

On Real Abstraction: Wealth and Suffering

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Immanuel Kant's conception of Enlightenment as humanity's exodus from self-imposed immaturity still possesses subversive cunning. Not only does he speak about self-imposed immaturity, that is Man-made immaturity. He also sees humanity as a subject that can free herself from the immaturity of her social conditions.¹

The notion of Man emerging from self-imposed immaturity presupposes opposition to the existing social relations. Kant's determination of the role of the scholar acknowledged this. He argued that only that science is true which helps the common Man to her dignity.² Kant therefore demanded from scholarly work that it reveals the true character of the political constitution and that failure to do so amounted to a deceitful publicity.³

Marx echoed Kant's idea of enlightenment when he argued that human history would begin once social relations existed in which humanity would no longer be held in bondage as a living means for the accumulation of capitalist wealth, but in which humanity would be an end in itself. Against the bourgeois ideal of abstract equality, which recognizes rich and poor as equals partners in wealth regardless of their inequality in property, Marx argued for an equality of human needs. He went further than Kant by arguing that the unveiling of the true character of the constituted relations of human "immaturity" is not sufficient. In fact, Marx did not conceive of the existing social relations as "immature" in relation to the promise of their further development. Marx's critical theory sets out to show that the capitalist labour economy comprises definite forms of human social practice and that it is therefore the social relations themselves, not their labour economy, that require

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revolutionising for the sake of a society, he calls it communism, in which humanity is a purpose, not a means.

Towards a critical theory of economic compulsion

Critical theory thinks against the flow of the world, at least that is its intension. The opposite term to a critical theory of society is not uncritical theory. It is traditional theory, at least according to Max Horkheimer who invoked the notion of a critical theory of society in his seminal essay “Traditional and Critical Theory” of 1937.⁴ If one were to summarise the difference between them, at its best traditional theory analyses the world of real (economic) abstractions to comprehend their political, economic, cultural, psychological, social, and historical truth from various standpoints, including the standpoint of labour. By arguing from the standpoint of labour, it establishes what society lacks in terms of the justice and rationality of its labour organisation, and what therefore needs to be done to overcome what it finds to be deplorable in the capitalist labour economy. In contrast, critical theory scrutinises the untruth of the economic abstractions. It asks about the social constitution of the relations of economic compulsion. Instead, then, of “stating what society lacks” with respect to the rational organisation of its labour economy and instead of asking “what praxis must realize” to achieve a more perfect “version of industrial society”,⁵ Adorno’s and Marx’s critical theory of capitalist political economy highlights “what is deplorable about society and has to be abolished”.⁶ In their judgement, capitalist society does not promise a freedom from want. Rather, it promises that those without property, free traders in labour power, will have to work for the profit of the buyer of their labour power to make a living. Indeed, they understand that both the capitalist and the labourer are subject to the relations of economic compulsion, which under the threat of bankruptcy compels the employer of labour power to make a profit from the living labour of its seller. What holds sway in capitalist society is the

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law of value, that is the law of the valorisation of living labour. The law of value posits the necessity of money to beget more money, on the pain of ruin. Marx thus conceived of the social character of capitalist society as an “abstraction in action”.⁷ It is, as Slavo Žižek put it in the context of the anti-austerity struggles in Greece during the Eurozone crisis, the “real of capital”, one which turns counter-hegemonic struggles for progressive ends into alternative strategies of capitalist development.⁸

Herbert Marcuse articulated the critical meaning of society as an “abstraction in action” well when he argued that in capitalist society the world manifests itself “behind the backs of the individuals; yet it is their work”.⁹ On the one hand, the individuals owe their life to what society as a process of economic compulsion does to them. On the other, their endeavour to make a living furnishes society as a compelling abstraction with an independent consciousness and a will. The economic quantities move as if by their own volition beyond human control; and yet, their movement manifests the practices of the social individuals in the form of the economic object. With reference to the social classes, society as an abstraction in action entails, crudely put, that the free labourers depend for their social reproduction on how effective their living labour is exploited for profit by the buyers of their labour power. Profitable employers hire workers, unprofitable ones go under. They shed labour. For the free labourers, their access to the means of subsistence depends on achieving sustained wage income, the premise of which is the enrichment of the capitalist through the consumption of their labour power, which they relinquished to him by agreeing on a contract of labour.

