

MARX INATTUALE

(a cura di Riccardo Bellofiore e Carla Maria Fabiani)

Editoriale

p. 9, RICCARDO BELLOFIORE, *C'è vita su Marx? Il Capitale nel bicentenario*

Abstract: The article suggests a reconstruction of Marx's Critique of Political Economy as a macro-monetary theory of capitalist production. The first part of what follows will provide a sort of methodological introduction to *Das Kapital*. I am questioning the meaning of critique versus criticism, the distinction between fetish-character and fetishism, the role of dialectics, and the difference between reading, interpretation and reconstruction. I will focus especially on *Volume I*. At the centre of the discussion are: the multiple meanings of abstract labour and socialization, the role of money as a commodity for the labour theory of value, the "method of comparison" in grounding valorisation (the emergence of gross profits) as the constitution of capital from class struggle in production, the unity of absolute and relative surplus value extraction, the key notion of «*Technologie*» in the real subsumption of labour to capital, the law of the tendential fall in relative wage, Marx's two notions of «competition», and the macro-monetary class perspective in capitalist reproduction crucial to *Capital, Volume I*. Some considerations are devoted to the transformation problem, the so-called New Interpretation, and crisis theory.

Keywords: abstract labour; method of comparison; real subsumption of labour to finance; tendential fall of the relative wage; competition; transformation problem; crisis theory

Questioni di metodo – parte I

p. 69, MICHAEL HEINRICH, *Rileggendo Marx: nuovi testi e nuove prospettive*

Abstract: Permettetemi di iniziare con un'osservazione personale sulla mia lettura de *Il capitale*. Sono circa 43 anni che leggo *Il capitale*, e devo dire che non mi sono ancora annoiato. Leggerlo è come compiere un avventuroso viaggio intellettuale, ma per godere appieno di quest'esperienza è richiesto un tipo di impegno diverso da quello a cui ci ha ormai abituato il sistema universitario europeo, per il quale «leggere» significa solamente individuare in maniera grossolana alcune delle tesi principali esposte in un'opera.

Leggere *Il capitale* significa comprenderne la struttura argomentativa, i diversi livelli di astrazione e, non da ultimo, per un autore come Marx, riconoscere il ruolo giocato dalle metafore all'interno del testo. Marx non ha utilizzato come fonti solo economisti, ma anche filosofi, teologi, e scrittori come Shakespeare e Goethe. Non si tratta solo di abbellimenti destinati al pubblico più colto: molte di queste metafore sono cruciali per comprendere i ragionamenti marxiani. Di seguito, parlerò in primo luogo di una nuova interpretazione di Marx, e poi di alcuni nuovi testi e intuizioni che potremmo ricavare dalla nuova MEGA.

Keywords: *Das Kapital*; MEGA; abstraction

p. 91, TOMMASO REDOLFI RIVA, *A partire dal sottotitolo del Capitale: Critica e metodo della critica dell'economia politica*

Abstract: The aim of the paper is to explain the concept of «critique of political economy» (CPE) in Marx's mature work. Starting from the different meanings CPE assumes, I will try to explain the peculiarities of such a critical

project. In particular, I will focus the attention on CPE as a critique of capital as objective-subjective totality: on the one side, as a system of social production whose aim is the valorisation of capital, based on the appropriation of unpaid labour and generating a system of socialisation of production increasingly becoming autonomous from the social agents which establish it; on the other side, as the place of constitution of the categories of political economy, whose defect cannot only be brought back to the methodological lack of the economists because such categories, as a part of the capitalistic reality itself, are products of capitalistic social relationships. What emerges from this perspective is that CPE, as the presentation of the system of capitalistic relationships, is the critique of a specific *science* put forth by means of the critique of its own specific *object*.
Keywords: Marx; critique of political economy; method of the critique; theory of value; fetishism

p. 109, FRIEDER OTTO WOLF, *Systematic Theory Building and Empirico-Historical Argument in Marx's Capital*

