crises of reproduction. Capitalist production, she argues (2017, 24), both depends on, and systematically undermines, the reproduction of labour-power, which it approaches with a relation of "separation-cum-dependence-cum-disavowal". In the contemporary period, social reproduction has been "commodified for those who can pay for it and privatised for those who cannot" while the ideal of the "family wage" has given way to that of the "two-earner family". In recognising that this ideal is only sustainable in the context of subsidised or cheaply available childcare, the report acknowledges that this is merely deferring a deeper crisis, not merely of care, but of social reproduction. The working poor, then, are one symptom of this crisis, and public concern about them a hazy recognition of it.

Fraser's work is part of a series of sustained attempts to renew and extend Marxism through a focus on social reproduction. In placing at the centre of analysis the question of how labour-power is reproduced, it allows for a rethinking of central questions of labour, class, and class struggle. First, understanding class struggle as involving first and foremost the struggle of workers to survive and reproduce themselves allows for a recognition that class struggle does not happen merely over wages. Access to healthcare, housing, and social benefits – precisely the things that make the working poor poor – are also significant arenas of struggle. Second, highlighting the importance of reproductive labour shines light on kinds of work that are not directly waged, and thus not officially recognised as such. This might also undermine one of the faulty premises of discussions of the working poor – that there is such a thing as a non-working poor.

A focus on struggle also reveals another important element in forming the working poor. The Cardiff report does not recommend, perhaps unsurprisingly, the strengthening of working-class organisation, consciousness, and solidarity as a solution. Yet if the value of labour is in part determined by the habits and expectations of a working class, then the working poor's existence must also be seen in the context of defeats and decline that have lowered these expectations. In this sense, the notion of greater numbers of people falling below a poverty-line seems

double-edged. On the one hand, it suggests a high watermark which more and more struggle to reach, an acceptance that there is a line beneath which people should not expect to live, but nonetheless do. On the other hand, that we can still see it might suggest horizons have not yet fallen so far. And such horizons can be expanded.

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## Zapatistas – Between Us and Them<sup>1</sup>

Gerardo Montes de Oca Valadez

There is no doubt about the current relevance of Marxist thought – as a form of analysis, interpretation and action – in light of the global processes of expansive commodification of all aspects of life and the environment. Without it, it would be impossible to understand the exploitation, dispossession and extermination that the neoliberal model administers, and to think of possible routes of transformation. However, Marx's thought has also been limited by its own historical and epistemic margins demarcated by coloniality, Eurocentrism and modernity. Modern ideals of science, progress, development of the productive forces, industrialism, and truth and happiness through abundance – all shared with the capitalist mode of production and way of life – have been fundamental to Marx's thought (Lander, 2014, 22).

In general, we can say that such beliefs within Marxist thought have led to the reproduction of undemocratic hierarchical structures on several occasions, which destroy the potential for self-determination, organization, decision-making, and action of individuals and the community from above. Marxist thought has projected a vision of a supposedly unique, true, necessary and desirable direction of historical development and transformation that goes hand in hand with an unsustainable relation to, or domination of, nature. Particularly in Latin America, this

position has bypassed multiple racialized and hierarchized subjects and communities that together with their self-determined forms of life do not fit into the revolutionary categories of conventional Marxist thought. These other sectors of society, together with their ways of thinking-feeling, living-relating, organizing and resisting intra-, inter- and transnational colonialism for more than 525 years (Pablo González Casanova 2014), have been discarded, or at least underestimated, as political agents for a long time.

This is why Zapatismo is today very useful for updating the meaning of Marxist thought from the perspective of other geographies. I cannot, and I will not, intend to speak for the Zapatistas, as they speak clearly and powerfully for themselves. As a person born and raised in Mexico – male, middle class, urban and “mestizo”<sup>1</sup> – I acknowledge the indigenous and colonial histories that precede me, and the erasures, violences and logics that coloniality has imposed among our communities. From that complex and non-fixed position, I look at and listen to the indigenous communities seeking to find ways to overcome the historical, material, and symbolic partitions imposed upon us.

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) is one of the anti-capitalist and anti-systemic movements that have contributed the most to building, from below, something materially and politically “different”: “a world where many worlds fit”<sup>2</sup>. Remarkably, this has been carried out by mostly indigenous people in very adverse situations, including a masked low-intensity warfare, in a country where the capitalist war – in all its colonial, patriarchal, and racist dimensions – unfolds with extreme violence: Mexico<sup>3</sup>. Through its demands<sup>4</sup> and the ways in which they have been proposed, Zapatismo has developed its universal, deep, lasting and anticipatory character, and at the same time, established a valid international agenda of struggle (Carlos Aguirre Rojas, 2015).