The money form of capitalist wealth, money that yields more money, is the real power of society as a process of economic compulsion. Following Simon Clarke, “the drive to force

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down wages, intensify labour...is not a matter merely of the subjective motivation of the capitalist, but bears down on the capitalist with the objective force of competition...Competition forces every capitalist to seek out means of reducing costs or accelerating the turnover of capital, the better to withstand immediate or anticipated competitive pressure. Thus, the individual capitalist is no less subject to the power of money than is the worker".¹⁰ That is to say, exploiting labour for profit is the means of avoiding competitive erosion, liquidation, and bankruptcy. These outcomes are particularly painful for the workers who, left without employment, find themselves cut off from the means of subsistence. Profit is primary. The satisfaction of needs is a sideshow. For the sake of maintaining waged-based access to the means of life, the valorisation of capital is primary, making money out of money from the living labour of a class of people who make a living as free traders in labour power.

What is "cannot be true".¹¹ It is true that to reproduce herself, the worker "must produce surplus value. The only worker who is productive is one who produces surplus value for the capitalist, or in other words contributes towards the self-valorisation of capital".¹² There is therefore a misfortune far worse than being a productive worker, and that is the misfortune of being a superfluous worker who, deprived of wage income, depends on the charity of others for her subsistence. Because of their freedom as sellers of labour power the free labourers are prevented from "running away".¹³ Following Herbert Marcuse, the "lash of hunger" compels them to "sell their services" to another class of Man.¹⁴ The class struggle is not about abstract ideas like socialism. It is a struggle for access to "crude and material things".¹⁵

Forms of Critique: Forces of Production and Social Critique

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The many variations in the Marxist tradition resolve around two contrasting readings of the critique of political economy as either a critique of capitalism from the standpoint of labour or as a critique of capitalist labour economy. According to the former, capitalism amounts to a historically specific mode of labour economy. This reading argues for a socialist mode of labour economy as the progressive alternative to capitalism. Its conception of socialism is programmatic in that it proclaims for a perfected system of labour organisation by means of central planning. According to the latter, the critique of political economy does not argue from the standpoint of labour. On the contrary, it amounts to a negative critique of the capitalist labour economy. Its critique lacks in programmatic features. Instead, it holds that the conceptual content of the society of the free and equal might emerge from the negation of the capitalist relations.

According to the standpoint of labour critique of capitalism, labour economy is an ontological principle. It rejects capitalism as a crisis-prone system of labour exploitation for private gain and demands the emancipation of labour from capitalist domination in socialism. Its argument for socialism is founded on a theory of modes of production as historically specific organisational forms of labour economy. According to this point of view, since “in any form of society human beings productively expend their corporeal powers”, the critique of capitalist labour economy has to differentiate between the “generic materiality” of human life as the transhistorical presupposition of the modes of production and the specific capitalist “historical form of wealth”.¹⁶ The analytical focus of this critique of capitalism falls on “the contradictory unity between the materiality of human life and its historically-determined social forms”.¹⁷ That is, it views as historically active the relationship between the transhistorically conceived forces of production and the historically specific social relations of production, as the decisive dynamic for the understanding of capitalism as a mode of production in “transition to communism”.¹⁸ In short, the argument for a socialist labour economy recognises the capitalist mode of production as an historically overdetermined mode of labour economy, which through its development of the economic forces compels history forward as the unleashed forces of production come into conflict with the

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capitalist relations, which become too small and narrow for them, thereby creating the objective conditions for transition to socialism.¹⁹ As a critique of capitalist political economy, the argument about a transhistorical materiality of labour economy is as fruitless as the conception of the productive forces as a historical subject. The conception of labour economy as the “transhistorical essence of social life”²⁰ that will be perfected in socialism in the interests of the workers through the application of state socialist reason is illusionary in its grasp of capitalist political economy but no less real as dystopia. It replaces the semblance of freedom in market mediated forms of social coercion by the freedom of state socialism as an unmediated form of social coercion.