Abstract: Marx's conception of the ideal average provides an approach to a productive re-discussion of Marx's epistemological practice in *Capital*. As a specific approach to systematic theory-building underlying Marx's *critique of political economy* it opens a way, with the implied distinction between systematic theory building and empirico-historical exemplification and analysis, it makes it possible today to reconstruct Marx's «materialist dialectics». More specifically it is claimed, that Marx's insights into the «limits of dialectical presentation» should be interpreted in a way that makes his «dialectics» compatible with modern, post-fregean logic. This is then taken as the basis for the argument that there is a need for and a possibility of specifically analysing the *lacunae* and *blind spots* in Marx's elaboration, making them starting-points for a further elaboration of his unfinished theory of the domination of the capitalist mode of production in modern bourgeois societies, as well as for new perspectives of criticizing modern bourgeois economics. Furthermore, it is argued, that this reading of *Capital* makes it possible also to think the mutual over-determination of different structures of domination within modern bourgeois societies, which are articulated with, but remain distinct from the capitalist mode of production.
Keywords: theory and history in Marx; limits of dialectical presentation; materialist dialectics; materialist feminism; political ecology

p. 129, STEFANO BREDI, *La dialettica marxiana come critica immanente dell'empiria*

Abstract: The paper aims to show that a materialist understanding of the method followed by Marx in his critique of political economy requires going beyond both the traditional logical-historical interpretation of dialectics and the logical-systematic interpretation developed within the *Neue Marx-Lektüre*.

Keywords: Marx; dialectics; materialism; *Neue Marx-Lektüre*; immanent critique

p. 151, ELENA LOUISA LANGE, *The Proof is in the Pudding: on the Necessity of Presupposition in Marx's Critical Method*

Abstract: Marx's labour theory of value cannot be understood without the critique of the value theories of classical political economy, especially that of Adam Smith and David Ricardo. It is therefore by necessity inflicted with the presupposition of its own intellectual context. Presupposition however is not only central to the formation of the labour theory of value as «analogous to Newton's Laws in mechanics» (Duncan Foley) in the realm of social science. Presupposition, a strong Hegelian *topos*, also basically informs the level of Marx's critique as the critique of the forms, and hence, the fetish-character of value, as they appear within the bourgeois economic horizon. However, it is precisely the unfolding of the presuppositions of «simple exchange», «money», «profit» etc. that puts Marx's method in contrast to the apotheosis of «given data» that informs «economics» today. First, I will first recapitulate the aporias in the theories of value of the classics to show how Marx developed the original *labour* theory of value.

Second, the demand of «presuppositionlessness» and the «proof» of the LTV that has (mis)informed approaches in Marxian value recently, will be critically targeted.

Keywords: Marx's method in *Capital*; labour theory of value; (presupposition in) Hegel's *Science of Logic*; Adam Smith; David Ricardo

p. 173, BOB JESSOP, 'Every beginning is difficult, holds in all sciences'. *Marx on the Economic Cell Form of the Capitalist Mode of Production*

Abstract: Marx and Engels followed the natural sciences closely and held that there was only one science: history, embracing nature and society. This contribution notes the influence of Darwinism, thermodynamics and cell biology in Marx's critique of political economy and examines the least-discussed of these influences: cell biology. For Marx eventually settled on the value-form of the commodity, described as the economic cell form of the capitalist mode of production (CMP), as the starting point for *Capital*. At stake here is Marx's deep interest in the natural sciences and the role of analogy and metaphor as sources of scientific inspiration in a period when major advances were being made in cell biology among other scientific fields. It then asks whether the discussion of the methods of political economy adumbrated in the 1857 «Introduction» adequately anticipates Marx's method in *Capital*. It does not: cell biology suggested another method. Accordingly, this chapter identifies six parallels between cell biology and Marx's analysis of the CMP and explore the heuristic and epistemological implications of beginning with the commodity as the elementary form of the capital relation. Nonetheless, these parallels affect the process of discovery more than the substantive focus of Marx's research or the order of presentation, where Hegelian influences remain. The contribution also reflects on the theoretical and political limits of metaphors drawn from the natural sciences in the critical analysis of social formations and their social transformation. It ends with some general conclusions on discovery, methods, and the logical-historical method of presentation.