Moreover, the Zapatista movement has been building its own forms of political and material autonomy outside the state and the logics of capital (Gilberto López and Rivas 2011: 103-15, Gustavo Esteva 2011: 117-43, Raúl Zibechi 2017; Pablo González Casanova 2015; Jérôme Baschet 2015), creating its own autonomous

municipalities and Juntas de Buen Gobierno (Boards of Good Government). This has also allowed the movement to develop alternative systems of education, health, justice, production, information, and communication, and so on. Autonomy, in Zapatista terms, is not a matter restricted to politics, but rather a matter that operates in all areas of social life. This is expressed in the General Women’s Law published by the EZLN in 1993, and more clearly in the active presence of indigenous women in the ranks of the EZLN since its origin, and the fact that their participation in reproductive, logistical and military work has been fundamental to the movement (Guimar Rovira 2012). The forms of resistance of Zapatista women have directly influenced, according to researcher María Isabel Pérez Enríquez (2008), the forms of resistance exercised by both the indigenous and non-indigenous of the overall civil society. Moreover, EZLN has contributed to both internationally legitimize the political participation of women, and to include the anti-capitalist fight into the feminist agenda (Sylvia Marcos 2017).

Objectively, the strategy of EZLN has focused on the mobilization of civil society. This became evident the moment when the EZLN underwent a transformation from being an army to becoming a social movement. Examples that testify to this transformation are, among others, the Other Campaign (La Otra Campaña), – together with the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle – and in particular its recent joint project with the National Indigenous Congress<sup>5</sup> (CNI). The Other Campaign consisted of many meetings between EZLN and different resistance groups in Mexico in order to create a national anti-capitalist movement.<sup>6</sup>

The recent EZLN and CNI joint project sought to participate in the next Mexican presidential elections in 2018 through the creation of the Indigenous Governing Council (CIG), with spokeswoman María de Jesús Patricio Martínez ‘Marichuy’ as candidate. Here the purpose was not to win or seize power, but rather to use the elections, that are seen by the Zapatista movement as a bargaining process between political parties and private interests, as a platform to make visible the effects of the capitalist war on indigenous communities and the entire country. A platform, moreover, to denounce the political class in power as responsible for extreme violence, corruption and its own impunity, and, fundamentally, the creation of a

gathering of the national, international indigenous and non-indigenous organizations. For this project, the CIG and 'Marichuy' realized a national tour – with minimum resources and no state funding, resembling The Other Campaign – in order to both meet with and listen to the different indigenous and non-indigenous communities and their problems; and to share the CIG collective voice. Their project is based on the Zapatista experience of building autonomy, and the EZLN's seven principles that go by the name of the "rule by obeying".<sup>7</sup> Most importantly, CNI proposes a government from below, where "the people rule and the government obeys". CIG defines its proposal in a similar way as an anti-capitalist, anti-racist and anti-patriarchal call to organize ourselves. By the end of the pre-campaign period, on 19th February 2018, CNI did not achieve to gather the total number of signatures requested by the state as a prerequisite to register a presidential candidate – a process complicated by several institutional, economic and social barriers<sup>8</sup>. But the main goals of the project were met: the situation and problems of the indigenous communities, together with a strong critique of the capitalist system, are brought back to national attention; both CNI, as well as the non-indigenous support networks, grew stronger. Today the project continues to consolidate the CIG and a national anti-capitalist movement and its agenda.<sup>9</sup>

The thought of Marx is still present in the Zapatista movement and the CNI, but in a constant process of appropriation, decolonization and re-elaboration. Marx's "objective" and impersonal thought, which is embedded in the coloniality of knowledge (Anibal Quijano, 2000: 209–46), has been contextualized and adapted by the Zapatistas to local needs without missing its global perspective. The development of the movement during its clandestine years, and its subsequent evolution into an international public since 1994, shows the way in which the movement was and is forced to overcome the limits of Marxist thought, and categories marked by eurocentrism and colonial modernity. The conditions that made such development possible are not located in European thought or its margins. Rather, they can be found in the multiple communities — with their embodied experience, knowledge, and forms of organization – that have resisted the colonial, racist and patriarchal capitalist war and its neoliberal, extractivist, necro- and narco-political versions for more than 525 years.