Following Adorno, the critique of political economy from the standpoint of labour perverts the critical intension of Marx’s historical materialism.²¹ It ontologises the capitalist labour economy and naturalises the capitalist economic categories. The circumstance that Man needs to eat and has therefore to exchange with nature does not explain capitalism nor does capitalism derive from it. Man does not eat in the abstract.²² Nor does Man struggle for life in the abstract. The struggle for life, invoked by Marx (and Engels) as a history of class struggle, takes place in definite forms of society. Instead, then, of transposing “every given struggle into the phrase ‘struggle for life’”, Marx’s critical theory requires analyses of the “struggle for life as it manifests itself historically in various specific forms of society”.²³

Critically understood, and as developed here, historical materialism is critique of capitalist society understood dogmatically as a historically overdetermined form of natural economic laws of development. What appears in the appearance of society as a relationship between economic things is not some abstractly conceived economic nature. Rather, what appears in capitalist society as economic nature is Man in her historically specific social relations. The capitalist economic laws compel the social individuals as if they, the economic laws, were a person apart, and yet, their nature is a social nature. What compels them is their own social

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world. In the words of Marx, “it is, in reality, much easier to discover by analysis the earthly core of the earthly kernel of the misty creations of religion than to do the opposite, i.e., to develop from the actual, given relations of life the forms in which these have been apotheosized. The latter method” he continues, “is the only materialist one, and therefore the only scientific one”. For him, the former method belongs to the “abstract materialism of the natural sciences, which excludes the historical process”.²⁴ There is only one reality and that is the reality of historically definite forms of life.

Marx’s point about the actual relations of life is key to social form analysis. It asks about the social constitution of the economic categories and expounds their “nature” as a social nature. For social form analysis, thus, the forces of production and the normative categories are the forces and norms of the actual capitalist social relations. In the words of Moishe Postone, “Marx’s critique transforms the categories of political economy from transhistorical categories of the constitution of wealth into critical categories of the specificity of the forms of wealth and social relations in capitalism”.²⁵ Form analysis is critique of the economic categories as apotheosised forms of definite social relations. It conceives of historical materialism as critique of society, including its normative values and forms of thought.

The social form approach to the critique of political economy emerged from the new left of 1968. It contains three overlapping methodological approaches. They are immanent critique, systematic dialectics, and *ad hominem* critique of the economic categories, which is decipherment of the economic abstractions as the apotheosised forms of definite social relations.

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Immanent critique judges reality by the standard of its own claims. For example, it judges the reality of social equality by the standard of its normative claim to equality. By judging reality by its own criteria, it seeks to make the “petrified relations...dance by singing their own tune to them”.²⁶ Instead of criticising reality as failing to live up to its normative standards, it both demystifies the normative ideas of, say, freedom and equality as the pleasant norms of a dreadful contents, and retains a glimpse of what could be. Matthias Benzer makes this point about the double meaning of immanent critique well when he says with regards to Adorno’s critical theory, the “liberal category of freedom purports to yield the utopian image of a genuinely free individual” but “on closer inspection, it simultaneously depicts an individual released from feudal social structures who is granted the autonomy that the capitalist economy requires of ‘him’; a ‘mockery of true freedom...which compels the individual towards *ruggedness*’”. At the same time, it critiques “society for failing to fulfil conceptual standards” which it “cannot avoid advocating” and which therefore lead to demands for “their social realization”.²⁷ Immanent critique interrogates the social coldness of the normative standard. There is a crack in everything. That is how the light gets in.

Systematic dialectics is associated with the work of Chris Arthur in the UK and the so-called New Reading of Marx of especially Backhaus and Reichelt in (the former West-) Germany.²⁸ Systematic dialectics focuses on the categorial character of the capitalist political economy to understand the logic that holds sway in it. It recognises the social forms as real (economic) abstractions and argues that they establish a framework within which, as Reichelt put it, the individuals encounter each other, “make contracts in the sphere of circulation, where they deal in mysterious economic forms with so-called ‘goods’, and who have always already perceived each other as equal and free subjects of law, and, who, prior to this thinly veiled perception of themselves as independent subjects, experienced class society as one of inequality, exploitation and rule by an autonomised system”.²⁹ Systematic dialectics

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elaborates the systematicity of society as a process of real abstraction and expounds the categorical character of the relations of economic compulsion beyond the objective illusions of normative order thinking and the dogmatic materialism of a political left that deems itself capable of transforming the capitalist labour economy for the benefit of its surplus value producers.