Keywords: capital; cell form; commodity; metaphor; method

p. 193, VITTORIO MORFINO, *Le note del Capitale su Lucrezio e Darwin*

Abstract: The article takes into consideration the notes of the *Capital* in which Lucretius and Darwin are quoted. The author, carefully reconstructing the theoretical context in which the Latin poet and the English naturalist are mentioned, proposes an interpretation, which goes from the certain to the conjectural, of the Marxian strategy that commands these notes.

Keywords: Lucretius; Darwin; Spinoza; mechanism; organicism

Rileggere il primo libro del Capitale – parte II

p. 205, WERNER BONEFELD, *Abstract Labour and Labouring*

Abstract: The paper argues that the critique of political economy amounts to a comprehension of economic categories from the actual, given relations of life, which is critique of economic things as perverted social forms. In this context, the comprehension of abstract labour is specific. Instead of conceiving of it as a capitalist modality of labour in general, it expounds abstract labour as purely social in character. Abstract labour is the value producing labour because it is the socially necessary labour, which is a real abstraction. The time of abstract labour is the time of exchangeability – it compels the expenditure of concrete labour time as expenditure of socially necessary labour time. Expenditure of concrete labour that exceeds what is necessary is wasted and valueless. It has no social validity; what cannot be exchanged is burnt. «Abstract labour» is the category of a mode of production in which the satisfaction of human needs is merely a sideshow.

Keywords: abstract labour; exchange; money; social compulsion; labour economy

p. 225, FRANK ENGSTER, *Il Capitale e il suo punto cieco: il denaro come tecnica di misura*

Abstract: In the 1960s, a logical-categorical reading of Marx's *Capital* began, especially with focus on the value-form analysis, from which the so-called «*New Marx Reading*» in Germany was one of the outcomes. These readings on the one hand found, with the necessity of synthesizing the theory of value with that of money, the key to opening up the further development of the capitalist mode of production. On the other hand, they stayed fixed on money's second function as a medium of exchange and on money-mediated commodity exchange, remaining trapped in the contradiction between use-value and exchange-value and the need for an abstraction to quantify the commodity relations. In contrast, the thesis of this paper is that it is money's *first* function as a *measure of value* which is decisive for the development of the inner connection of money and value and for the capitalist mode of production as a whole. Only through the first function can the technique of quantification be deduced, the technique to turn the negativity of a pure social relation into the positivity of *quanta* and to release with this turn the productive power of the capitalist mode of production. Quantification in capitalism is neither an abstraction, nor a reduction or a form of counting. Rather, in capitalism society is subjected to a measurement of its own productive power; a productive power which through its measurement is, in the first instance, released and systematically expanded. Developing the capitalist mode of production from the "standpoint" of money – the standpoint of an ideal unit which becomes by money's main function the measure of value, the means of the realization of value and the form of its valorization – opens up an adequate understanding of how to make society an object of both science and critique.

Keywords: money; value; measure; technique; commodity form

p. 245, MASSIMILIANO TOMBA, *'La bestia è l'azienda non il fatto che abbia un padrone'. Commento al quinto capitolo del Capitale*

Abstract: The first chapter of the third section of *Capital, Volume 1*, constitutes in many ways an Archimedean point of the entire work. In this chapter the many theoretical questions investigated in the first section are reconfigured from the perspective of the labor-process and valorization-process, acquiring a new political color. In my reconstruction, by putting the use-value at the center, I explore the diverse theoretical layers of this chapter in light of their political implication.

Keywords: value; use value; commodity; socially necessary work; corporeity; production; circulation

p. 259, MARIA GRAZIA MERIGGI, *La giornata lavorativa*

Abstract: Marx found the comparison among the slaves owner, the feudal lord and the capitalist owner, to show their voracity of time of life of the workers. The limitation of the working day is possible only with a double trial: contractual strength of the organized workers and productivity of the worked time.
Keywords: plus value; strength's relationships; productivity

p. 271, MARIA TURCHETTO, *La scoperta del plusvalore relativo*

Abstract: We analyze the Chapter 10 of *Capital's Volume I* «The Concept of Relative Surplus-value» highlighting come important concepts: 1) the industrial and mass character of production as consequences of the relative surplus-value; 2) extra-profits and dissemination of innovations; 3) the combined operation of absolute and relative surplus-value.