In 1983, the first EZLN camp was officially settled clandestinely. A few years before that, a group of mestizos with Marxist-Leninist ideas had ventured into the jungle of Chiapas with the intention of forming a revolutionary army to fight against the conditions of extreme poverty, injustice, neglect, exclusion, exploitation, violence, and dispossession in indigenous communities. The first years (1983–1994) of clandestine infrapolitical work (James Scott, 2004), in which the EZLN tried to gain the trust of the indigenous people and build a revolutionary army, served to challenge their urban and mestizo beliefs of being a revolutionary vanguard, and allowed the development of new forms of thought and organization, realities and needs. This is how Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos describes what they experienced:

"We really suffered a process of reeducation, of remodeling, as if we had been unarmed, as if we had lost all the elements we had –Marxism, Leninism, socialism, urban culture, poetry, literature– everything that was part of us, and also things that we did not know that we had. They disarmed us and put us together again, but in a different way, and that was the only way to survive" (Le Bot, Yvone 1997, 151).

Carrying Marxist thought with it, EZLN is therefore part of a long tradition of indigenous struggles and organizing processes in continuous movement: from the Spanish invasion and colonization, through the struggle for Mexican independence and revolution, to more recent revolutionary movements and the theology of the liberation (González Casanova 2015, 265–92).

This process ingrained Marxism in bodies, histories and territories of collective living with their own forms of thought and organization which escape the regime of coloniality and modernity. It was necessary, then, to put aside any form of a Marxist revolutionary blueprint for seizing power from above, and to develop the capacity to look and listen to different ways<sup>10</sup> in order to begin building "from below and to the left" "a world where many worlds fit".

The gaze. Toward where and from where. That is what separates us. You believe that you are the only ones, we know that we are just one of many.

You look above, we look below.  
 You look for ways to make yourselves comfortable; we look for ways to serve.  
 You look for ways to lead, we look for ways to accompany.  
 You look at how much you earn, we at how much is lost.  
 You look for what is, we, for what could be.  
 You see numbers, we see people.  
 You calculate statistics, we, histories.  
 You speak, we listen.  
 You look at how you look, we look at the gaze.  
 You look at us and demand to know where we were when your calendar marked  
*your* “historic” urgency. We look at you and don’t ask where you’ve been during  
 these more than 500 years of history.  
 You look to see how you can take advantage of the current conjuncture, we look  
 to see how we can create it.  
 You concern yourselves with the broken windows, we concern ourselves with the  
 rage that broke it.  
 You look at the many, we at the few.  
 You see impassable walls, we see the cracks.  
 You look at possibilities, we look at what was impossible until the eve of its pos-  
 sibility.  
 You search for mirrors, we for windows.  
 You and us are not the same.  
 (Ejército de Liberación Nacional a través del Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos  
 y del Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés. 2013, 92-3).

## Notes

1] In broad terms I understand “mestizaje” as a political project of the Mexican State that has systematically aimed at erasing the indigenous presence and legacy in the population in order to homogenize the forms of life, organization, interaction, politics, economy, and governing, and having global neoliberal capitalism as its current paradigm.

2] This is one of the most known political ideas of the EZLN, which are often expressed in rather poetic forms.

3] Mexico has been experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis in the last decade. Since the USA-led war on drugs started in 2006 the levels of violence, horror, injustice and impunity increased exponentially. At the same time, the recently imposed energy reforms accelerated the dispossession, privatization and destruction of indigenous natural resources and territories by foreign mining companies. Among other data, since 2006 up until now there have been around 300,000 deaths; 30,000 missing people –1 every two hours; almost 300,000 people are victim of enforced inner displacement due to poverty and violence perpetrated by drug cartels and at times in collusion with military and or police forces; 50,000 migrants assassinated; 23 missing journalists since 2003 and more than 100 killed since 2000. By 2016 43.6% of the population is poor according to official data – but around 70% according to prestigious and critical specialist and researcher Julio Boltvinik. The Daily Minimum Wage is \$88.36 mx peso in 2018 – around 3,83€ –, while at the same time Mexico is today the 15° strongest economy in the world according to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

By the end of 2017, the State approved to “fast track” – despite general rejection – the new Law of Internal Security that gives excessive powers to the military army in law enforcement activities including gathering intelligence “by any legal means possible”. The new law is full of vague definitions and has no objective criteria for what internal security means. Hence it can be applied to “any” situation. Mexico is one of the countries in which the State makes use of the Israeli spyware Pegasus and there are documented cases of State espionage against activists. Also, between 2006 and 2016, Mexico’s National Human Rights Commission received around 10,000 complaints of abuse by the military, and torture is considered by several NGO’s as a systematic practice. See more about this law here: <https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Mexicos-Controversial-Internal-Security-Law-Explained-20180131-0042.html> and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/15/mexican-military-police-drugs-crackdown-human-rights>

