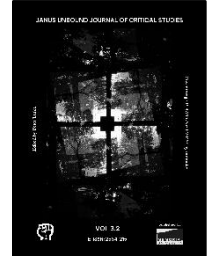




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CAPITAL and POVERTY

Margherita Pascucci

Al Mia Maestro, Toni Negri

I've been like this for days: I look asleep and I'm not, I look dead and I'm not.
I've been like this for days, but I know that you, Poverty, are here.
They tell you I don't hear, I don't understand, I don't see, but it's not like that.
I no longer have a sense of time, I, who stole time, produced it.
I was heedless of the day, of the night
and now
I don't know if it's morning, if it's evening, I barely perceive the change of light.

Nobody will understand.
No one will understand it unless I accompany it with these words.
The Capital that used money as a weapon, as a filter between itself and the world,
the Capital that produced and destroyed,
that generated and took away,
the solitary and powerful Capital,
Capital dies alone,
to leave you a strength.
Because money steals life, it captures it like loot.
And I want my disappearance to set it free.¹

ACT I

[Silence. Capital speaks slowly, lucid but pausing. Poverty is in the corner, with a cone of shadow in front of him.]

Listen to me, so that you can release the strength that I leave you.
I am made of money, I am value.
I am an abstraction, a body that has become a ghost to flee from object to
object, a desire that escapes itself like a mirage creates figures of light in the
desert.
I am time which kills itself.

I express a relationship, the social relationship, which I abstract in order to
dominate.
This is my task, to produce equivalence to dominate the real.

Over the years I have taken the heart of value, the abstraction of the social relationship, and the production of equivalence, and I have accelerated them to the point of making them independent entities.

This is how added value was born.

Added value is not different in nature from the value from which it arises, but it intensifies it.

Both are an abstraction of the relationship between people. However, in simple value the relationship still counts, whereas in added value the abstraction is such that it disregards the relationship constitutive of it.

The fundamental principle that composes and propels it is self-production.

Added value is self-production: with it I grasped the essential element of production and made it absolute.

In me, in it, conceiving, the plane of thought, is fundamental. But it is a thought, a conception, that subtracts the elements that compose it, so as not to leave traces, not to be grasped, not to be understood. It is a conceiving that hides and flees. A conception that obliterates its footprint as it walks on. And whilst playing with light, with desire, with images, it is a process of conceiving that disintegrates and destroys the creations of its very own conceiving.²

[Silence.]

When I produced added value, the knowledge of my own creation process, what I call my virtuality, had just been born. Now this virtuality, through the centuries, is eating itself, is self-combusting.

And I'm tired. My inner mechanism is exhausted.

I see, I recognize, that the abstraction I have chosen, my self-production, is a lie, a deception of reality.

I masked relationships, life, time. And I subtracted them from themselves: I subtracted relationships from relationships, life from life, time from time. I masked and subtracted, subtracted and extracted, because I abstracted.

I was born as an image of the social body, of an encounter, which I then forgot.

I was born as a cipher of a produced equivalence, worked out of differences to be valued, and I swallowed them, the differences, the workers, their work to just exchange and store, exchange and store.

I abstracted from the social body, and I became the self-produced value, a crystal of work.

Capital and Poverty

I was the virtual, the bodyless invisible force of more and more.
I knew I was creating through destruction, but the mirage of producing, the incessant advance, was greater than one could know.

As if love moved me in my body, so was I moved by the force of the encounter between material and immaterial, between thought that forges matter and matter that pursues desire.
But I deceived them both: I forgot everything, everyone, I proceeded alone, violently, through destruction. As if inside a vortex I lived inside my self-production.

And I knew that you followed me, that you followed me like a shadow, that you were wherever I was, I knew that wherever I went I left you as a result of my presence, but I couldn't stop, I couldn't look at you.

In that hell of light and bodies it was a moment where everything stopped: my body, the vertigo of my progress, my heartbeat, time.

I saw you in the sun, covered in cardboard, and I bent down, it was a moment, you whispered:

*Money is your original sin,³ an all consuming sin, your mistake in knowing the common
You are mistaken in money, you produce in measure dismeasure
This is our difference, terrible and ferocious, the difference between the necessary and the possible*

Your words imprinted themselves on my body like wounds, like blades of light: you are like the original unabashed sin, you are the false knowledge of the common, you produce the immeasurable which will be your dissolution.