Keywords: Marx; *Capital* chapter 10; relative surplus-value; industry; mass production

p. 285, LUCA MICALONI, *Dall'anima semovente al 'soggetto automatico'. Stratificazioni filosofiche nel concetto di 'capitale' e nell'analisi marxiana del sistema di macchine*

Abstract: In this paper the Author examines the philosophical implications of the Marxian analysis of the «automatic system of machinery». In the first part, he shows that the notion of «automaton» cannot be univocally assimilated to a passive and heteronomous kind of movement. In fact, it displays (both etymologically and conceptually) an affinity with the notion of «self-motion»: an «automaton» is something that finds within itself the sources and the principles of its movement. In the second part, the Author argues that Marx's definition of «capital» as «automatic Subject» (Book I, chapter 4) should be grasped from the standpoint of this notion of «automaticity», which is also coherent with the Idealistic (Fichtean and Hegelian) account of the prerogatives of the «Subject». In the third part, he examines the chapter on «large-scale industry», in which the «automaton» (i.e. one of the shapes of capital as automatic Subject) proves to be the real «Subject» of capitalist production, through the subsumption and expropriation of the subjectivity (of the capacity of initiative, movement and control) of the human bearers of labour-power.

Keywords: *Capital*; automatic subject; machinery; Marx; large-scale industry

p. 301, CARLA FILOSA, *Tempo di lavoro e salario*

Abstract: The aim of this article is to clarify the meaning of «wage» and «labour-power» concepts, according to Marxian analysis. The feature of the labour-process as human action aimed at the production of use-values is first highlighted. It is the everlasting nature-imposed condition of human existence. Indeed, the process of creating surplus value is nothing but the continuation of the boundless producing value process. Thus, the prolongation of the working-day beyonds the limits of the natural day – encroaching on all life's time – has mainly the purpose of realizing increasing surplus value in the labour-power consumption (i.e. during the commodities production). The «mystery» of poverty – nowadays contended as an enemy – is principally due to a generally known law that the longer the working days the lower the wages are. Indeed, the reproduction of labour-power mass as over-population is the mandatory outcome of the capitalist accumulation general law. Current migration flows show that the existence of huge quantity of (unemployed) human being is a precious disposable reserve army, independently than the limits of the actual increase of population, as a mass of human material always available to be exploited. This paper will deeply discuss about these issues, remarking also the existing differences between wage and (basic) income as well as the different typologies of wage (material, real, relative and nominal). Finally, the strict connection between wage, labour-power value and surplus value, will be validated.

Keywords: labour-power; wage; exploitation; surplus-value; migration

p. 317, ROBERTO FINESCHI, *Una storia complessa. La teoria dell'accumulazione in Marx*

Abstract: «Accumulation» is a crucial concept in Marx' theory of capital. Next only to the value form, this is the part that underwent the most significant changes in the different drafts of his work, since it plays a crucial role in its general structure. Its function, more than the transformation of values into prices of production, is the key point to think the continuity/discontinuity between the different abstraction levels of the theory. In this essay, we shall try to show this development and explain its more general meaning.

Keywords: accumulation; *Capital*; Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe; capital in general; abstraction levels

p. 337, GUGLIELMO FORGES DAVANZATI, *La teoria marxiana dell'esercito industriale di riserva come teoria della politica economica*

Abstract: This paper deals with the relation between labour market deregulation and the path of employment in Italy, based on Marx's theory of the industrial reserve army. It will be shown that the increase in labour flexibility negatively affected the employment rate in the 2000s. Moreover, it is argued that as unemployment increases, workers' bargaining power decreases not only in the labour market but also in the political arena, allowing the Government to implement further policies of labour flexibility. The evidence confirms this conjecture.

