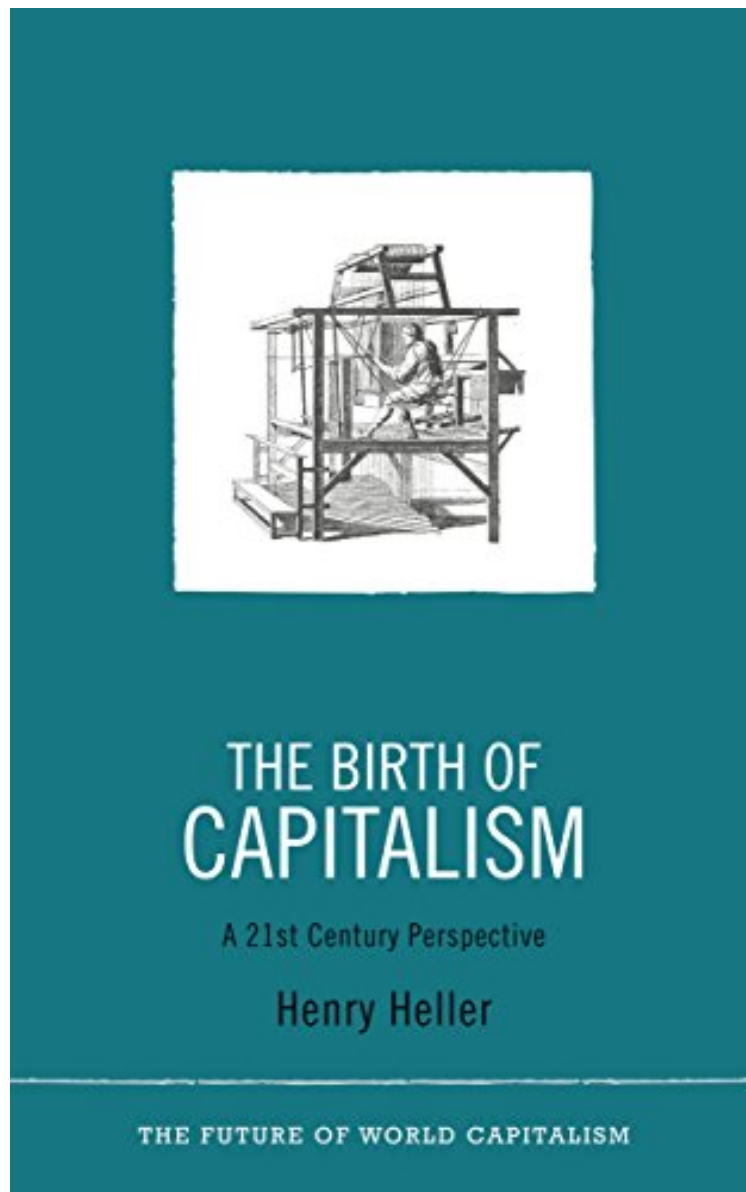


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# The Birth of Capitalism: A 21st Century Perspective (The Future of World Capitalism)

*Henry Heller*

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In the light of the deepening crisis of capitalism and continued non-Western capitalist accumulation, Henry Heller re-examines the debates surrounding the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe and elsewhere. Focusing on arguments about the origin, nature and sustainability of capitalism, Heller offers a new reading of the historical evidence and a critical interrogation of the transition debate. He advances the idea that capitalism must be understood as a political as well as an economic entity. This book breathes new life into the scholarship, taking issue with the excessively economic approach of Robert Brenner, which has gained increasing support over the last ten years. It concludes that the future of capitalism is more threatened than ever before. The new insights in this book make it essential reading for engaged students and scholars of political economy and history.

The Birth of Capitalism sets a new standard in the study of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. With the care of a surgeon, Heller dissects the divergent body of analysis regarding this contentious subject. He does not shy away from the numerous controversies; instead, always grounding himself in Marx's analysis, he separates the wheat from the chaff in each contribution. A must for anybody interested in the transition debates. -- Michael Perelman, author of *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation* Heller has already contributed to our understanding the transition from feudalism to capitalism through his outstanding work on French history. His new work provides us with a comprehensive, critical but balanced account from a classical Marxist perspective of the entire debate and its various controversies. Particularly impressive is the way in which he demonstrates that any serious approach to the transition cannot be restricted to discussing economic changes, but has to encompass the totality of social relationships, including, crucially, those embedded in the state. -- Neil Davidson  
While many fantasize about an 'Empire' unified on a planetary level, this is a brilliant analysis of the role of national states in the forming and functioning of capitalism. It is a very useful book for those who want to understand the contradictions of today's world, and to engage in the struggle for a real project of emancipation without losing sight of the growing dangers of war. -- Domenico Losurdo, University of Urbino, author of *Liberalism: A Counter-History*  
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