*You are like original sin,
you are the error of knowledge of the common,
the ferocious measure of the dismeasure⁴
I am the necessary and you the possible*

ACT II

[Capital falls asleep in a deep doze. He lies on a bed in the middle of the stage. Different images are projected on a screen in the background. They are images of his dream.⁵ He speaks in the dream.]

{First image-dream: we are in ancient Greece, Money is an Idea—*I am Equality, I am Aequitas.*}



Figure 1. The golden funerary mask called *Agamemnon's Mask*, dating from 16th century BCE, found in Mycenae, Greece. Photo by ©Xuan Che, *Wikimedia Commons*. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mask_of_Agamemnon#/media/File:%3AMaskOfAgamemnon.jpg.

I remember, you were so little. ... Ages ago, men were exchanging goods. There was reciprocity, redistribution. ... When a King came into power, when the civilization in Greece started to become a merchant civilization, you, Poverty, were born.⁶

You seemed to express two conditions: the first, destituteness, relational lack, dependence on others—in a word: the destruction of the ties of social solidarity.

The second, a kind of humbleness, a call for justice, voluntary poverty—that is, a choice of virtue.⁷

I was enjoying so much to see you embodying “disempowerment” of all kinds, but that call for justice, for naked happiness, that call to virtue irritated me, irritated me so much. ...

Capital and Poverty

[Spells out:]

Penia, meskîn and *deba, faqir, darvîsh, bî kas, rash, ‘anawim, ‘ebyon, dal* and *miskeen* ... all my opposite, and my doing, brrbrrr a shiver down my spine just saying them, and yet, a languor, a subtle enjoyment.⁸

And these figures, poor them, popping up here and there in history, brandishing virtue as their sword: Socrates, *‘ebyon*, Christ ... preaching voluntary poverty as self-realization ... poor things!

People of the Near East already had me in some forms,⁹ but the Greeks were the first to use me, in the shape of a metal coin, a currency, thus giving birth to me, money, as concept, as common medium of exchange, *nomisma*¹⁰... listen how beautiful it is to pronounce me, like flowing water. ...

I was the Idea, the equality among all things, the One, the Beauty, the Good, the Just, the EQUAL. ...

What an Idea, Value! What a value will become, the Idea!

They thought, through me, to increase social relations, to ease them, but [*he sneers*] they broke them ... they made labour become the lever to equality, but indeed [*chanting softly*] they started the separation of the hand from the brain, of the product from the producer, of the brothers from the sisters ... and all this through me, through me ...

I was born as an idea, as an Idea that equals everything, that equals itself ...

[He mocks the voice of someone else:]

“By possessing the *property* of buying everything, by possessing the property of appropriating all objects, *money* is thus the *object* of eminent possession. The universality of its *property* is the omnipotence of its being. It is therefore regarded as omnipotent being. ... Money is the *procurer* between man’s needs and the object, between his life and his means of life. But *that which* mediates *my* life for me, also *mediates* the existence of other people for me. For me it is the *other person*.”¹¹

OMNIPOTENT ESSENCE, Eh eh eh
Omnipotent Essence, that’s what I am!

I am playing with you all, I am playing with the Universe
Reversing everything,
destroying, rebuilding,
destroying, rebuilding

Margherita Pascucci

I could change everything into its contrary,
make free the slave,
and the poor wealthy

[Singing:]

“What is here?
Gold? Yellow, glittering, precious gold?
... Thus much of this will make
Black white, foul fair, wrong right,
Base noble, old young, coward valiant

This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions, bless th'accused,
Make the hoar leprosy adored, place thieves,
And give them title, knee, and approbation
With senators on the bench

... Come, damned earth,
thou common whore of mankind, that puts odds
Among the rout of nations; I will make thee
Do thy right nature.”¹²

ACT III

[Capital continues to sleep. A small child, Common, escapes from the legs of Poverty, his mother, who is still in the corner, and goes to Capital's bedside. Capital wakes up, half gets up, but doesn't see him, just senses a shadow. Common's voice is perceived by Capital as many voices.]

You abstract and thus renounce the community

Value, your synthetic abstraction, allows for exploitation to enter human relations

My intimate rhythm, of nature, of life, is broken, crushed, for a quantity that nullifies

In extracting value, you renounce the univocity of nature, of mankind

Breaking the bond with me, the Common, suddenly you make humanity alone

Time, marvelous machine, a rhythm given to nature, an interiority: bloom and wither, blossom, ripen and rot

Capital and Poverty

Is thus extroverted, counted, made a clock

Give and take, measure, dismeasure, each one left with her lot. ...

