

Marx in Algiers

Sandro Mezzadra

The following text is the last chapter of a book on Marx that will be published later this year in English under the title *In the Marxian Workshops: Producing Subjects*. Articulated in ten short chapters, the book combines a close reading of some of Marx's texts with a concern for the ways in which his work can be made productive in our present. I am not particularly interested here in reading Marx as part of a canon of 'classics'. At the same time, I am quite cautious with regard to any straightforward use of the theoretical framework of his critique of political economy to analyse contemporary capitalism and support its contestation. This is not only because capitalism, according to that 'revolutionary' nature pointed out so effectively by Marx himself, has changed so dramatically in the one hundred and fifty years separating us from the publication of *Capital*. It is also because these transformations have been driven by extraordinary social struggles and struggles of labour that have invented new languages of liberation and established new parameters of critique. This is not to say that the basic concepts of Marx's critique of political economy – labour power, abstract labour, living labour, to give just a few important examples – cannot be used today. I am convinced that the opposite is the case. Yet in order to be productively deployed, they first have to be understood theoretically (through close reading), and then plunged into the materiality of contemporary capitalism and into the history and present of class struggles after Marx (hence, my concern regarding the present).

In order to enable this dual move in the book, I track the emergence of, and mutations in, the problematic of a politics of liberation as well as its material rooting in a critique of the present in Marx's early

philosophical writings, in the historical essays on the revolutions of 1848, and in what I regard as the open workshop of the critique of political economy. In doing so, I follow the thread provided by contemporary debates around the 'production of subjectivity'. My tenet is that such a consciously anachronistic reading of Marx's texts can open up new perspectives on the vexed question of subjectivity in his work. Shedding light on the interplay between Marx's analysis of the multiple forms of subjection that produce subjects, in addition to his emphasis on the productive power of (exploited and dominated) subjects, is intended to establish a renewed understanding of subjectivity as the privileged viewpoint for the articulation of a critique of capitalism which is attentive to the shifts, mutations and transitions constituting both its history and its present. This emphasis on subjectivity leads me to propose a reading of Marx that is quite different from the so-called *Neue Marx-Lektüre* (or 'new reading of Marx') and its focus on the value-form, although in my discussion of the notion of abstract labour I do try to take into critical account some aspects of this reading in the works of scholars such as Michael Heinrich and Moishe Postone. Rather, I understand my work on Marx as being in continuity with my own theoretical and political training in Italian 'autonomist' Marxism – although readers of the book (and of its last chapter) will also notice that I assume a critical distance from elements of that tradition, specifically in my interpretation of concepts such as the formal and real subsumption of labour under capital, the 'tendency' of capitalist development and even the question of the composition of the working class.



In a nutshell, my engagement with postcolonial criticism, as well as with theories and experiences external to what is traditionally considered as 'the West', has led me to be sceptical of any linear reading of the tendency of capitalist development and to be wary of related attempts to forge the image of the revolutionary subject according to its allegedly 'highest' point.

The last chapter of the book, which bears the title 'Marx in Algiers', and which is translated below, is of particular relevance from this perspective. The last station in the life of Marx, so shaped by persecution and mobility that Jacques Derrida memorably defines him as 'a glorious, sacred, accursed but still clandestine immigrant as he was all his life',¹ is taken here as symptomatic of a set of shifts and displacements characterising his thought after the publication of volume one of *Capital* in 1867. Taking stock

of the work that I have done with Brett Neilson over the last decade on contemporary globalisation,² I focus here in particular on the concept of the 'world market' [*Weltmarkt*] and its relation with 'world history' [*Weltgeschichte*]: the space and time of capitalism, to put it simply, as well as of struggles for liberation. I am convinced that it is only by taking together 'world market' and 'world history' that we can forge an analytical and political framework that breaks free at once from any linearity and of the burden of a concept of 'progress' in understanding the temporality of capitalism. At the same time, this allows us to emphasise that the expansion of capital's frontiers within the global space does not result in a process of homogenisation. As I argue, such an analytical framework is consistent with Marx's search for a 'multilinear' approach to the investigation of capitalism in the last years of his life, recently high-

lighted by several scholars. Furthermore, it opens up new angles on the subjects exploited by capital, on the struggles and resistances that confront its expansion, and on the prospects of an anti-capitalist politics - not only historically, but most importantly in our present.

