

VSM Lectures

San Giobbe Economic Campus, Venice

March 20th | Aula Saraceno | h. 12.30 - 13.30

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Value Struggles: Looking at Capitalism through the Wine Glass BOOK PRESENTATION



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There is no better product than wine to unmask some of the contradictions of contemporary capitalism. Wine is one of the most fragmented and diversified industries, and one that is not yet completely dominated by large corporate interests. It is also where all sorts of antagonisms against the power of capital are taking place. The expansion of uniform and branded offerings is counterbalanced by alternative discourses and practices valorising how place, nature and craft can deliver a range of different wines. At the same time, viticulture often comes at the cost of biodiversity and the exploitation of gendered and racialized labour.

Value struggles: Looking at capitalism through the wine glass shows how these tensions and contradictions play out within three sites of struggle: place, nature and people (class, race and gender). The book examines how different 'worlds of valuation' are leveraged by specific groups of actors to maintain existing power imbalances or to attempt to challenge them. Through a detailed analysis of South African and Italian wine, it shows that predatory accumulation is about extracting value not only from labour, but also from place, nature and people's identities as owners of tangible and intangible assets. Value struggles provides a poignant example of how power is exercised in contemporary capitalism and explains the consequences for producers, workers and nature – both in the global South and the global North.

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