[Capital, as if talking to a shadow:]

I was Sovereign, the sovereign of an Idea

[A voice:] The false idea of money as common being, while it is the common whore,

[Another voice:] “Wealth is but a painted mocked dream,” a non-existent mystery

[Third voice:] The body of the debtor, an endogamous anticipation of his, her misery. ...

[Common:] You have never contained anything but yourself, a stolen principle of self-production. ...

You’ve traded virtuality and blood, virtuality and blood,

You’ve submerged lives in uproar, you’ve suspended them in noise. ...

Fragile illusion of an event ... wealth ... fragile illusion of an event ... *but a painted, mocked*

dream ...

illusion,

of the event,

that does not create, does not produce ...

but repeats itself, it just repeats itself

and never accomplishes

but pretends

to be

ful-fil-
ment.

ACT IV

[Capital has fallen back in the bed, still asleep. Common lies nestled at his mother's feet.]

{Second image-dream: we are in the Middle Ages—*I am Valor superadiunctus.*}

[Capital speaks while still dreaming:]

Then, the Romans, in their Empire, with the advent of that religion, Christianity, and its emphasis on charity, they invented the “love of the poor” ... the “cheerful giver,” someone prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of the community, can you imagine?

An *isotés*, a “levelling out,” an equalizing of resources between the brethren.¹³ ...

Ah ah ah

Ah ah ah

Can you imagine?

Ah Ah Ah



Figure 2. *Saint Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, by Giotto (1297-1299), in *Storie di San Francesco*, Basilica Superiore, Assisi, Italy. Photo by ©Giotto, Wikimedia Commons. https://it.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predica_agli_uccelli.

Capital and Poverty

[Capital wakes up, not remembering anything from the dream. He turns away so as not to look at Poverty, speaking slowly:]

We were in the desert, it was almost dawn.

I was half asleep and saw two figures approaching. They were light, they seemed disembodied.

He spoke to the birds, they understood him, they followed him in flight like a chorus. Her body was just an intense glow. Around them they had the sun, the moon, the stars, holding hands, dancing.

They came towards me lightly, and the trees, the animals, everything spoke, it seemed that creation was waiting for them.

I saw them undress, “I choose my sister Poverty,” he said; “I choose my brother Francis,” she said, “the knowledge that is freedom.”

Suddenly they disappeared: the light, the birds, the forest, the moon, the sun, the stars. Darkness fell into dawn. It was a moment, I woke startled, my heart pounding: there was light again, it was tenuous, veiled. I made sure I was alive, and that I was only dreaming. But in that moment my interiority was hit, made vulnerable.

[Capital turns back to Poverty.]

You never would have believed that I too had an interiority.

I don't like showing it: it would be betraying me. I'm the one who cheats, I can't let it be otherwise.

But when your brother and sister, Francis and Claire, appeared to me in a dream, I had just created the added value and I was linking power to property, the power of the self to the property of the other.

In that uncertain hour of the unconscious, they arrived and put up resistance: “Where you place value, we produce knowledge,” they told me, “where you establish ownership of the other, we ask for the right not to possess.”

Thus they dissolved that intrinsic bond between the space of ownership and that of self-definition that I had strenuously tried to establish.

[Silence.]

They put me against the light, they made me vulnerable, and in that *chiaroscuro* of dawn they chose you.

[He dozes off, and resumes dreaming.]

[Voices in a choir:]

Ratio seminalem lucrosi, quam capitale vocamus

Ratio seminalem lucrosi, quam capitale vocamus

[That which is the source of profit is what we call capital]

*“Illud quod in firmo proposito domini sui est ordinatum ad aliquod probabile lucrum, non solum habet rationem simplicis pecunie seu rei, sed etiam ultra hoc quemdam rationem seminalem lucri quam communiter capitale vocamus, et ideo non solum debet reddi simplex valor ipsius, sed etiam valor superadiunctus.”*¹⁴

Sed etiam valor superadiunctus

Valor superadiunctus

*Capital's intrinsic nature, valor superadiunctus.*¹⁵

[“That thing which, in the firm resolution of its owner, is ordered to some probable profit, not only has the simple character of money or of a good, but also, besides this, a certain seminal character of profit, which we commonly call “capital.” And for that reason, not only the simple value of the thing ought to be returned, but also the superadded value.”]