2017/2018 Amnesty International’s report gives the overall situation in its introduction: “Violence increased throughout Mexico. The armed forces continued to undertake regular policing functions. Human rights defenders and journalists were threatened, attacked and killed; digital attacks and surveillance were particularly common. Widespread arbitrary detentions continued to lead to torture and other ill-treatment, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions. Impunity persisted for human rights violations and crimes under international law. Mexico received a record number of asylum claims, mostly from nationals of El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Venezuela. Violence against women remained a major concern; new data showed that two thirds of women had experienced gender-based violence during their lives. The rights to housing and education were compromised by two major earthquakes.” See: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/mexico/report-mexico/>

4] Work, land, housing, education, health, food, culture, information, independence, freedom, justice, democracy, and peace.

5] <http://www.congresonacionalindigena.org/what-is-the-cni/>



6] The Other Campaign was the implementation of the Sixth Declaration (EZLN 2005), in which the EZLN openly defined itself as anti-capitalist: “below and to the left”. In that document, the EZLN made it clear that the enemy is the capitalist system and the political parties its servitude. Accordingly, The Other Campaign consisted of several intense preparative meetings with numerous indigenous and non-indigenous organizations, cooperatives, collectives of workers, farmers, migrants, teachers, students, women, LGBT people, artists, etc. The EZLN wanted to listen to their struggles and forms of organization and resistance. The other part of the project was a national tour of Sub Comandante Marcos (who used the name of Delegado Zero for such enterprise) and other members of the EZLN aiming at bringing the different resistances together and forming an anti-capitalist national movement—in which each individual or group creates its own form of organization—in order to build a new world where many worlds fit.

7] To serve, not to serve yourself; to represent and not to supplant; to construct and not to destroy; to obey and not to command; to propose and not to impose; to convince and not to win; to go down and not to go up.

8] As a start, in order to be registered as an official independent candidate, the National Electoral Institute (INE) demanded the gathering of almost 900,000 signatures in at least 17 States that confirm the country's signatures through a new modality: an app that works only in mid-range smartphones and through internet connexion. In a country where most of the population lives in poverty and the indigenous population is in extreme poverty, this requirement meant an important limitation. At the beginning of the pre-campaign to gather the signatures, the phone and internet networks went down in regions where they usually work fine. Also, the app had constant technical problems, it did not work properly all the time and gathering one signature could eventually take a long period of time. There were also documented cases of police harassment of the CIG support network and street points where people were collecting signatures. However, the organization gathered more than 250,000 signatures with the highest percentage of valid official signatures. It was a collective work in which no one got paid, every supporter did it out of genuine conviction, and to collect just one signature implied an honest dialogue with strangers—in contrast, the other pre-candidates, who had direct links with political parties, paid for the work of collecting signatures. Also, most of them collected signatures of names not registered in the INE. Even when those signatures were not validated, there were no legal consequences of such procedures.

9] CNI will continue to consolidate the Indigenous Governing Council, and the non-indigenous supporting network will continue to organize and create their own agendas autonomously, while at the same time remaining attentive to further decisions and proposals for action from the CNI. There are several topics that will inform the agenda.

10] See the interview of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos conducted by Julio Scherer “La entrevista insólita”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFCC1yw-7w4>. Or its print version in Revista Proceso, 10 Marzo 2001: [http://hemeroteca.proceso.com.mx/?page\\_id=184763](http://hemeroteca.proceso.com.mx/?page_id=184763).

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## Biographies

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#### Gainfranco Casuso

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Jeff Diamanti teaches Literary and Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam. He is co-editor of *Contemporary Marxist Theory* (Bloomsbury 2014), *Materialism and the Critique of Energy* (MCM Prime 2018) and the forthcoming *Bloomsbury Companion to Marx* (Bloomsbury 2018).

#### Lina Dokuzovic

Lina Dokuzovic works at the intersection between visual art and text/knowledge production. Her writing, research, lectures, and artistic work deal with the topics of migration; knowledge production and educational policies; mechanisms of appropriation and privatization of structures such as

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#### Jeanette Ehrmann

Jeanette Ehrmann is a research associate at the Department of Political Science at Justus Liebig University Giessen. In her doctoral thesis "Tropes of Freedom. The Haitian Revolution and the Decolonization of the Political", she reconstructed the ideas and practices of political agency and emancipation in the Haitian Revolution. Her current project – "From Human Capital to Banana Republics. Unsettling the Coloniality of Neoliberalism" – seeks to develop a decolonial critique of neoliberalism.