Charlotte Baumann's characterisation of systematic dialectics, the new Reading of Marx in particular, as a logicians' account of the capitalist social relations is apposite.³⁰ Although systematic dialectics delivers on the logic of the capitalist social nature, its concept of the social is tenuous. Systematic dialectics tends to take the identification of the logic of real abstraction as a goal, which entails the risk of falling back onto the (traditional) differentiation of society into system and lifeworld. Rather than conceptualising the capital relations with reference to the historical elements implicit in them, it posits capital as a conceptual totality akin to a Hegelian idea imposed on reality. For systematic dialectics the category of the free labourer is unsettling, to say the least. For Arthur "labour-power is not produced by capital; it is an external condition of capitalist production".³¹ In contrast Elena Louisa Lange argues that "labor power is...a capitalistically produced commodity". She argues that capital produces the commodity "labour power" as "the direct source" of its "raison d'être: profit".³² Her identification of the capital relation as a system that produces its own social premise conceives of the social relations in terms of their incorporated functionality. Moishe Postone's account expresses the dualist conception of society as system and as lifeworld. He argues that capital "subjects people to impersonal, increasingly rationalized structural imperatives and constraints", which "cannot be grasped adequately in terms of class domination".³³ In his account, "capital" as system sets the objective framework within which the social conflicts unfold.

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The identification of capital as an extra-social subject presumes what needs to be explained. On one hand, following Adorno, “the reality in which men live *is not unvarying and independent of them*”. On the other, following Clarke, the capitalist relations of production presuppose the historical emergence of a class of free labourers.³⁴ It is the case, a logic holds sway in capitalist political economy. It incorporates the individuals as its personifications. However, its shape remains human. That is to say, the individuals “live in social being, not in [economic] nature”, and their social being has not been given to them by the capitalist economic nature.³⁵ It is rather the historical result of their own – objectively compelled – social practices.

Discovering the untruth of the capitalist relations does not only entail discovery of the logic that holds sway in reified society. It also entails discovery of the simple fact that the capitalist “social order cannot exist without distorting men”.³⁶ The social individuals are not just cogs in a system of economic compulsion. As such cogs, mere human “instruments of production”, they are “possessed with consciousness”.³⁷ As Baumann puts it, they suffer “from the pressures” of their own reified existence as personifications of the economic categories.³⁸ Society as a process of real abstraction does not suffer from the capitalist economic nature. It does not go on strike and does not struggle to make ends meet. The social individuals do, and they do so as personifications of the economic categories that compel them.

On the one hand, the understanding of the mysterious character of the economic things, which “abound with metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties”, rests on the comprehension of the human social practice that furnishes them with a will and a dynamic. The social individuals “do this without being aware of it” in the pursuit of their self-preservation.³⁹ On the other, although society's laws of motion abstract “from its individual

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subjects, degrading them to mere executors, mere partners in social wealth and social struggle, there would be nothing without individuals and their spontaneities”.⁴⁰ Reification, society as system, “finds its limitation in reified Man”.⁴¹ That is, the critique of reification amounts to the conceptualised praxis of the capitalist social relations. The preponderance of society as reified object entails the sheer unrest of life as its hidden, non-conceptual foundation and secret history. The need to make suffering speak, to “lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth”.⁴² In this context, suffering is not an existential term of pure subjective feeling. Rather it is an objectively mediated term. It “is the weight of objectivity upon the subject, and because that which the subject experiences as its most subjective moment – the expression of suffering – is objectively mediated”.⁴³ While a definite logic holds sway in the social forms the critique of political economy is decipherment of the social relations that constitute them. It is decipherment of the relations of economic compulsion as relations of the sheer unrest of life.

Concluding Remarks

Social form analysis interrogates the economic categories as the objectified forms of definite social relations and it argues that the sheer unrest of life, the class struggle to avoid and avert suffering, is the hidden secret of the relations of economic objectivity.

The social mentality and the forms of thought of the acting individuals are incorporated in the spirit of money. However, contrary to perception, money does not talk. It is rather the social relations that speak in and through money as the independent power of their social relations. Money does not care about inflation or deflation, whether it belongs to the few or is desired by the many, or whether it yields living offspring or crashes. The validity of money is a social

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validity, and its power to compel the individuals to the point of madness is socially constituted. As the universal of the capitalist relations of economic compulsion, it “compress[es] the particular until it splinters, like a torture instrument”.⁴⁴ Yet, money does not care for the sacrifice of living labour on the altar of profit. The capitalist cares for profit as he must to avoid competitive erosion. The free labourers care for money, too. They struggle for money to make a living. In its entirety, the world of economic compulsion is a world of definite forms of human social practice, which endow society in the form of the “money subject” with a cold, calculating consciousness.⁴⁵ The defining character of bourgeois society is social coldness.