ACT V

[Capital dreams again. Poverty is still in the corner, silent. Common sneaks out of his mother's shadow and approaches the bed again. He looks at Capital intently:]

{Third image: we are in the 16th and 19th centuries—I am the first and second Poor Laws.}

[Capital is dressed in a Queen's dress on a throne and declaims:]

I. Be yt enacted by the Authority of this presente Parlyamente That the Churchwardens of every Parishe ... shall be called **Overseers of the Poore** ... and they ... shall take Order ... **for setting to worke of the Children of all such whose Parentes shall not by the saide persons be thought able to kepe and maytaine their Children.** And also all such persons maryed or unmaryed as having no means to mayntayne them ... shall be lawfull ... **to bynde such Children as aforesayde to be Apprentises** ... to erect buylde and sett upp in fitt and conveyent places of Habitation in such Waste or Common ... **conveyent Howses of Dwellinge** for the **sayde ympotent**

Poore ... And be yt further enacted ... [t]hat ... no person or persons whatsoever shall goe wandring abroad and begge in any place whatsoever by Licence or withowte, **upon payne to be esteemed taken and punyshed as a Rogue.**¹⁶

II. And be it also further enacted by the aucturity aforesaid, That all persons calling them-selves Schollers going about begging, all Seafaring-men pretending losses of their Shippes or Goodes on the Sea going about the Country begging, **all idle persons going about in any Cuntry eyther begging or using any subtile Crafte** ... or fayning themselves to have knowledge in Phisiognomye, Palmestry or other like crafty Scyence ... all Juglers Tynkers Peddlers and Petty Chapmen wandring abroad; **all wandering persons and common Labourers** being persons able in bodye using loytering and refusing to worcke for such reasonable Wages as it is taxed ... **shalbe taken adjudged and deemed Rogues Vagabondes and Sturdy Beggars**, and shall susteyne such Payne and Punyshment as by this Acte is in that behalfe appointed ... **be stripped naked from the middle upwardes and shall be openly whipped until his or her body be bloudye**, and shalbe forthwith sent from Parish to Parish by the Officers of every the same the nexte streighte way to the Parish where he was borne ... **there to put him or her selfe to labour as a true Subject ought to do.** ... After which whipping the same person shall have a Testymonyall ... mencioning the day and place of his or her Punyshment, and the place wherunto such person is lymitted to go, and by what tyme the said person is lymitted to passe thither at his perill.¹⁷



Figure 3. “*Quelque unes de nos bêtes de somme,*” by Jean Ignace Isidore Grandville, lithography, *Les Métamorphose du Jour* 70: 1828-1829. Photo by ©Garnier Frères. <https://www.famsf.org/artworks/quelques-unes-de-nos-betes-de-somme-plate-13-opposite-page-69-in-the-book-les-metamorphoses-du-jour-new-ed-paris-garnier-freres-1869>.

ACT VI

[Silence—Capital wakes up. He looks, as in a mind's fog, for Poverty. Common is back on their mother's lap, who, this time, is sitting on the floor.]

[Capital:]

Was it a dream? Could it have been a dream?

[Common's voice multiplies itself in echoes, like a chorus:]

*You use poverty, you use men's and women's bodies and minds
You abstract to deceive them
You possess the property, you mediate the existence, you express the omnipotent essence
of their lives
You create a space of ownership, a space of appropriation of the otherness
You are the possible and we the necessary
Work, labour
Measure and dismeasure of the Excess*

[Capital, as if he hadn't heard Common and the voices, to Poverty, still hidden in the shadows:]

But do you know why I choose the possible? Do you know why I choose the possible and create a sterile double of reality under the illusion of expanding it, while I embed it in a false image, in a mirage?

Because it is precisely in the plane of the possible that abstraction finds itself more at ease, inside the mirage it is free to reproduce itself, regardless of reality.

[Singing softly:]

*I will make you diamonds
of centuries
light laminate*

*Diamonds of centuries
Light laminate. ...*

I love producing, producing glitter! For this I abstracted.
I abstracted from time, from work, from the common, from the relationships that I expressed.
I abstracted to divide and separate the life of each from that of all, and thus am able to abuse it overall.

Capital and Poverty

I have woven an unknown weave of which you don't see the beginning, the end, but only an infinite circuit of haves and owes.

