

## The Bewitched World of Capital

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# The Bewitched World of Capital

*Economic Crisis and the Metamorphosis of the  
Political*

*By*

Giacomo Marramao

*Edited by*

Matteo Mandarini



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# The Marxism of Crisis and the Political Morphology of Capital

Matteo Mandarinì

Giacomo Marramao's writings of the 1970s, some of which are collected here, were part of a broader reflection by a number of Italian Marxists on some of the most important of the workers' and the communist movements' engagements with the state and with the cultures of crisis to which those movements responded in the first half of the twentieth century. Much of his focus at this time was on:

the precocious reception, within the 'young Viennese Marxist school',<sup>1</sup> of that culture of crisis that expresses at the highest level the complexity of a capitalism that transforms itself by incorporating the elements of 'science' and 'organisation', and the more properly 'structural' aspect constituted by the process of crisis and disaggregation of the Habsburg State...

MARRAMAIO 1980: 260

This crises of bourgeois society and culture forms the backdrop for the rethinking of Marxism in the period discussed in these writings, but – as we shall see – it will be taken up again within the specific conjuncture in which the Italian workers' movement and its organisations find themselves in the 1970s as well.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Marramao's work can be said to be characteristic of what Anto-

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1 But also on the Social Democratic Party in the inter-war period as well as on the early work of the Frankfurt School.

2 The expression the 'culture of crisis' refers to the bourgeois culture of the turn of the nineteenth century in particular, from Nietzsche through the inter-war period in central Europe, including figures as diverse as Mahler, Schoenberg, Weber, Schmitt, Rathenau, Klimt, Dix, Schiele, Spengler, Hofmannsthal, Rilke, Musil, Roth, Kraus, as well as Freud, Wittgenstein, Einstein (the list could be extended much further of course). Perhaps we can summarise most effectively what caught the attention of Marramao and others in this period with the following words from Alberto Asor Rosa: 'Of the great contemporary bourgeois culture and the extraordinary artistic experience of the early 1900s we note: that they are born and develop as the symptoms of an objective *incompleteness* of the bourgeois system and they represent it, not in the way of praise or denunciation, but as a reflection that is matured and transfigured in the rebellion of languages and methodologies' (Asor Rosa 1964: 221–2). So by the culture of crisis, we refer to that historical moment that led from 1848 to the