The critique of social coldness has to be more than just a normative argument about redistributive justice, equality and freedom. Theoretical concepts and normative values “cannot be perceived without reference to the historical elements implicit in it”.⁴⁶ The history making violence which divorced the direct producers from the means of subsistence imbues the bourgeois concepts of freedom and equality with a definite social content that appears in its civilised form as an exchange relationship between supposedly equal legal subjects - one trading her labour power for a wage to “dodge the freedom to starve”, the other consuming the acquired labour power for profit to avoid competitive erosion.⁴⁷ The concepts of justice, humanity, freedom, and equality do *not* comprise a normative standard that remains somehow separated from an altogether disagreeable social content. Rather they are afflicted with the injustice and inhumanity “under whose spell they were conceived”.⁴⁸ The truth of normative critique is the untruth of freedom as economic compulsion. It really is the case that the dynamic of the whole process of capital as self-valorising value is fed by the social practices of the class divided individuals who “owe their life to what is being done to them”.⁴⁹ Clearly, the civilised regulation of social coldness is much preferable to its

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authoritarian conduct. Yet, by standing up for the free labourers the normative critique of capitalism endorses the system that compels them in their acquired freedom.

“Thinking means venturing beyond”.⁵⁰ We know the bad. We should know how to avoid it. But we do not know the good. What a human freedom it would be to live life without anxiety and worry about the satisfaction of needs, and with time to spare for enjoyment. In the meantime, despite an immense accumulation of material wealth, the poor and miserable continue to “chew words to fill their bellies”.⁵¹

¹ Man, with a capital 'M', is used here and throughout in the combined sense of Mensch, Menschheit and Menschlein – he/she/it, humanity as a concrete universal.

² See Immanuel Kant, *Nachlass*, in: *Sämmtliche Werke*, G. Hartenstein edition, vol. 8, Leipzig: Leopold Voss, 1868, p. 625.

³ See Immanuel Kant, *Conflicts of the Faculty*, New York NY: Abaris, 1979..

⁴ Max Horkheimer, “Traditional and Critical Theory”, in: *ibid.*, *Critical Theory Selected Essays*, London: Continuum, 2002.

⁵ Wolfgang Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?*, London: Verso, 2016, p. 2.

⁶ Matthias Benzer, “Social Critique in the Totally Socialized Society”, *Philosophy and social Criticism*, 2011, 37 (5), p. 588. Benzer argues with reference to Adorno’s social theory.

⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 2, London: Penguin, 1978, p. 185.

⁸ Slavoj Žižek *Should the the Left's Answer to Rightist Populism Really Be a "Me Too"?* Part I. [Online] 2018, para 15. Available at http://thephilosophicalsalon.com/should-the-lefts-answer-to-rightist-populism-really-be-a-me-too-part-i/#_edn1, accessed October 19, 2021.

⁹ Herbert Marcuse, *Negations*, London: Free Association Press, 1988, p. 151.

¹⁰ Simon Clarke, *Keynesianism, Monetarism and the Crisis of the State*, Aldershot: Edward and Elgar, 1988, p. 100.

¹¹ Ernst Bloch *Philosophische Grundlagen I*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1961, p. 65.

¹² Marx, *Capital*, p. 644.

¹³ Marx, *Capital*, p. 719.

¹⁴ Marcuse, *Negations*, p. 225.

¹⁵ Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History”, p. 246.

¹⁶ Guido Starosta, “The commodity-form and the dialectical method”, *Science and Society*, 72 (3), pp. 31, 25.

¹⁷ Alex Kicillof and Guido Starosta, “On Materiality and Social Form”, *Historical Materialism*, 2007, 15 (3), p. 24, quoting Chattopadhyay.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁹ See, for example, Terry Eagleton, *Why Marx was Right*, New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2011, pp. 43-4.

²⁰ Moishe Postone, *Time, Labour and Social Domination*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 167.

²¹ See Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, London: Verso, 1990, p. 335.

²² As Georg Lukács, *Soul and Form*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2073, p. 179, put it, “existence can have no reality except... the reality of lived experience”.

