

BOOK PROJECT AND RESEARCH QUESTION

In September of 1977 tens of thousands of young left-wing militants descended upon Bologna, a bastion of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), to protest the growth of repressive policing tactics by the Italian state. Members of the Italian gay liberation movement were also active participants; some note that this event was the first time that they felt real potential for revolutionary transformation in Italy. One participant later recalls a favorite refrain of the gay contingent that day: "Towards a Divine Gay Diabolic Communism!" Campy, yet serious, this slogan suggests a resonance between Marxist language and the politics of queerness in Italy at a time when this connection was neither common nor tolerated by many on the left, as well as a desire to wrest a radical left politics from the guardians of "official" communism in the PCI. My book project, *Towards a Gay Communism: Queer Materialisms and the Ends of Perversion in 1970s Italy*, tracks this unlikely articulation of queer struggle with anti-capitalist struggle in 1970s Italy.

The question that drives this project is the following: what was the underlying materialist logic through which queer anti-capitalist struggle was articulated in late 20th century Italy? My shift in focus from 'Marxism' proper to the broader category of 'materialism' makes room for the idiosyncratic, and often divergent, ways that the intellectuals, militants, and artists I examine critique the changing nature of capitalism in these years through the related themes of sexuality and perversion in their aesthetics and theoretical language.



Book Cover of Luciano Parinetto's collection of essays, *Marx diversoperverso* (Milano: Unicopli, 1997)

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL FINDINGS AND PLANS FOR WRITE-UP

I used the NeMLA Summer Fellowship to do archival work for the second chapter of the book, which explores the connection between perversion and materialism in heterodox Marxist philosopher Luciano Parinetto's 1976 text *Corpo e rivoluzione in Marx: Morte Diavolo Analità* (*Body and Revolution in Marx: Death, the Devil, Analità*). This chapter appears in a first draft in my dissertation, where I focused on the literary quality of Parinetto's writing in this text, arguing that his polemical tone is oriented towards the masculinist tendencies of the Italian Communist Party politics and popular workerist theories of revolution in other heterodox Marxist thinkers. For the book this chapter will instead reconstruct Parinetto's theoretical position within larger conversations happening in Italian and European Marxism at the time (mainly the shift from a humanist model like that of the Frankfurt School to a anti-humanist structuralist model popularized by Louis Althusser). To do so I accessed his archive in the town of Chiari, just outside of Milan, at the Fondazione Morcelli Pinacoteca Repossi.

There I found a long out of print collection of essays called *Marx diversoperverso*, which demonstrates the way his work, even in the 1990s, advances a heterodox Marxist analysis that mixes epistemological and ontological methods of analysis rooted in the polymorphous nature of a body's desires. This finding will help me to construct the trajectory of his thought over his long career in the philosophy--ranging from the end of the 1960s until his death in December 2001.