

In conclusion, Luis Ribot's volume represents an important and interesting development in the historiographical landscape regarding the forms of power and taxation of the Spanish monarchy during the early modern period, especially because it addresses a period, that of Charles II of Habsburg, whose historiography has often been characterised by preconceived views of the past, without a thorough analysis of primary and secondary sources, as the author does. In this sense, Ribot provides the right keys to understanding and interpreting Charles II's reign not only as a period of partial decline, but also as a moment in which the political and economic foundations for future reforms and Bourbon projects of the 18th century were laid.

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Luca Tomassini, *Oltre. Il ruolo dell'uomo nella società dell'intelligenza artificiale*, Franco Angeli, 2024, pp. 192.

In his new book *Oltre. Il ruolo dell'uomo nella società dell'intelligenza artificiale* (2024), Tomassini addresses the profound transformation humanity is undergoing in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI). As a technologist and thinker, the author offers a cross-disciplinary reflection on the cultural, philosophical, and ethical implications of AI in contemporary society. His work, part of Franco Angeli's *La società* series, is not a technical treatise, but a thoughtful exploration of the evolving relationship between humans and intelligent technologies.

Tomassini offers a comprehensive journey through the complex and rapidly evolving world of AI. Structured into thematic chapters, it invites the reader to explore how AI is reshaping our lives, our institutions, and even our understanding of what it means to be human.

The book begins with a Preface and Introduction, setting the stage for the discussion to come, accompanied by a useful Glossary of Key Terms to help readers navigate the specialised language of this field.

The first chapter, *Il nuovo giorno*, marks the transition from historical developments to the transformative power of AI today. In the second, *Dalla storia al presente*, the author traces the origins and evolution of intelligent systems, while the third, *La rivoluzione silenziosa dell'AI*, delves into the ways Artificial Intelligence is already influencing key sectors – from healthcare and mobility to media, finance, education, and beyond. In *Oltre Turing* (chapter 4), Tomassini examines the future of intelligence. This section explores cutting-edge topics like quantum computing, the

essence of machine consciousness, and the data-driven nature of innovation, as well as the decline of Moore's Law and the enduring role of progress. *Il Lavoro che verrà* (chapter 5) investigates how AI is changing the international labour market, introducing new professions, redefining human roles, and sparking reflection on the social value of work itself. The sixth chapter, *Governare l'AI*, tackles the ethical, political, and security challenges of this technological age. It explores threats to democracy, the implications of surveillance, and how societies can shape a responsible, equitable AI future. *La politica dell'AI* (chapter 7) leads naturally into *Le ombre di Orwell: "1984"* (chapter 8), where Tomassini reflects on the parallels between Orwellian dystopia and the surveillance capacities of modern technologies, questioning whether robots will be our allies or adversaries. In the ninth chapter, *Conoscenza, coscienza e convivenza con AI*, the author examines the psychological, environmental, and existential implications of AI integration, touching on human-AI relationships, emotional algorithms, ChatGPT, and the pursuit of safe innovation. *L'uomo è una macchina?* (chapter 10) challenges our deepest assumptions, contemplating the transformation of identity in the digital age and rethinking the essence of humanity in light of intelligent systems. Finally, *L'eredità della nostra era* (chapter 11) offers a philosophical closing, reflecting on the endless path we are now walking – one shaped by intelligence, both natural and artificial.

One of the book's pivotal remarks is that AI must be understood not merely as a technological innovation but as a cultural and anthropological phenomenon. Tomassini warns against both utopian and dystopian narratives, proposing instead a balanced, reflective approach that emphasizes responsibility, awareness, and the ethical framing of technological choices. He encourages the development of a new humanism that integrates digital intelligence while preserving the complexity of human values. Throughout the text, Tomassini refrains from expressing deterministic interpretations and instead frames AI as a tool whose impact depends on the societal models and governance structures within which it is embedded. The book advocates for inclusive and multidisciplinary dialogues involving not only engineers and policymakers, but also philosophers, educators, and civil society actors.

Despite the lack of empirical data or case studies, *Oltre* makes a significant contribution to the theoretical discourse on the societal implications of AI. It serves as both a reflective essay and a call to action for intellectuals, professionals, and institutions to critically shape the future of human-machine coexistence.

In conclusion, Tomassini's book is a timely and intellectually stimulating work that deepens our understanding of the challenges and opportunities posed by AI. Its strength lies in its capacity to frame technological evo-

lution within a broader philosophical and cultural perspective – an approach that is essential for navigating the complexities of our digital future.

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David Lay Williams, *The Greatest of All Plagues: How Economic Inequality Shaped Political Thought from Plato to Marx*, Princeton University Press, 2024.

Economic inequality is a prominent feature of modernity. Advances in science and technology have allowed humans to gain longer lifespans and a better quality of life, but they have also helped to concentrate extreme wealth in the hands of a tiny few.¹ In the United States, for example, 2/3 of the nation's wealth is now held by the top 5% of households.² Yet very few serious efforts have been made to address this issue, in part because we cannot agree that it is even a problem in the first place. Indeed, in the U.S. the 119th Congress just passed a budget bill that strips health insurance from ten million of the poorest Americans in order to help fund a tax cut for millionaires – a policy explicitly designed to make economic inequality even worse.³

Is economic inequality a problem that needs to be addressed? And if so, *why*? What are the consequences of living in an increasingly economically stratified world? In *The Greatest of All Plagues*, David Williams takes up these and other questions, mining some of the greatest thinkers of the western philosophical canon for insights into the perils of economic inequality. As it turns out, economic inequality is not just a product of modernity but has been a consistent concern for political thinkers for thousands of years, from Plato and Aristotle all the way to Carl Marx and David Engels. Yet, as Williams rightfully points out, academics too often overlook these passages on economic inequality when teaching the philosophical canon. *Greatest of All Plagues* is a necessary corrective to this, offering a thoroughly researched and highly readable treatise on a timely topic of utmost importance capable of attracting the interest of scholars from a wide range of academic disciplines.

¹ <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/issues/economic-justice/income-and-wealth-inequality/>.

² <https://inequality.org/facts/wealth-inequality/>.

³ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1/text>.