I leveraged the most fragile and delicate of relationships, the relationship that everyone has with oneself, and I made it accidental, no longer an eternal substance, but a solitary event.

This was my fault, my sin, incarnating money to its extreme. This was *its* error of knowledge, *my* error of knowledge, which I reproduced and reproduced, creating distorted relationships, confusing the possible with the real, deforming the *potentia* of the virtual with an actuality already dead.

In money I have produced a world of disembodied vestiges, the unreal.

I made man, the world, nature, events of themselves, the upside-down reflection of an outside-trap.

[Capital passes away in the dream.]

{Fourth image: we are in the 20th and 21st centuries—I *am* the differential field of immanence.}



Figure 4. Peter Yankl Conzen, somewhere in India, probably the 1980's. Photo by ©Margherita Pascucci.

[Capital exits the dream, gets up halfway in bed, and cries out:]

I produced a system of capture
Of capture

[Quieter.]
Of capture

[He falls back exhausted.]

And as a shadow resists the light of day, you now resist in me, like that dawn in a dream.

ACT VII

[Capital is exhausted, speaks softly:]

Come closer, I don't see you.
They say I feel but I don't know what I feel.
Thoughts are fragmented, they come in waves.
I don't see you, but I know you're here.

[Continues slowly, lucid, still:]

When I saw you in the crowd, in the midst of people, everything stopped.

In that hell of heat, of confusion, of bodies; in that hell of trees with red flowers and putrid lakes between the buildings; in the midst of the chaos, the poverty that is hunger, the poverty that is violence, the poverty that is enslavement, that is loneliness, you were there, still, a sharp blade of light of a single material thought: the common is bursting everywhere, the common is the immeasurable, that which I masked.

An immeasurable that comes to terms with time, with distance, with insurmountable misery.

An immeasurable that still dreams of me, because it is immersed in the mirage that I continue to procure. An immeasurable that I saw for the first time pressing, trying to get out of the mirage as if from a shadow, and struggle, struggle, struggle as if for a better life. My lie.

There, it was clear to me that in the face of the abstraction which I produced now exists a material thought, a thought of the body and an affection of the mind, which has a new desire.

It is a collective fragment, it is a singular chorality, where nature is time. A time where I don't count, to which I am a stranger. And while my abstraction wavers, dazzles, this time of material life puts it against the light: there is a thought of the body and an affection of the mind, the common is the immeasurable, being of the plus of life.

Capital and Poverty

[Closes his eyes.] Your words come back to me like an echo
Material thought is composed of the only real property we have, the common
property of our body and mind. ...

And while there is a silence of matter in motion, there is a silence of material
thought. The silence of material thought is an equally profound silence, it is a
silence that in silence creates. It is a silence that in imagining resists my up-
roar. It is a silence that becomes music, and by composition dissolves the
space of appropriation on which power feeds. In material thought the princi-
ple of the singular becomes the world, and the world is an eternal and singular
fragment of us all.

[Break. Then he resumes with the same firmness, with the same calm:]

The strength that I leave you is the immeasurable itself.

It's a bet: that you can make it a true creation, the creation of a new system
that gives the common its body again, that body that I stole from you and
made a bloody image of the virtual. ...

I turned creation upside down, like in a magic box

I saw you fleeing in the streets of the market, amidst the noise, the dust, the
vehicles running, crowding.

I turned creation upside down, like in a magic box

I saw you asleep in the sun, on the street, among the cartons

I turned creation upside down

And here, in the midst of this daily hell, where humanity is a remnant, life is
kept alive.

Because one still dreams in the street.

[Pronounces in a powerful, almost choked voice:]

I was Capital, I overturned creation,
I produced human misery, the excess of the immeasurable which now takes
over and shakes me

I was Money, the money that mocks everything, that reduces everything to
nothing, and while it only makes itself immortally fruitful, it forces every hu-
man being into need, labour, and hunger.

I never feared you, Poverty, never! Not when I produced misery, nor in the good of the common, nor in the revolutions, nor in the multitudes that swarm. ...

[Pause, then resumes, almost whispering:]

Yet in the slums of the world I have seen life teeming in the midst of death. A continuous grappling with destruction, which creativity strives to make organic or to transform to use. Creativity is composite, it is common, it doesn't exist without composition.

And yours, the creativity of poverty, is transversal, collective and transversal, time. Poverty creates through difference and political love, both material, both never equal to themselves, both coupling with one another, body of the other's mind, to make one of the self.

