

social movements make demands opposing racial and gender discrimination, the socially disastrous effects of austerity policies, the ecologically dangerous, unrestricted exploitation of nature, and centralized, anti-democratic control over technological progress.

According to Feenberg, the Lukácsian notion of mediation can help us understand these movements as a moment in the dialectics of reification and de-reification. Further on, resistance to reification may still be politically weak and scattered; however, it operates on the deeper level of changing the capitalist *a priori* of everyday experience, drawing upon the cultural resources of a 'new sensibility', informed by aesthetic experience, as Marcuse would like to have it. The contribution of Feenberg's new book is its critical reappropriation of an important theoretical tradition of modernity, showing cogently that it possesses the theoretical potential to conceptually articulate the new cultural consciousness gradually formed by the new social movements, and to delineate a positive emancipative perspective of present struggles. It can thus give rise to fruitful dialogue on the necessary re-radicalization of social critique in the face of the deep and multifaceted crisis of contemporary capitalism.

Konstantinos Kavoulakos

All trousers, no shirt

Fred Moseley and Tony Smith, eds, *Marx's Capital and Hegel's Logic: A Reexamination*, Brill, Leiden and Boston MA, 2014. vii + 336 pp., £98.00 hb., 978 9 004 20952 7.

The twelve chapters in this volume consider the place of Hegel within Marx's critique of political economy, specifically the place of the *Science of Logic* within the various drafts of *Capital*. Collectively, they constitute a referendum on what in the Marxian literature has come to be variously labelled as the 'New Hegelian Marxism', the 'New Dialectics' and 'Systematic Dialectics'. Whilst this reading of Marx (which has been around for over two decades now and whose status as 'new' would thus seem to be waning) takes in a wide variety of accounts of the Hegel–Marx confrontation, it is unified to the extent that it specifically emphasizes the influence of the 'late' Hegel on the 'late' Marx. In other words, it is not Marx's early, explicit critiques of Hegel in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, the *Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy in General*, and so on, but his implicit

appropriation of the *Logic* within *Capital* that defines the systematicity of his work.

Some proponents of the New Dialectics stress the ways in which the *Logic* provides not only a methodological but an ontological model for Marx's 'exposition' (*Darstellung*) of capital as self-valorizing value. This dovetails with the so-called 'homology thesis'; namely, the three Doctrines of the *Logic* (Being, Essence and Concept) are homologous to the systematic development of the value-form in *Capital*, from the commodity to money to capital. The work of Chris Arthur, included in this volume, is an emblematic example of this standpoint. (For a more extensive treatment, see Arthur's *The New Dialectic and Marx's Capital*, reviewed by John Kraniauskas in *RP* 122.) Others associated with the New Dialectics take a more cautious approach, underscoring what they see as Marx's highly selective and changing use of the *Logic*, whilst still others contend that the intelligibility of Marx's dialectic must ultimately be based in his rejection of the inescapably idealist character of Hegel's dialectic. The critical function of this volume is attributable to this diversity of positions. There is a palpable tension between the chapters, but this is precisely what makes it a contribution to our understanding of Hegel and Marx.

The axes around which the debates turn are familiar. The well-trodden 'opposition' between Marx's materialism and Hegel's idealism, including Marx's declared 'inversion' (*Umstülpen*) of the Hegelian dialectic, consistently surfaces in the chapters. For Tony Smith, this is a false opposition, rendering the metaphor of inversion both misplaced and misleading. Quoting Marx against his own reading of Hegel, Smith suggests that "absolute thought" refers ... to *anyone's* thinking in so far as it "cognize[s] the immanent soul of [the] material and ... concede[s] to it its right to its own proper life". In this sense, Marx's 'systematic reconstruction in thought of the essential determinations of capitalism' should be viewed as exemplary of the Absolute Idea: it is wholly accountable to the objective content of the world. This materialist Hegel also features in Mark Meaney's and Roberto Fineschi's analyses of, respectively, interest-bearing capital and capital in general, both of which insist that Hegel's dialectic is completely internal to the self-development of the determined content it articulates. On the other hand, the chapters by Juan Iñigo Carrera, and Gastón Caligaris and Guido Starosta, toe the orthodox Marxist line that Hegel's dialectic is in fact inverted. For Caligaris and Starosta, the *Logic* is 'inherently flawed' because its systematic