#### Max L. Feldman

Max L. Feldman is a writer and art critic based in Vienna. He studied Philosophy at Heythrop College (University of London), Cultural and Critical Studies at Birkbeck College (University of London), and Continental Philosophy at The University of Warwick, before teaching Philosophy at Heythrop College and the University of Roehampton, London. He is currently writing a PhD in Philosophy at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. You can find his previous writing at [www.maxfeldman.com](http://www.maxfeldman.com)

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#### Ido de Haan

Ido de Haan is professor of political history at Utrecht University. He is currently supervising a research project on the history of neoliberalism in the Netherlands ([neoliberalisme.nl](http://neoliberalisme.nl)). Among his publications are books on Dutch political history (*Een nieuwe staat. Het begin van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, ed. with P. de Hoed and H. te Velde, Prometheus 2013; *Het beginsel van leven en wasdom. De constitutie van de Nederlandse politiek*, Wereldbibliotheek 2003), on the memory of the Holocaust (*Na de ondergang. De herinnering aan de Jodenvervolgung in Nederland*, SDU 1997) and on the history of political ideology (*Zelfbestuur en staatsbeheer. Het politieke debat over burgerschap en rechtsstaat in de twintigste eeuw*, AUP 1993; *Maakbaarheid. Liberale wortels en hedendaagse kritiek van de maakbare samenleving*, ed. with J.W. Duyvendak, AUP 1996). Together with Beatrice de Graaf and Brian Vick he edited *Securing Europe after Napoleon*, CUP forthcoming).

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James D. Ingram teaches political theory at McMaster University in Canada. He is the author of *Radical Cosmopolitics: The Ethics and Politics of Democratic Universalism* and co-editor of *Political Uses of Utopia: New Marxist, Anarchist, and Radical Democratic Perspectives* (both from Columbia University Press).

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Niki Kubaczek is a sociologist, activist and publisher based in Vienna. At the moment he is writing on the antiracist politics of friendship at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. He is part of the editorial board of *transversal texts*, the *eipcp – european institute for progressive cultural policies* and *kritnet – network for critical border regime and migration research*.

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Li Yitian is Professor in the School of Marxism at Tsinghua University in Beijing. He got his B.A. at Wuhan University (2002) and PH. D. at Tsinghua University (2007). His research interests include contemporary ethics and political philosophy in a Marxist perspective as well as virtue ethics. He has written *Virtue Ethics and Moral Diversity* (2012), *Virtue, Mind and Action* (2016), *In Defense of Normativity* (2018), edited *Marx and Theory of Justice* (2010), *Community and Political Solidarity* (2009) and published articles and reviews widely on Marxist ethics, eco-socialism and contemporary moral philosophy.

**Urs Lindner**

Urs Lindner is a postdoctoral researcher at the Max-Weber-Center of the University of Erfurt, Germany, and is currently writing his habilitation on affirmative action in a comparative perspective. In 2017, he co-edited the first German volume on critical realism. His PhD was published in German under the title *Marx and Philosophy: Scientific Realism, Ethical Perfectionism and Critical Social Theory* in 2013.

**Isabell Lorey**

Isabell Lorey, political theorist at the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp), based in Berlin, and member in the editorial board of the book series transversal texts. From October 2018 on she will hold the professorship for Queer Studies at the Academy for Media Arts Cologne.

From 2015 – 2018 she was professor for Transnational Gender Politics at the Institute for Political Science, University of Kassel. Last book in English: *State of Insecurity. Government of the Precarious*, London/New York: Verso 2015. Currently she is writing a book on “Presentist Democracy”.

**Gundula Ludwig**

Dr. Gundula Ludwig currently is a recipient of an APART Fellowship of the Austrian Academy of Sciences at the Department of Political Science/University of Vienna. Fields of interest include: political theory (state theory, theories on democracy and power), feminist theory, queer theory, body politics, and history of medicine.