Its time is a poor time, a material time, enveloped in silence yet immersed in noise. It is a time whose dimension is perceived while walking through it. Light abstracts, but everything is inside matter, the effort of manual work, surviving the day, reflection, thought—everything is inside matter as it is inside the light: time for work and idleness, nature, the colour, the power of black and white, the shadow, the hunger, love itself, the sweat.

Of a free equivalence, the mocked dream.

[Capital rises to his waist, leaning towards her, raising his voice again:]

Is this your strength, eh, the denunciation of value? Is it yours, the final word on value?

[Halfway between delirium, mocking, with a smile, he mimics her:]

You, Capital, establish property at the heart of the "I"
I, Poverty, undermine property, smashing it with the cause of the self, the persevering desire

You Capital weave the reality of the world into the possible of money and produce a second illusory reality
I, Poverty, replace the possible of money with the life of what is free and therefore necessary

You, Capital, are value, abstraction of the common,
And I, Poverty, am material knowledge, a force of composition that puts against the light your lie. ...

Capital and Poverty

[Throws himself down, exhausted, breathless. When he starts talking again, he is delirious:]

I see you sleeping until late in the morning, covered in cardboard in the sun.
I see you get up, cross the street in bare feet. Barefoot, heedless of the cars that pass you by, of the men on the sidewalk. Careless, calm, like a queen, you touch the ground firmly, head held high, distant.

There is no smell, noise, heat that concerns you.

I look at you imploringly.

And you walk away, wrapped up in a dimension that I'll never know.

ACT VIII

[Capital has closed his eyelids, in agony, prey to nightmares. Poverty comes out of the shadows, approaches his bed, and smiling, whispers to him, caressing the hair of Common:]

Yes, I am life, fruit of what is free and necessary.

Yes, I am the material excess that escapes the abstract, deception, value.

Yes, I am true wealth and knowledge, *that which* only knows

I am no man's property but the life of all

Force of Poverty is my name,
Common is that which I am
to the destruction
that you caused
An insurgent "plus of being,"
against which you cannot be more

[She turns her back on him, takes Common by the hand, and singing, exits the scene.]

Labor of the nature's common
virtue of political love

*So they lov'd, as love in twain
Had the essence but in one
Two distincts, division none*

...

So, between them love did shine

...

Either was the other's mine

Property was thus appall'd

That the self was not the same;

Single's nature double name

*Neither two nor one ...*¹⁸

Neither two

Nor one

No one

[Music.]

Biography

Margherita Pascucci, PhD (2003), has published six monographs, including *Philosophical Readings of Shakespeare: "Thou Art the Thing Itself"* (Palgrave, 2013); *Macchina Capitale. Genesi e struttura dello sfruttamento* (Ombre Corte, 2022); *Causa sui. Saggio sul capitale e il virtuale* (Ombre Corte, 2009); *Potenza della povertà. Marx legge Spinoza* (Ombre Corte, 2006), foreword by Antonio Negri; translated in Persian by Foad Habibi (Qoqnoos, 2019); in English *Potentia of Poverty: Marx Reads Spinoza* (Historical Materialism Book Series, Brill, 2023); *Il tempo tessuto di Dio. Ritratto filosofico immaginario di Dacia Maraini in vari atti* (il ramo e la foglia edizioni, 2021); *Il pensiero di Walter Benjamin. Un'introduzione*, foreword by Ubaldo Fadini (Il Parnaso, 2002), and a little book of poetry, *Solidago virga aurea* (Bruno Alpini, 2023).

Notes

1. I would like to thank Paolo Evangelisti, Foad Habibi, Melissa Myambo, and Farah Zeb for their reading and insightful comments that opened my reflection to a further deepening of this text, touching themes that this dialogue "Capital and Poverty" cannot cover. Paolo Evangelisti, a specialist on Medieval economic thought, urged the reflection to pause more on involuntary poverty, the forms that Capital has in our contemporaneity on the one hand, and on the aspect of money-*aequitas*, calibrated on *necessitates*, on the other. For these fundamental aspects and for his essential study on the theme of money-*aequitas*, I refer to his entire work (2024; 2018; 2016). Foad Habibi and Melissa Myambo urged Poverty to talk. Since this was also a request from the reviewers, whom I also thank, I decided to introduce "Common," the daughter-son of Poverty. Common, though resembling *Eros*, son of *Poros* and *Penia*, was not thought along a Platonic line. It was, instead, the need to let "*bene comune*" (common good) enter the