dialectic ‘begins with the simplest *thought-form* (*that is, with a purely ideal or formal abstraction*)’, and, consequently, it cannot register the inner movement of ‘real material being’. Similarly, Carrera claims that Marx begins *Capital* by ‘confronting the commodity as a real concrete and not as a category or a concept’. The pro-inversion camp is not strengthened (although it is perhaps well represented) by these two chapters. Both operate with a rigid dualism between ‘ideal’, ‘abstract’, ‘thought’, ‘concept’, ‘category’, and so forth, on the one hand, and ‘material’, ‘concrete’, ‘the real’, and so forth, on the other. Such dualism does not just impoverish the dialectical interplay between these categories in Hegel and Marx, but conflates the meaning of different categories within each opposing side. An upshot of this (a problem, to be fair, which the materialist Hegel camp in this volume also fails to address) is that, whether intentionally or not, ‘matter’, not ‘sensuous human activity’ or ‘labour’, becomes the implicit ground of Marx’s concept of materialism.

The relationship between Hegel’s ‘Concept’ and Marx’s ‘capital’ takes centre stage in many of the chapters by the economists. The crux of the matter here is whether the moments of the Concept (universality, particularity and singularity) correspond to those of capital in general, many competing capitals and interest-bearing/finance capital in *Capital*. Meaney, Fineschi and Fred Moseley each stress different dimensions of this homology, but all agree that this structure is in place. (This is not true of all the contributors. For instance, Smith insinuates that Hegel’s ‘singularity’ potentially corresponds to Marx’s ‘social individual’ in communism, but certainly not to bank capital.) These chapters meticulously chart the changing course of this homology through the ten years of drafts of *Capital*, but what they offer in close textual and philological exegesis does not make up for the fact that there is actually very little critical engagement with the *Logic* or with *Capital* in themselves, relegating the Hegel–Marx confrontation to a simple framework of one-to-one mapping. The critical power of interpreting capital as a manifestation of the Hegelian Concept is subsequently limited.

Matters are more complex – and much more promising – with those chapters that integrate the *Logic*’s Doctrine of Essence, which is to say the essence/appearance (*Wesen/Erscheinung*) relation, into their analyses of *Capital*. There is no consensus on the precise contours of Marx’s use of the Essence-Logic, but each reading adheres to what Patrick Murray calls a ‘disruptive overlap’ between the Essence-Logic and the Concept-Logic. Smith declares that Marx grasps

the structure of capital – qua self-valorizing value – as ‘precisely isomorphic with the structure of Hegel’s *Abso-lute*’, but ultimately the most consequential (Hegelian) aspect of *Capital* is that ‘*the social ontology of generalized commodity-production is defined by two completely incommensurable Essence-Logics in Hegel’s sense of the term.*’ This is the conflict between money as the adequate form of appearance of value, and money as the fetishized form of appearance of the social, such that value is ‘the reified and alien form sociality takes when it is in the historically specific mode of dissociated sociality’. This foundational contradiction (never overcome in capitalism) constitutes for Smith the meaning of Marx’s *critical* systematic dialectic, as against Hegel’s *affirmative* systematic dialectic. For his part, Riccardo Bellofiore prioritizes the semblance–appearance (*Schein–Erscheinung*) distinction, not the universality–particularity–singularity structure, as the crucial homology between the *Logic* and *Capital*. He then – quite convincingly – extends this distinction to that between ‘fetishism’ (*Schein*) and the ‘fetish-character of capital’ (*Erscheinung*). Bellofiore’s and Smith’s accounts are both enriched by Igor Hanzel’s close reconstruction of the circular movement from *Schein* to ground (*Grund*, the central category of *Wesen*) to *Erscheinung* in *Capital*.