Marx in Algiers

Capitalism arises and develops historically amidst a non-capitalist society ... This is the setting for the accumulation of capital ... Accumulation, with its spasmodic expansion, can no more wait for, and be content with, a natural internal disintegration of non-capitalist formations and their transition to commodity economy, than it can wait for, and be content with, the natural increase of the working population. Force is the only solution open to capital; the accumulation of capital, seen as an historical process, employs force as a permanent weapon, not only at its genesis, but further on down to the present day.

Rosa Luxemburg (1913) ³

Marx never went to Detroit and Adam Smith never went to Beijing. Marx did however actually stay in Algiers for a couple of months at the beginning of 1882, near the end of his life, hoping to find (in vain) some comfort from the harsh winter in London following his doctor's advice. As with the well-known works by Mario Tronti and Giovanni Arrighi just alluded to, the title of this article should not be taken literally.⁴ Marx went to Algiers while harshly debilitated by poor health but also strained by the death of his wife Jenny in the previous year. The following will not reconstruct Marx's stay in Algiers, even though it admittedly presents more than a few elements of interest.⁵ Instead, his passage to the 'South' and the 'East' will be used here as a (consciously allusive) metaphor for the set of displacements emerging in his thought after the publication of the first volume of *Capital* in 1867.

It is in this way that one could attempt to resolve the *enigma* of Marx's interruption of the plan to conclude his critique of political economy (he partially resumed it only in 1877). 'Illness', as Engels informs us, appears to have been among the major reasons for this interruption.⁶ Yet, considering how passionately Marx supported the Commune, along

with his active involvement in the International's internal disputes, it seems unlikely that he could not have found the energies necessary to order systematically the bulk of manuscript writing that he had prepared for the second and third volumes of *Capital*, even before the publication of Volume One. As such, solving this 'enigma' of Marx's interruption to his work means formulating the hypothesis that it was a series of theoretical blockages faced by Marx that halted the order of 'presentation' [*Darstellung*] of his critique of political economy, and so forced him to resume his 'enquiry' [*Forschung*].⁷ In the last years of his life, Marx immersed himself in the study of the natural sciences of his time (from chemistry to geology), gathered materials for a 'critical history of technology' (influenced by Darwin) and filled up several notebooks with his commentaries upon the works of different anthropologists and ethnologists.⁸ The latter is particularly important and indicates the need to take into account Marx's increasing interest in different realities and areas of the world, distinct from those around which he had hitherto constructed his theories of capitalism (England) and proletarian revolution (France).

As I have shown elsewhere, the concept of *Weltgeschichte* is particularly relevant to Marx's work in this respect.⁹ In its standard English translation ('universal history'), the term loses its reference to the 'world'. This is not a mere terminological issue. The young Marx takes in earnest the spatial connotation of the syntagm *Weltgeschichte* – used in German philosophy from the eighteenth century – and consciously welds it to its temporal aspect. As we read, for instance, in *The German Ideology*: 'it is certainly ... an empirical fact that separate individuals have, with the broadening of their activity into world-historical activity [*mit der Ausdehnung der Tätigkeit zur Weltgeschichtlichen*], become more and more enslaved under a power alien to them ... a power which has become more and more enormous and, in the last instance, turns out to be the *world market* [*Weltmarkt*]'.¹⁰ Evidently, the spatial connotation is unambiguously concrete in Marx's use of *Weltgeschichte*, and the spatial meaning goes so far as to point towards a historical time dominated by a power [*Macht*] that adopts the world as the field

of its own action. The idea of proletarian internationalism stems from this intuition in Marx's work, which constitutes, at the same time, a formidable anticipation. As Jacques Derrida argues, 'No organised political movement in the history of humanity had ever yet presented itself as *geo-political*, thereby inaugurating the space that is now ours and that today is reaching its limits, the limits of the earth and the limits of the political'.¹¹

One can notice here a further and markedly original aspect of Marx's thought that should also be emphasised from the standpoint of the production of subjectivity. His endeavour is aimed at sensing the action of forces whose constitution and efficacy is to be located within 'global' coordinates, in an epoch in which the process of the affirmation of national states and dissolution of 'local' affiliations in Europe was far from coming to an end. These forces determine the production and everyday experience of subjects who, for this reason, he defines as 'empirically universal individuals'.¹² With a certainty which cannot be found in any spokesperson of classical economics, Marx locates one of the distinctive characters of the modern capitalist mode of production in the intrinsic world dimension of its operations. Let us consider the following passage from one of Marx's economic manuscripts, posthumously published by Karl Kautsky between 1905 and 1910, under the title *Theories of Surplus Value*:

It is only foreign trade, the development of the market to a world market, which causes money to develop into world money and *abstract labour* into social labour. Abstract wealth, value, money, hence *abstract labour*, develop in the measure that concrete labour becomes a totality of different modes of labour embracing the world market. Capitalist production rests on the *value* or the development of the labour embodied in the product as social labour. But this is only [possible] on the basis of foreign trade and of the world market. This is at once the precondition and the result of capitalist production.¹³

According to a formulation that Marx often repeated, particularly in the *Grundrisse*, the world market is thus 'the precondition and the result of capitalist production'. 'The tendency [*Tendenz*] to create the *world market* is directly given in the concept of

capital itself. Every limit [*Grenze*] appears as a barrier [*Schranke*] to be overcome'.¹⁴ While capital cannot exist outside of the horizon of the world market (which is indeed its 'precondition'), this very horizon needs nonetheless to be constantly fabricated and imposed (in this sense, the world market is 'the result of capitalist production').

The question of the specific production of space that characterises capital has been for some time the focus of Marxist geographers, most notably those whose analyses are based on the problem of the 'turnover of capital' – that is, of its cycle, 'when this is taken not as an isolated act but as a periodic process' and whose duration 'is given by the sum of its production time and its circulation time'¹⁵ – so as to analyse the territorial hierarchisation resulting from it.¹⁶ I wish here to draw attention to the ostensible circularity of Marx's argument whereby the world market – like the subjective figures of the capitalist and the worker – is both the precondition and the result of capitalist production. Such circularity is broken by the identification of a historical moment, the 'so-called primitive accumulation' analysed by Marx in Part Eight of the first volume of *Capital*, in which both the world scale of the capitalist mode of production and its subjects were *produced* through anomalous and exceptional procedures, in contrast to the description of commercial relationships advanced by classical economics. Amongst the 'violent means' of primitive accumulation,¹⁷ Marx accords particular attention to colonialism and conquest because of their substantial role in the *opening* of the world market: 'The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterise the dawn of the era of capitalist production'.¹⁸ The world market owes its existence to the violence of this 'opening'. However, it is important to stress that its space presents characteristics one can define as *formal* in that such space could be materially articulated and organised in substantially different ways, according to variable geometries of hegemony, domination and depend-

ency. Where capital ‘constantly revolutionises’,¹⁹ it does so also in relation to the production of those spaces in which its valorisation and accumulation on a global scale can come into being.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the important debate about imperialism registered precisely this issue, which Marx himself had grasped when he distinguished the world market from ‘international’ intercourse.²⁰ What I would argue is that, initially, Marx was rather dazzled by what I termed above the ‘formal’ characteristics of the world market and, on this basis, he formulated a linear image of the *tendency* of capital in developing and imposing its own logic in a necessary way, and without any friction, according to an essentially unitary and homogenous model. Independently of their rhetorical efficacy (particularly in relation to the critique of utopian socialism), the celebratory tone that Marx adopts regarding the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie in modern history in the *Manifesto*, together with the similar tone taken with regard to English colonialism in India in a dispatch written in 1853,²¹ could also be seen as symptoms of an imbalance between the spatial and temporal aspects of Marx’s understanding of *Weltgeschichte*. These pages, like others in Marx’s texts, undoubtedly suggest a certain idea of progress as historical necessity which would disentangle the concept of *Weltgeschichte* from that concreteness potentially indicated by the spatial reference.

In fact, the same argument could be made for the section in the *Grundrisse* dedicated to ‘Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations’, which is generally guided by a retrospective reading aimed at bringing to the forefront the distinctive characteristics – and, ultimately, the ‘superiority’ – of the capitalist mode of production. Marx is working here with a concept of ‘community’ which is formulated, to a large extent, as the negative of those processes of ‘dissolution’ and ‘separation’ – chiefly of producers from the ‘objective conditions’ of their labour – constitutive of capitalist society, in ways that anticipate some of the most relevant developments in sociological theory over the following decades. However, Marx’s interest in the development of the ethnology and anthropology of his time shows the extent to which, in the

last years of his life, he felt the need to problematise this reading. At the same time, the immense collection of readings of and commentaries on societies other than the Western European which Marx accumulated from the 1850s on – mostly the result of his work as a journalist for the *New York Daily Tribune*, on India and China, slavery in the United States, Irish and Polish nationalisms – allowed him to fill out the concept of ‘world market’ with new material determinations.²²