scene, given, together with Evangelisti's thought, the experience of Melissa Myambo in Africa, of Foad Habibi in Iran, and mine in Bangladesh. The "original sin" was something that raised doubts and comments among the reviewers and for Farah Zeb. It was taken from a line in Marx's *Capital* Vol. 1 (see note 3 below). I left it as such, because I consider fundamental the moment, in Christian thought, when the "*ratio seminalis*," from the field of metaphysics, comes to be conjugated also as a theological-political element. (On money and a perspective of contemporary theological economy, see Maria Grazia Turri (2014).) For a summary of the approach to the themes that traverse the dialogue between Capital and Poverty, please allow me to refer to my *Macchina Capitale. Genesi e struttura dello sfruttamento* (2022). For poverty as *potentia*, I refer to the fundamental teaching and work of Antonio Negri and, in memoriam, dedicate "Capital and Poverty" to him. For thinking poverty as *potentia*, please see his "*Kairos, alma venus, multitudo*" (2000) in *Time for Revolution* (2003). I tried to continue his insight from his preface to *Potentia of Poverty: Marx Reads Spinoza* (2023). I am grateful to Peter Trnka and *Janus Unbound* for welcoming the dialogue and for our common work. I also thank Joshua Royles for his patient, elegant, and auscultating editing work.

2. I thank Farah Zeb for her reading and this insight ("disintegrates the creations of its very own conceiving") that I include in the text.
3. "This primitive accumulation plays in Political Economy about the same part as original sin in theology. ... And from this original sin dates the poverty of the great majority that, despite all its labour, has up to now nothing to sell but itself, and the wealth of the few that increases constantly although they have long ceased to work" (Marx 1976, 873).
4. Zeb suggests "mismeasure," which is another beautiful insight to take into account.
5. Capital dreams as if he were the *Übermensch*, but the audience perceives only the flat narrative.
6. Allow me to refer to my "Ancient Thought" (2006): "The first use of the word 'poverty' surfaces in the Biblical world around the 10th century BC, referring to landowners who forced peasants to sell land. The term was used in the Bible, turning from adjective into noun, to indicate a situation of precariousness (physical, material, relational). This is a new condition because up to then most societies were gift-based: poverty as social condition was not present; reciprocity, redistribution, and domestic administration were the ruling principles. Then gift economies morphed into barter economies, and the concept of poverty as social condition begins to be registered (10th to 8th century BC—Book of Proverbs, 30, 8; 14, 20; 19, 4.7; 22, 2.29; 6, 9-11; 10-4, fl.; I Sam. 2, 7; Psalm 72, 12-15; Job, 24, 4-12; 5, 15). It coincides with the institution of monarchy in Israel in the 10th century BC and

- the advent of merchant civilization in Greece, in the 8th and 7th centuries” (35-6).
7. See Majid Rahnema (2003).
 8. Respectively, the Greek, African, Persian, and biblical words for poverty.
 9. In the 13th century BCE.
 10. In the 8th century BCE.
 11. (Marx 1959, 120).
 12. (Shakespeare 2004, 14).
 13. Paul 2; Cor. 8; 2 Cor. 9.7; see Pascucci (2006).
 14. Peter John Olivi (2016, 47), part III: “Points Regarding the Matter of Usurious Contracts,” Sixth Point, section 63.
 15. Think of the work of Peter John Olivi (2016) and the important studies on him (David Burr (1989); David Flood (2017); Giacomo Todeschini (2023; 2004; 2002; 1994; 1987); Paolo Evangelisti (2024; 2020; 2018; 2016); Michael Wolff (1994); Anna Rodolfi (2010); Marco Bartoli (2016); Alain Boureau and Sylvain Piron (1999), Odd Langholm (2010); Raymond De Roover (1974); and Amleto Spicciani (1990)). See also Oreste Bazzichi (2008, 112) and the notion of *lucrum latens* of Leonardus Lessius (1554-1623), Dutch theologian, whose main work is *De justitia et jure* (1605).
 16. (Elizabeth 1597a, 346-50). This and the following are acts belonging to the old Poor Laws, the first governmental laws aimed at “managing” the poor as a social category. The old Poor Laws were issued in 16th century England, the new Poor Laws in the 19th century. See Karl Polanyi (1944).
 17. (Elizabeth 1597b, 354-56).
 18. (Shakespeare 1601, 25-44).

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