

OMAGGIO AD ANDRÉ GORZ NEL DECENNALE DELLA MORTE. GUEST EDITOR'S PREFACE

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1. The night between September 22nd and 23rd 2007 André Gorz and Dorine Keir, his life-long partner, committed suicide in their Vosnon house. Last written words on a note: “prévenir la gendarmerie” – “let the police know”.

In the tenth anniversary of his death, André Gorz is not discussed nearly as much as it would deserve in the debates of the global community of scholar-activists. With the partial exception of *Letter to D.* (2006/2009) – a remarkable editorial success which has allowed a new generation of militants and academics to discover his thought – the name of Gorz does not often pop up in intellectual as well as political analyses at a transnational level. This is a rather curious occurrence given his multifarious international connections, amongst which of particular importance were those with German and Swedish Metalworkers Unions, with American critics of mass-consumption and with the Italian New Left in the 1970s (Gianinazzi 2016).

Quite understandably, in France the situation is different: there have been conferences on his intellectual legacy, as well as publications on specific issues he contributed to analyze (Gollain 2000 and 2014; Münster 2008; Lesourt 2011; Caillé and Fourel 2013; Fourel 2013). Moreover, his political vision is still relatively influential, in particular in the *écologo* circles such as peasant movements, anti-nuclear formations and the party *Europe Écologie Les Verts*.

The main aim of this monographic issue of *Etica e politica* is to pay homage to André Gorz and his legacy. However, I believe the best way to honor a great

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philosopher is to critically engage with his thought; the collected materials thus present some features of his original account of capitalistic crises in a knowledge-based economy – mainly developed from the late 1990s onwards – so that a collective debate may be relaunched. Such discussion might be of particular interest for the ever-expanding basic income debate, given the key role assigned to Gorz as a long-standing activist of the movement.² Finally, I would like Gorz's *research style*, namely his non-academic capacity to cut through disciplines, institutions, campaigns and yet be recognized as a bridge-builder: I hope the kindness of his writings can innervate our homage to his thought and legacy.

2. Let us sketch a brief description of André Gorz's intellectual journey: I believe it is fair to say that, from the 1960s onwards, Gorz's thought has revolved around the relationships amongst *environmental crises*, *labor transformations* and *tendencies of capitalist development*. Yet this set of themes needs to be carefully articulated against the background of his changing interests and analytical focuses – especially starting from the controversial *Farewell to the Working Class: An Essay On Post-industrial Socialism* (1980/1987). Beyond the manifest – and yet quite generic – intellectual continuity which Gorz himself highlighted (2008/2010),³ his trajectory and its legacy show a distinctive intermittent, varying feature due to the standpoints interpreters chose to privilege in emphasizing one element over the remaining two, and the specific character of their interrelation.

In very general terms – and for purely heuristic purposes – I propose the following sequence: a first, fundamental encounter with Jean-Paul Sartre's Existentialism in the 1950s⁴ led to a period (1960s) of renewed interest for classical Marxist questions, such as the tensions between reform and revolution and the political role of unions.⁵ The long wave of May 1968 opens up the politico-ecological phase (1973-1978),⁶ while from 1980 Gorz critically engages the issue of labor in extremely innovative ways, both at the theoretical and empirical

²This is why this monographic issue of *Etica e Politica* should be read in close continuity with the one I co-edited with Giacomo Pisani on basic income: <https://www.openstarts.units.it/handle/10077/14139>.

³In a 2005 interview to *EcoRev'* journal, Gorz states that he never abandoned Sartre's approach to the notion of subjectivity. Such approach stems from the moral necessity to oppose the autonomy of each individual to the domination performed by social mega-machines. This is why Gorz saw both political ecology and hackers' ethics as agents of liberation.

⁴See for example *The Traitor* (1958/1989) and *La morale de l'histoire* (1959).

⁵See for example *Strategy for Labor* (1964/1967) and *Réforme et révolution* (1969).

⁶See for example *Ecology as Freedom* (1977/1980).

levels.⁷ Finally, in the second half of the 1990s Gorz embarks on some of the most refined and pioneering research on cognitive capitalism and the unprecedented opportunities for liberation created by basic income and the global development of the Internet.⁸

3. Most of the materials in this monographic issues relate to the last phase of Gorz's reflection. Françoise Gollain's contribution in French – a slightly modified long-excerpt of a forthcoming book titled *André Gorz, une philosophie de l'émancipation* – introduces the key topics, contextualizes them against the background of Gorz's analytical trajectory and proposes some original remarks. Following this is an interview Gorz gave in 1998 to Patrick Dieuaide, Pierre Péronnet and Carlo Vercellone, published in Italian in 1999 in the collection *Tute bianche*, edited by Maurizio Lazzarato and Andrea Fumagalli. This latter also provide a commentary in which he evaluates what changed in the basic income debate in the last two decades. Subsequently is to be found another interview – translated for the first time into Italian – Gorz gave to the *Multitudes* journal in 2005. The issues raised in that interview, and more specifically opportunities and challenges of basic income, are critically discussed in the following two articles, by Giuseppe Allegri and Carlo Vercellone – this latter is the translation into Italian of an essay originally published in Caillé and Fourel (2013).

The last two materials expand the perspective in order to grasp Gorz's interest in political ecology. In the first article, Carlo Vercellone re-interpret his well-known argument in favor of basic income against the background of the environmental crisis and highlights its ecological potentials. Finally, Emanuele Leonardi's article assesses the topicality of Gorz's political ecology by analyzing in some detail a groundbreaking book – *Ecology as Freedom*.

4. In concluding this Preface, the editor wishes to express his deep gratitude to the scholars who accepted to contribute with their essays to this issue. Many thanks also to Riccardo Fanciullacci for having accepted my proposal to dedicate an homage to André Gorz, and to the editorial board of *Etica e politica* for its patience and support.

⁷See for example *Farewell to the Working Class* (1980/1987) and *Critique of Economic Reason* (1988/1989).

⁸See for example *Reclaiming Work: Beyond the Wage-based Society* (1997/1999) and *The Immaterial* (2003/2010).

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