Keywords: Marx; industrial reserve army; employment in Italy

p. 355, SEBASTIANO TACCOLA, *L'accumulazione originaria: genesi del modo di produzione capitalistico tra storia e struttura*

Abstract: This paper proposes a re-examination of the Marxian primitive accumulation. In the first two parts, I will sum up the Marxian exposition of the primitive accumulation as a diachronic process, which is capable to explain the historical genesis of the capitalist mode of production, especially as it took place in England (through the Enclosures Acts, the clearing of the estates, and so on). Then, I will focus on the permanence of this kind of accumulation, on the one hand (part three), as a lever that drives the capitalistic accumulation on a global scale, and on the other hand (part four), as a synchronic process that plays a crucial role in the reproduction of the concept of «capital». This last point, in my opinion, represents the core of an interpretation of primitive accumulation founded on that inner genesis of categories, which is immanent to the Marxian critique of political economy and its method of presentation.

Keywords: primitive accumulation; critique of political economy; history; structure; *Capital*

p. 371, CARLA MARIA FABIANI, *Da Hegel a Marx: fenomenologia dello Stato moderno capitalistico*

Abstract: In Chapter 24 of the first book of *Capital*, Marx deals with the modern capitalist State, emphasizing the existence of complex factors which affect it. The theoretical basis of his reflection is to be found in Hegel's *Phenomenology*. He points out the violent methods that the State use against workers – the eslege proletariat – and the subsumption of the State to capital.

Keywords: State, capital, system, rabble, eslege proletariat, pauperism

p. 389, EDOARDA MASI, *Divagazioni intorno al 25° capitolo del I libro del Capitale*

Abstract: This paper deals with Marx's theory of colonization. It is argued that – in contrast with E.G. Wakefield's view – Marx proposed a complete and consistent approach to the role of colonization in the dynamics of capital reproduction. In particular, he emphasized the transformation of free men in “underdeveloped” economies into wage workers.

Keywords: primitive accumulation; colonization; imperialism; China

Lecture – parte III

p. 407, REBECCA CARSON, *Money as Money: Suzanne de Brunhoff's Marxist Monetary Theory*

Abstract: This article proposes the necessity to return to Suzanne de Brunhoff's Marxist monetary theory in order to conceptualise the relationship between production and social reproduction within financialised capitalist social relations. De Brunhoff maintains a commitment to understanding «money as money» or money as an independent variable, with a focus on a monetary theory of credit. By representing un-valorised value, credit money cannot simply be understood as representative of reified forms of value and therefore corresponding subjection to the form cannot be interpreted from the point of view of the fetish character only. In this way, money is a form that, although is immanent to capital, is at the same time other to capital. With focus on an intervention de Brunhoff made within the pages of the «workerist» journal «Primo Maggio», this article will go on to deploy de Brunhoff's reading of money as a way to understand the interplay between two readings of money that continue divide the field of Marxian thought into Marxism and post-Marxism: money as command over exploited labour or «money as capital», *versus* commodification of social life under the commodity-money-capital relation. What this article will show is that it is de Brunhoff's focus on «money as money» that offers us a unique position from which to account for concerns propagated between these two sides and in doing so gives us a unique entry point into understanding the internal complexities of the capital relation in the present.

Keywords: money; value form; financialization; Suzanne de Brunhoff; «Primo Maggio»

p. 429, ETIENNE BALIBAR, *Some Additional Reflexions on the Viewpoint of Suzanne de Brunhoff about the Critique of Political Economy*

Bio-note: Etienne Balibar is Emeritus Professor of Political Philosophy at Université Paris-Ouest Nanterre, and currently Anniversary Chair of Modern European Philosophy at Kingston University, London. His published works include *Reading Capital* (1965), with Louis Althusser and others (new complete translation: Verso, 2016), and *Citizen Subject. Foundations for Philosophical Anthropology*, Fordham University Press, 2017.

p. 435, GIANLUCA POZZONI, *Il mondo mistico del Capitale: scienza, critica e rivoluzione in Lucio Colletti*

Abstract: Taking the cue from some of Lucio Colletti's unpublished letters and writings, this article will focus on Colletti's work from the 1967-1973 period. Here, Colletti interprets Marx's theory of value in terms of a «real abstraction» – i.e. in terms of the alienation of individual private labours. By turning this abstraction into an object and by reifying it, capital becomes for Colletti an inherently “upside-down” social reality, whose knowledge can only be acquired through the critique and upturning of its idealism. The originality of Colletti's Marxism lies in the powerful link it establishes between political economy and critique, between Marxism and the critique of idealism, between science and revolution.