It would be best not to overestimate the amount of displacement and revision in Marx’s thought that derived from this study and research, specifically after the publication of the first volume of *Capital*. Letters, drafts of letters and notebooks are to be read with some caution; at most they can support the formulation of hypotheses. What seems plausible, nonetheless, is that in his final years Marx shifted his perspective towards a multilinear approach to history and capitalist development. He did so by considering the possibility of a multiplicity of heterogeneous forms of the imposition and organisation of capital’s social relations, adjusted to different geographical and historical scales.²³ Marx himself affirms this when he refers to his treatment of ‘so-called primitive accumulation’: ‘the “historical inevitability” [of the transition to capitalism] is expressly limited to the *countries of Western Europe*’, as he put it in a letter to Vera Zasulich in March 1881.²⁴ Furthermore, slightly more than three years earlier, Marx had warned the editorial board of a Russian magazine against transforming his ‘historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into a historico-philosophical theory of general development, imposed by fate on all peoples’.²⁵

In theoretical terms, it is worth re-reading the short passage from the *Grundrisse* already cited above: ‘The tendency to create the *world market* is directly given in the concept of capital itself. Every limit [*Grenze*] appears as a barrier to be overcome’.²⁶ There is an argument implied here which, if developed appropriately, would yield a productive intervention in the (often harshly polemical) debate around the evaluation of capital’s ‘universalism’ and its relation with ‘historical difference’ – especially as this debate has occurred over the past few years in

‘postcolonial studies’.²⁷ Stated differently, it could be argued that while, on the one hand, the ‘tendency’ of capital indicates the ‘universal’ moment concerning both the concept of capital and its action, on the other hand, the encounter with the ‘limit’ – defined at the same time from the point of view of its geographical extension and in relation to a set of historical, social and cultural conditions determining, amongst other things, the composition of ‘living labour’ – is also the basis for the profound heterogeneity of capitalism (as much with regard to its historical configurations as its contemporary one).²⁸ The limit Marx is referring to in this passage is geographical, signalled by the use of the term *Grenze* (border). Nevertheless, it is also social, as is evident in the following lines of the passage, in which Marx adds that the tendency of capital is ‘to subjugate every moment of production itself to exchange and to suspend the production of direct use values not entering into exchange, i.e. precisely to posit production based on capital in place of earlier modes of production, which appear primitive [*naturwüchsig*] from its standpoint’.²⁹

In this extract from the *Grundrisse*, capital confronts non-capitalist spaces, both in the limits to its geographical ‘extension’ and in the limits to its ‘intensive’ penetration into determined social formations. This is the problem of the transition to capitalism, central to Marx’s analysis of the ‘so-called primitive accumulation’. Marx was certainly convinced that in Western Europe such a process of transition was essentially over and that, if anything, it was itself repeating in the colonies. As he argues in the last chapter of Volume One (‘The Modern Theory of Colonisation’): ‘There the capitalist regime constantly comes up against the obstacle [*Hindernis*] presented by the producer, who, as owner of his own conditions of labour, employs that labour to enrich himself instead of the capitalist’.³⁰ In order to enrich the interpretative model of the relation between capital’s ‘universal’ moment and the ‘heterogeneity’ of capitalism just outlined, it is essential, then, to qualify and articulate the reference to this ‘obstacle’ by including a set of historical conditions which go far beyond the existence of the figure of producer as ‘owner of his own conditions of labour’. Further-

more, it is important to restate my conviction that the problems and the ‘procedures’ Marx studied in relation to ‘so-called primitive accumulation’ must be understood as characterising – while evidently taking into account that its forms transform over time – the entire historical development of the capitalist mode of production and, thus, cannot be confined solely to its ‘prehistory’.³¹ The generation of what appears at once as ‘the precondition and the result of capitalist production’ – the world market, of course, but also and more importantly the subjects circulating within it – is continuously posed anew as a problem that interrupts the historical linearity of development. This is particularly the case in those moments of crisis when capital must extend its essential need for ‘constant revolution’ to the highest degree when faced with specific *limits*.

In these moments, the problem of the limit re-emerges, in other words, as the problem of the transformation of a series of social relations, productive processes, forms of political organisation, of specific spatial arrangements into barriers to be overcome.³² Our contemporary situation plainly illustrates the way in which these barriers are not necessarily non-capitalist environments, but can be constructed as ‘external’ to capital (from within, so to speak) in order to open new frontiers for its valorisation. For instance, one could look here at the attack upon the welfare state in the West or the dismantling of productive cycles belonging to past epochs of industrialisation in many parts of the world. It seems that this dynamic of ‘opening’, immediately guarded by specific mechanisms of ‘closure’ – that is, of the confining and hierarchisation of spaces, as well as the disciplining of subjects – is a structural trait of the capitalist mode of production, one of its indeed ‘universal’ moments to be critically understood in the particular circumstances in which it develops. However, ultimately, it is coupled with a specific production of subjectivity and of conflicts that are not reducible to the two fundamental images around which Marx’s revolutionary imagination unfolds, the industrial working class and the rioting proletariat in the streets of Paris.

