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A Copernican Turn in Ecology?¹

Jason Moore's world ecological approach and the
Philosophy of Praxis

Abstract

This study seeks a strategic collation of the Philosophy of Praxis as developed by Marx-Labriola-Gramsci and the world ecological position put forward by Jason W. Moore. It was to be presented at the XXIV. International InkriT-Conference, which had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. The programmatic title recalls Immanuel Kant's likening of his own transcendental turn to the epistemological turn realised by Copernicus "who, when he did not make good progress in the explanation of the celestial motions if he assumed that the entire celestial host revolves around the observer, [...] made the observer revolve and left the stars at rest" (CpR, W 3, B XVI, Engl. Transl. Paul Guyer and Allan W. Wood). Kant's turn reverses however the reversal by claiming that "objects must conform to our cognition" (ibid.), in Haug's view a throw-back to pre-Copernican geocentrism. Marx, by contrast, throws the spectator into world transforming Praxis and, thus, into the world of human-nature interagency. The starting point for Marx's implicit philosophy of praxis is, as Antonio Labriola argues, this situatedness within nature, a connection lost to marxist-leninist dogmatism, while Western marxism bracketed ^nature^^ altogether. Haug now associates Labriola's >practical reversal of the theory of cognition< (*capovolgimento pratico della teorica della conoscenza*) inherent in historical materialism with Moore's turn in treating the ^man/nature^^ relationship: instead of stipulating a binary opposition, Moore traces the mutual – though as

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¹ The original German version appeared in *Das Argument* 334, *Die Große Unterbrechung. Wege zu einer ökologischen Produktionsweise?*, vol. 62, 2020.

Haug specifies: radically *asymmetrical* – implication. He lays bare the common ground of the two theories -- namely that they cast us as thinking actors and acting thinkers from an imaginary vis-à-vis into the dynamic richness of real-world relationality – and shows that bringing them together completes the picture (or expands the field of praxis). Moore conceives his position as anti-Cartesian and takes Cartesian duality to be an ontological premise of Capitalism yet hesitates to explore the philosophical side of Cartesianism. Haug's marxist deconstruction of Decartes' dualism opens the way for a critical renewal of both traditions: the Philosophy of Praxis overcomes its ^western^^ nature-blindness and the world ecological position foregoes the tendency towards anthropomorphic projection with its gateway for spiritualistic myth making.