

Title: Marx and Political Economy

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ABSTRACT

Marx states in *Capital* that political economy originates with capitalism and has no life or meaning beyond capitalism. Yet much of Marxist theory since Marx has been built upon these principles of political economy. Exchange value, money, wages, even capital itself, among many other categories, are understood in ways that are said to be consistent with Marx's theory and as premises for progressive economic policies and for building socialism. Of course, Marx himself uses these categories in certain ways as essential to the analysis of capitalism.

I argue in this paper that what is being missed in much of Marxist theory since Marx's time, is his understanding of how the categories of political economy upon which capitalism depends originate in the first place and why and how they can be understood to have no life beyond capitalism. What is missing, I argue, is Marx's interpretation of the categories of political economy as subjective human relations in their mutual social production. Rather than conflating his theory with political economy, Marx understands its categories as relationships within human social development which contradict that development and the social production upon which it depends and, for those reasons, become increasingly contradictory to human existence.

Central to my interpretation is an understanding of human mutual production as a dialectical and logical-historical process of the development of human subjects. I demonstrate, following Marx, how the categories of political economy originate and develop within this process. And I understand the development of humans as social and political subjects on this same basis and why it is, as Marx and Engels state at the beginning of *Communist Manifesto*, that "all class struggles are political struggles".

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