²³ Karl Marx, “Marx to Ludwig Kugelman in Hanover, London, 27 June 1870,” in: MECW, vol. 43, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988, p. 527.

²⁴ Marx, *Capital*, p. 494.

²⁵ Postone, *Time, Labour and Social Domination*, p. 56.

²⁶ Karl Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law. Introduction”, in: MECW, vol. 3, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975a, p. 178. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 182.

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- ²⁷ Benzer, “Social Critique...”, pp. 583-84, quoting Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 262.
- ²⁸ Chris Arthur, *The New Dialectic and Marx’s Capital*. Brill: Leiden, 2004; and Chris Arthur, *The Spectre of Capital: Idea and Reality*, Leiden: Brill, 2022. Hans-Georg Backhaus, *Dialektik der Wertform*, Freiburg: Ça Ira, 1997. Helmut Reichelt, *Zur logischen Struktur des Kapitalbegriffs bei Karl Marx.*, Freiburg: Ça ira, 2001; Helmut Reichelt, *Die neue Marx Lektüre*, Freiburg: Ca Ira, 2013.
- ²⁹ Helmut Reichelt, “Social Reality as Appearance: Some Notes on Marx’s Conception of Reality”, in: Werner Bonefeld and Kosmas Psychopedis (eds), *Human Dignity*, London: Routledge, 2017, p. 65.
- ³⁰ Charlotte Baumann, “Adorno, the New Reading of Marx, and Methodologies of Critique”, in: Werner Bonefeld and Chris O’Kane (eds), *Adorno and Marx: Negative Dialectics and the Critique of Political Economy*, London: Bloomsbury, 2022.
- ³¹ Chris Arthur, “The Inner Totality of Capitalism”, *Historical Materialism*, 2006a, 14 (3), p. 92.
- ³² Elena Louisa Lange, *Value without Fetish*, Leiden: Brill, 2021, p. 47.
- ³³ Moishe Postone, *History and Heteronomy: Critical Essays*, Tokyo: The University of Tokyo Center for Philosophy, 2009, p. 78.
- ³⁴ Theodor Adorno, *Against Epistemology*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013, p. 28. Clarke, *Marx, Marginalism...*, p. 118. See also Simon Clarke, “Class Struggle and the Working Class: The Problem of Commodity Fetishism”, in: Ana Dinerstein and Michael Neary (eds), *The Labour Debate*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002a.
- ³⁵ Adorno, *Against Epistemology*, p. 28.
- ³⁶ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 194.
- ³⁷ Marx, *Capital*, p. 719.
- ³⁸ Baumann, “Adorno...”, p. 66.
- ³⁹ Marx, *Capital*, pp. 163, 166-67.
- ⁴⁰ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 304.
- ⁴¹ Theodor Adorno, *Gesellschaftstheorie und Kulturkritik*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975, p. 25.
- ⁴² Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 17-8.
- ⁴³ Ibid, p. 18, translation amended.
- ⁴⁴ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 346.
- ⁴⁵ Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 144.
- ⁴⁶ Theodor Adorno, *Introduction to Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2022, p. 145.
- ⁴⁷ Adorno, *History and Freedom*, 201. On law making violence and law preserving violence, see Walter Benjamin, “Critique of Violence”, in: Walter Benjamin, *Reflections*, New York, NY: Schocken; and Amy Swiffen, “Walter Benjamin’s Concept of Law”, in: Beverley Best, Werner Bonefeld and Chris O’Kane (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Frankfurt School Critical Theory*, London: Sage, 2018.
- ⁴⁸ Theodor Adorno, *Prisms*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1983, p. 66.
- ⁴⁹ Theodor Adorno, “Society”, in: Stephen Eric Bronner and Douglas MacKay Kellner (eds), *Critical Theory and Society*, London: Routledge, 1989, p. 275.
- ⁵⁰ Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973, p. 2. For an appreciation of Bloch’s Marxism, see Cat Moir, “Ernst Bloch: The Principle of Hope”, in: Best, Bonefeld and O’Kane, *The SAGE Handbook*.
- ⁵¹ Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, London: Verso, 2005, p. 102. On the lack of access to basic material things in our time, see Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2017. It now goes under the name of ‘cost-of-living crisis’. See *Financial Times* at <https://www.ft.com/cost-of-living-crisis>, accessed July 15, 2022.