The different forms of communal property and communitarian relations cannot but assume a cent-

ral role in these processes and conflicts, as they ultimately did in the scene of ‘so-called primitive accumulation’, both as a ‘point of attack’ for capital – by means of a wide spectrum of devices of enclosure and dispossession – and as a basis for resistance. If we were to accept the hypothesis whereby in the last years of his life Marx developed an acute awareness of the global significance of these issues, his encounter with the works of different anthropologists and ethnologists – as recorded in the notebooks of 1880–82 – becomes even more meaningful when compared to the ways in which Engels presents it in the preface to *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884). Put differently, Marx was not only looking for the historical origins of a series of criteria of social hierarchy, but had also been compiling an archive of diverse forms of the ‘common’ so that he could politically interpret some of the most important conflicts of his time as these were determined by the global expansion of capitalism.

Famously, in his final years Marx gave particular attention to the Russian case, and reflected on the possibility that the *obshchina*, the rural commune, could represent the basis for a direct passage to communism.³³ In this instance, the texts available to us are relatively fragmentary and recent attempts to shape a ‘communitarian’ version of Marx – principally in the United States – are definitely not very convincing.³⁴ I have no interest in extracting from the late Marx a complete theoretical revision of his work nor a solution to the aporias of his thought. Rather, it is necessary to bring to the fore Marx’s unceasing requalification of the terms of a problem – that of *liberation* – which had been constant in his work since his first writings. It is certainly in the intensity of his theoretical engagement with forms of common property and communal relations that we can glimpse Marx’s need to resume his enquiry, precisely on the topic of the production of subjectivity in capitalism in general and as materially conceptualised in its world dimension.

Perhaps this was Marx’s concern while walking down the streets of Algiers at the beginning of 1882, gathering information about construction workers – who ‘although healthy people and local residents they go down with fever after the first three days’

of work and receive ‘a daily dose of quinine’ as part of their wages³⁵ – or sipping a coffee in a ‘Moorish’ tavern, fascinated by the spirit of ‘absolute equality’ he could perceive among its Arab regulars. However, in reporting his impressions to his daughter Laura on the 13th of April and to avoid any misunderstandings, Marx adds in his characteristic mixture of German and English: ‘*und dennoch gehen sie zum Teufel without a revolutionary movement*’. ‘Nevertheless, they will go to rack and ruin without a revolutionary movement’.³⁶

Translated by Yari Lanci

Sandro Mezzadra is Professor of Political Theory at the University of Bologna and co-author with Brett Neilson of *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labour* (2013).

Notes

1. Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 2006), 219.
2. In particular, see Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labour* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013); ‘Extraction, Logistics, Finance: Global Crisis and the Politics of Operations’, *Radical Philosophy* 178 (March/April 2013), 8–18; and ‘On the Multiple Frontiers of Extraction: Excavating Contemporary Capitalism’, *Cultural Studies* 31:2–3 (2017), 185–204.
3. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, trans. Agnes Schwarzschild (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 348ff.
4. Mario Tronti, ‘Marx a Detroit’, in *Operai e Capitale* (Torino: Einaudi, 1966), 290–303; Giovanni Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century* (London and New York: Verso, 2007).
5. See Marlene Vesper, *Marx in Algier* (Bonn: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1995); and Marcello Musto, *L’ultimo Marx: 1881–1883* (Roma: Donzelli, 2016), 105–14.
6. Friedrich Engels, ‘Preface’, in Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 2*, trans. David Fernbach (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 85.
7. As Marx argues in the postface to the second edition of the first volume of *Capital* (1873): ‘Of course the method of presentation must differ in form from that of inquiry. The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development and to track down their inner connection. Only after this work has been done can the real movement be appropriately presented. If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject-matter is now reflected back in the ideas, then it may appear as if we