Not coincidentally, these are the same chapters that weigh in on the relevance of Hegel’s concept of subject to Marx’s concept of capital. With the exception of Bellofiore (and Arthur elsewhere), the standpoint of this volume is that the ‘self-moving substance’ – the substance-subject – does *not*, as Hanzel puts it, ‘contribute to Marx’s conceptual grasping of the very *real ground* of the social relation characterized by ... “capital”’. The hang-up, in a nutshell, is the production process. For Smith, because the Doctrine of the Concept lacks an adequate concept of capital, the substance-subject does not register ‘how coercion, alienation and expropriation pervade modern society’. The outcome of Murray’s examination of surplus-value and profit is that Marx uses the Concept-Logic in order to explain capital’s *pretence* to be a self-valorizing subject and the Essence-Logic in order to expose this subjectivity as fraudulent. Keying into Marx’s well-known depiction of value as an ‘automatic’ and ‘dominant’ subject, Hanzel argues that the precise location of these passages – in Chapter IV of *Capital* Volume I, and hence before Marx’s journey into the ‘hidden abode of production’ – dictates that capital only masquerades as a Hegelian subject, that capital’s subjectivity can only be comprehended at the level of false appearance

(*Schein*), not real ground (a ‘historically specific social relation of production’).

It is possible to disagree with these conclusions – Bellofiore makes a compelling case that the “linear” *exploitation of workers and class-struggle in production* does not preclude us from understanding capital as an instance of the Hegelian subject. However, the issue is not the conclusions themselves, but rather the framework through which they are read. We need to be wary of the premiss – which not every contributor in this volume necessarily holds to, but which not one single chapter critiques – that the systematicity of Hegel’s and Marx’s ‘systematic dialectic’ is defined by its separation from, and opposition to, a ‘historical dialectic’. This is a basic tenet of much of the literature in Systematic Dialectics: history and historical

time must be excluded from the domain of the systematic. There are many problems with this. For one, it exempts the *Logic* from being held accountable to its own historicity. It also rejects the fact that history and historical time are *immanent* to the systematic development of the value-form in *Capital*, a fact that undercuts Hanzel’s claim that the passages on value as subject do not express the category ‘real ground’. These problems coincide with a constitutive tension at the heart of Systematic Dialectics: it is predicated on the *historical* specificity of capitalism, not to mention categories of the philosophy of history like ‘the modern’ and ‘the contemporary’. There are a number of things to take away from this volume, but the false opposition between systematic and historical dialectics is not one of them.

George Tomlinson

The man who almost leaped over his own shadow

Jonathan Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life*, Liveright Publishing, New York and London, 2013. 672 pp., £25.00 hb., 978 0 87140 467 1.

It has been revealed recently that Chinese premier Zhou Enlai’s iconic 1972 statement ‘It is too soon to tell’ did not refer to the French Revolution of 1789, but to the May days of 1968. This is perhaps a sign of the times: a recent trend in historiography attempts to understand the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on their own terms rather than through the prism of the twentieth century. Jonathan Sperber embodies this trend. In the same way that Blackbourn and Eley, in *The Peculiarities of German History*, do not depict the so-called ‘failed bourgeois revolutions’ of 1848 as initiating the inexorable path to Hitler, neither does Sperber cast Marx under the shadow of Stalin. Nevertheless, Sperber’s disassociation of Marx from twentieth-century communism also comes at the cost of denying his relevance for twenty-first-century capitalism:

Putting Marx into that era means remembering that what Marx meant by ‘capitalism’ was not the contemporary version of it, that the bourgeoisie Marx critically dissected was not today’s class of global capitalists, that Marx’s understanding of science and scholarship, contained in the German word *Wissenschaft*, had connotations different from contemporary usage.

Sperber is but one in a long line of commentators to assert this. Marx, it seems, is perennially irrelevant.

Hegel once said that each individual is a child of their time. We can no more think beyond our historical period than jump over our own shadow. Yet, while Marx clearly has one foot in the nineteenth century, Sperber overemphasizes it to the detriment of that other foot which, leaping forward, has yet to come down.

Sperber contends that historical developments have superseded Marx. The world of service-sector work and joint-stock companies are ‘outside Marx’s intellectual universe’. This neglects Marx’s discussions of these phenomena in, among other places, chapter 16 of *Capital* Volume I or chapter 23 of *Capital* Volume III. Contemporary Marxists like Ursula Huws have shown that Marx’s theory of the working class is no less applicable to contemporary service-sector workers than to industrial factory workers, or, like Guglielmo Carchedi, have shown that Marx’s conception of the capitalist class can be fruitfully applied to recent developments in the corporate firm. Sperber calls such updates ‘Marxology’ and deems them ‘singularly useless pastimes’. He says little, however, about the extent to which the processes Marx identifies as essential to capitalism – exploitation, class struggle and crisis – remain despite these historical developments. Sperber cites the standard criticisms of the ‘transformation problem’ and the theory of