**Ewa Majewski**

Ewa Majewska is a feminist philosopher of culture, she works as adjunct professor at the Department of Artes Liberales at the University of Warsaw, Poland. She was a visiting fellow at the University of California, Berkeley (BBRG), a stipendiary fellow at the University of Örebro (Sweden), IWM (Vienna) and ICI Berlin. She is the author of three monographs, co-editor of four volumes on neoliberalism, politics, gender and education; she published articles and essays in: *Signs, e-flux, Nowa Krytyka, Przegląd Filozoficzny, Przegląd Kulturoznawczy, Kultura Współczesna, Le Monde Diplomatique* (PL) and multiple collected volumes. Her main focus is weak resistance, counterpublics and critical affect studies.

**Eva Meijer**

Eva Meijer recently defended her PhD-thesis, titled *Political Animal Voices*, at the University of Amsterdam. She teaches (animal) philosophy at the University of Amsterdam and is the chair of the Dutch study group for Animal Ethics, as well as a founding member of Minding Animals The Netherlands. Recent publications include a book on nonhuman animal languages and the question of what language is, *Animal Languages*, and a fictional biography of bird scientist Len Howard, *Bird Cottage*, both of which will be translated into eight languages. More information can be found on her website: [www.evameijer.nl](http://www.evameijer.nl).

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Andrew Poe teaches political theory at Amherst College, where he is an assistant professor of political science and a member of the coordinating committee of the Amherst Program in Critical Theory. His research engages problems of democratic theory, especially modes of resistance, rhetoric, belief, extremism, and political affect. He is currently completing a manuscript, *The Contest for Political Enthusiasm*, which offers a critical genealogy of the phenomenon of enthusiasm in politics. He can be reached by email at [apoe@amherst.edu](mailto:apoe@amherst.edu).

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In and beyond the frameworks of the eipcp-platform transversal texts, the Zurich University of the Arts and other rather unidentifiable milieus, Gerald Raunig tries to focus, if possible, on dividualities and dissemblages, machinic capitalism and molecular revolution, technecologies and subsistential territories.

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Emmanuel Renault is Professor of Social and Political Philosophy at the University of Paris Nanterre. He is the author of several books on Marx, Hegel, social philosophy and contemporary critical theory, including *Social Suffering: Sociology, Psychology, Politics* (Rowman & Littlefield 2017) and *The Return of Work in Critical Theory* (as co-author, Columbia UP 2018).

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Nora Ruck is Assistant Professor of Psychology at the Sigmund Freud Private University Vienna, where she co-coordinates the master program "Social Psychology and Psychosocial Practice". She has lived, studied, and conducted research in Austria, the Netherlands, Germany, the U.S., and Canada. Both her research and teaching focus on the relations between psychology and social inequalities and social movements, relating both to the ways in which social movements have altered our understanding of human experience and agency, and to the mechanisms through which psychology itself has contributed to social inequalities and oppression. Email: [nora.ruck@sfu.ac.at](mailto:nora.ruck@sfu.ac.at)

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Mathijs van de Sande teaches political philosophy at Radboud University Nijmegen. In 2017 he obtained his PhD at the Institute of Philosophy in Leuven, with a thesis on the prefigurative

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#### **Birgit Sauer**

Birgit Sauer is professor at the Department of Political Science at the University of Vienna, Austria. She has published on gender, governance and democracy, on gender and right-wing populism and on affective labour and state transformation.

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Felix Stalder is a professor for Digital Culture at the Zurich University of the Arts, a senior researcher at the World Information Institute in Vienna and a moderator of <nettime>. His work focuses on the intersection of cultural, political and technological dynamics, in particular on new modes of commons-based production, control society, copyright and transformation of subjectivity. Among his recent publications are *Digital Solidarity* (PML & Mute 2014) and *The Digital Condition* (Polity Press, 2018) felix.openflows.com

#### **Dan Swain**

Dan Swain is an Assistant Professor at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague. He completed his PhD, entitled *Marx's Ethics of Self-Emancipation*, at the University of Essex in 2015 and is the author of *Alienation: An Introduction to Marx's Theory*.

#### **Sina Talachian**

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Mariana Teixeira is Associate Researcher at the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning, in São Paulo, and was a Visiting Researcher at the Free University-Berlin. She received her Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Campinas (Brazil) with a dissertation on social pathologies, suffering, and resistance in the work of Axel Honneth. Mariana has published on critical theory, Marxism, post-colonialism, and feminism, and is a member of the editorial board of the academic journals *Ideias* and *Dissonancia: Critical Theory Journal*.

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Julia Tirlor is a cultural scientist, writer, precarious worker and currently a PhD candidate at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna with research interests in intersectional feminisms, theories of collectivity and labour struggles and their representation.

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