- have before us an *a priori* construction'. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 102. On the relation between *Darstellung* and *Forschung*, especially in relation to the *Grundrisse*, see Antonio Negri, *Marx Beyond Marx: Lessons on the Grundrisse* (London: Pluto Press, 1991), 12–13.
8. 'A critical history of technology', Marx contends in a note in Volume One, 'would show how little any of the inventions of the eighteenth century are the work of a single individual. As yet such a book does not exist. Darwin has directed attention to the history of natural technology, i.e. the formation of the organs of plants and animals, which serve as the instruments of production for sustaining their life. Does not the history of the productive organs of man in society, of organs that are the material basis of every particular organisation of society, deserve equal attention?'. Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1*, 493n4.
9. Sandro Mezzadra, *Nei Cantieri Marxiani: Il Soggetto e la Sua Produzione* (Castel San Pietro Romano, Roma: Manifestolibri, 2014), ch. 7. English translation by Yari Lanci, forthcoming from Rowman & Littlefield International.
10. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, in *Collected Works, Volume 5, 1845–47* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975), 51.
11. Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, 47.
12. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 5*, 49.
13. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 32, 1861–63* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1989), 388.
14. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 408.
15. Marx, *Capital Vol. 2*, 235.
16. cf. David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982).
17. Marx, *Capital Vol. 1*, 883.
18. *Ibid.*, 915.
19. Marx, *Grundrisse*, 410.
20. cf. Luciano Ferrari Bravo, 'Vecchie e nuove questioni nella teoria dell'imperialismo', in *Imperialismo e classe operaia multinazionale*, ed. Luciano Ferrari Bravo (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1975).
21. Karl Marx, 'The British Rule in India', in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 12, 1853–54* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1979), 125–33.
22. See, in particular, Kevin B. Anderson, *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity and Non-Western Societies* (Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2010).
23. See again Anderson, *Marx at the Margins*, but also Enrique Dussel, *El último Marx (1863–1882) y la liberación latinoamericana* (México D.F.: Siglo XXI, 1990), ch. 7.
24. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 24, 1874–83* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1989), 370.
25. *Ibid.*, 200.
26. Marx, *Grundrisse*, 408.
27. I am referring in particular to Vivek Chibber's *Postcolonial Theory and the Spectre of Capital* (London and New York: Verso, 2013). In his polemical book, Chibber accuses theorists of 'subaltern studies' – such as Guha, Chakrabarty, and Chatterjee – of not having fully recognised the 'universalising' tendencies of capital and ascribes to them an acritical celebration of historical and cultural differences, which would allegedly result in a new and paradoxical 'orientalism'. Even though Chibber grasps some of those aspects that are worthy of critical discussion within the project of 'subaltern studies' – and, more generally, in postcolonial theory – the overall tone of his argument leads him to fundamentally misunderstand not only that project, but also some of Marx's concepts that he deploys against it ('abstract labour', to begin with). This was well clarified by Partha Chatterjee in a debate with Chibber in New York, April 2013, available online at <https://kafila.online/2013/05/07/partha-chatterjee-on-subaltern-studies-marxism-and-vivek-chibber/>. For a critical discussion of Chibber's book, see my review essay in *Interventions* 16:6 (2014), 916–25.
28. Although from a different perspective, see Thomas C. Patterson, *Karl Marx, Anthropologist* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2009), ch. 5.
29. Marx, *Grundrisse*, 408.
30. Marx, *Capital Vol. 1*, 931.
31. I advanced this argument, which I share with many other scholars, in 'The Topicality of Prehistory: A New Reading of Marx's Analysis of "So-Called Primitive Accumulation"', *Rethinking Marxism* 23: 3 (July 2011), 302–21.
32. It is worth noting that in the *Grundrisse* Marx makes use of the pair 'limit' [*Grenze*] and 'barrier' [*Schranke*] to define capital in general, even in different contexts, as can be seen in the following extract: 'As representative of the general form of wealth – money – capital is the endless and limitless drive to go beyond its limiting barrier. Every boundary [*Grenze*] is and has to be a barrier [*Schranke*] for it. Else it would cease to be capital – money as self-reproductive. If ever it perceived a certain boundary not as a barrier, but became comfortable within it as a boundary, it would itself have declined from exchange value to use value, from the general form of wealth to a specific, substantial mode of the same'. Marx, *Grundrisse*, 334.
33. cf. Luca Basso, *Marx and the Common: From Capital to the Late Writings*, trans. David Broder, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 85–99.
34. For an evaluation of this debate, see Anna Curcio, ed., *Comune, comunità, comunismo* (Verona: ombre corte, 2011).
35. 'Marx to Paul Lafargue, 20 March 1882', in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 46, 1880–83* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1992), 220.
36. 'Marx to Paul Lafargue, 20 March 1882', 242.