Keywords: Lucio Colletti; Italian Marxism; labour theory of value; dialectics; Marx-Hegel relation

p. 475, CHRIS ARTUR, LUCA MICALONI, *The Logic of Capital. Interview with Chris Arthur*

Bio-note: Christopher J. Arthur (1940 –) studied at the universities of Nottingham and Oxford. For 25 years he taught Philosophy at the University of Sussex, UK. He is the author of: *The New Dialectic and Marx's Capital* (2002), and of *Dialectics of Labour: Marx and his Relation to Hegel* (1986). He edited and introduced: *The German Ideology* by Marx and Engels (1970; revised 1974); *Law and Marxism* by E. B. Pashukanis (third imprint, 1989); *Engels Today: A Centenary Appreciation* (1996); and (with Geert Reuten) *The Circulation of Capital: Essays on Volume Two of Marx's Capital* (1998). He was one of the founders, and a member of the editorial collective for many years, of the journal *Radical Philosophy*. He also was a participant from the start of the *Conference of Socialist Economists*, and served as a member of the editorial collective of its journal «Capital & Class». He was a founder-member of *The International Symposium on Marxian Theory* and has attended all its working conference, and contributed to the resulting book collections. His recent research has been directed towards a renewal of the critique of political economy, drawing on the work of Marx and Hegel.

p. 485, CHRIS O'KANE, *Moishe Postone's New Reading of Marx: the Critique of Political Economy as a Critical Theory of the Historically Specific Social Form of Labor*

Abstract: This article examines Moishe Postone's new reading of the critique of political economy. Part One contextualizes the underlying justification of Postone's interpretation of Marx by discussing his critique of traditional marxism and frankfurt school critical theory. Part Two exposit Postone's interpretation of the fundamental categories of *Capital in Time, Labor and Social Domination* from this perspective: arguing that Postone attempts to rejuvenate Marxian critical theory by conceiving of the critique of political economy as a critique of the historically specific and contradictory dynamic of abstract and concrete labour. Part three discusses the shortcomings of Postone's interpretation of *Capital in Time, Labor and Social Domination*, reconstructing his later work from this perspective. I conclude by pointing to the ways that Postone's interpretation can be further developed.

Keywords: Moishe Postone; Marxism and Frankfurt school critical theory; abstract and concrete labour

p. 503, RICCARDO BELLOFIORE, *The Adventures of Vergesellschaftung*

Abstract: This paper engages in a dialogue with opposite approaches whose importance is that they take seriously the issues of abstract labour and capitalist 'socialisation' (Vergesellschaftung). On the one side there is Michael Heinrich's view about the Marxian 'monetary theory of value', stressing the nachträgliche Vergesellschaftung, whereas abstract labour exists only in monetary circulation of commodities, hence in ex post 'socialisation', within a non-commodity money approach. On the other side, there is Roberto Finelli, insisting that labour is already immediately fully 'social'. This latter position is untenable in literal terms and is unilateral (actually erasing money from any essential role in value theory), but its merit is to show how unilateral is also the view of abstract labour within a perspective reducing Vergesellschaftung only to an a posteriori dimension. This limit results from the Neue Marx-Lektüre's almost exclusive focus on the first three chapters of *Capital*. I show that in Marx the nachträgliche Vergesellschaftung in universalised commodity circulation gives way in the later chapters to the unmittelbar Vergesellschaftung: the 'immediate socialisation' in the capitalist labour process, where abstract labor not only counts as, but actually is, already abstract in production. Rubin and Napoleoni saw, in complementary ways, that for Marx abstract labour already exists as (potential and latent) 'value/money in motion' in immediate production. I argue, with Graziani, that the two socialisations requires a third and prior one: the ante-validation of capitalist labour through finance to production. Abstract labour is a process. The capitalist monetary Kreislauf (circuit) is the other side of the coin of the abstraction of labour as a process, from labour-power (initial finance) to living labour (production) to objectualised labour (ideal money) to the final validation (real money).

Keywords: socialisation; abstract; labour; money; finance; *ens realissimum*