

(By Gussel Sprouts)

“Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution.” (Marx)

If we are to affirm the ideology of Marx, and the Marxist understanding of not only communism, but its relationship to humanity, we can only begin so by understanding his thoughts on ideology and of his break with Feuerbach, and what this means for the relationships of subjects/objects. Louis Althusser, the philosopher who said “structures don’t take to the streets” as he turned his nose up at the students protesting in May ’68, disingenuously knew or cared little for the ideas of Marx and the ways they were distinct from the other thinkers of his time. At other times, he was willfully and honestly ignorant, but it is important to understand that Althusser’s thought is largely contradictory in a logistical sense (he was inconsistent in his breaks/agreements with Marx) but also in a sense that he produced thought which was fundamentally anti-Marxist.

Our critique of Althusser must go even further here than that of his misunderstanding of Marx, but what he builds on with such a conclusion, parallels can be seen in ideological apparatuses already in historical existence and the present moment, to which we can conclude that the ideological and

cultural apparatus, the real movement to abolish the present state of things is not one of ideas, nor ideological “structures”. Capital has already reached an unprecedented level of totality, a certain subsumption of the Real by an irreconcilable “big Other” (1). Althusser would have all of this for what he calls “socialism”. We have seen this already in the history of existing socialisms, while originally hiding the ill-informed and possibly disingenuous veil of being “the first Left-wing critique of Stalinism”.

The first few sections are to provide contexts of Althusser (and therefore his thought) with that of Marx, revolutionaries of his time, and his politics in the Communist Party of France. After such, we will venture into Althusser’s ideas themselves. We will find that we do not require a deep understanding of Structuralism (or the sociological and Freudian undertones in his thought) to see that Althusser’s thought is irreconcilable with that of Marx.

Tensions in the Epistemological Break

“Althusserian philosophy has an attraction to those intellectuals who are critical of existing society, are committed to social change, but who are not prepared to accept the fundamental changes in their methods of thought and in their scientific work which are implied in Marxist theory.” (Martin Glaberman)

One thing defenders of Althusser will tell you is that his major thesis was that Marx's thought did, or rather must, constitute a cohesive and valuable whole. "The Epistemological Break" proposed by Althusser is neither cohesive nor valuable, it points to a *subjective, anti-communist* reading of Marx. This can be seen in the very syllabus that Althusser proposes that we read Marx, not even along the general historical lines on which he formulates the break, but rather on how suitable the ideas are to that of Althusser. (2)

So Althusser did not even believe that Marx and Engels magnum opus, *Capital*, constituted a complete and comprehensive whole. In order to reconcile Marxist theory to his own, Althusser narrowed and narrowed the thought he believed was "authentically Marxist". The motivation of this is problematic, Althusser pointed to the influence of "Hegelianism" and "Feuerbachianism" consistently in Marx's thought, believing that the *Critique of the Gotha Program* was the only work by Marx and Engels to be left "untouched" by these influences (which is in-and-of itself, erroneous because this is one of the sources of a "human subject" in later Marx). With such a dismissal of Marx, it begs the question of what kind Marxism, if any, did Althusser actually believe in. (3)

Problems arise with Althusser's reading of *Capital*, as his reading of *Capital* contradicts (quite intentionally) the

philosophical theories that produced them. This reading is paralleled by the futile attempts of the Soviet cultural and ideological machine to reconcile Marx's theory and dialectic, with the Soviet economic policies, which were beginning more and more to look their opposite. The issuing of this document in 1943, entitled *The Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union*, sought to reconcile the contradictions of *Capital* and the extension of its analysis to the Soviet Union. (4)

Nevertheless, Althusser held that his work as the "first Left-Wing critique of Stalinism", in an attempt to erase large portions of Marxism from history.

Marx certainly identifies an epistemological break in *The German Ideology*, but it is not the one that Althusser theorizes, although indeed it was "with that of all existing previous philosophers", as he puts it. Problems arise in the not understanding Marx's dual-oppositionism, to both that of Hegel but also Feuerbach.

Althusser believed passionately in the ethic of Marxist criticism. This Marxist criticism extended to the work of Marx himself, presupposed by particular "provisional Marxist theoretical concepts" (5). This is not to suggest alternative of Marxist dogma here, but the problems posed by this can be seen in Althusser's work as well. Althusser makes numerous attempts to purge Marxist economic theory of its philosophical

producers, and subordinate the narrow Marxist theory he believed was “authentic” to that of his own theories. The task set out as performed by Althusser proves problematic once again, impressing one part of Marx on the rest in an attempt to find what is “authentic”, bringing into question what was authentic and why to begin with. This creates an infalsability and circularity that renders Althusserian analysis “subjective” and not in the sense that is admirably Marxist. (6) A particular and dangerous delusion can be found here, Althusser saw himself as the gatekeeper of an ideological Marxism, someone able to interpret the works of Marx with a lens that Marx himself gave to him, something others were incapable of.

Althusser has a number of theoretical downfalls which reflect a break with the methodology of Marx, and they can be summed up as: his abandoning of the dialectical class-struggle for a core of “self-criticism”, the conflation of theory with practice in lieu of it’s synthesis, his affinity for (and dependence on) sociological analysis and categories from outside the Marxist methodology, and the idea that ideology is both innate and inseparable from humans. The last of these produces a number a theoretical conclusions that are anti-Marxist, but can be summed up in the death of the human subject.

Academic and Political life of Althusser

“Everything that happens in philosophy has, in the last instance, not only political consequences in theory, but also political consequences in politics: in the political class struggle.” (Louis Althusser)

In order to understand the brevity of error in Althusser's thought, you must understand the historical context which produced him, and how his thought was often reproduced through his politics (which the idea of which, in-and-of itself, is in contradiction to his theory, and his theory of Theory, we will tackle this in the next section)

Althusser was both a leading academic, and a leader and theoretician of the French Communist Party, however critical and fringe he may have been to both milieus. The overall current and trend he emerged from was eventually formalized in history as “Eurocommunism”. Eurocommunism emerged from the political crisis of Soviet aligned Communist Parties in Western Europe after the death of Stalin. Both Khrushchev “Secret Speech” and the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union denounced and challenged the legacy of Stalin. The repression of the uprisings in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) also challenged those who identified one or more elements of Soviet Orthodoxy. Western Marxism saw two dominant trends out of this tension with Moscow, Eurocommunism and the Ultra-Left, which was

distinguished by its influence and criticism of Dutch-German Council Communism and Italian Left Communism. Both disillusioned with the politics of the by-then dissolved Third International, the former symbolised a return to the revisionism of the Second-International, while the latter represented a break with all prior organizational forms and the character of a new class-struggle to come. Certainly, this is not doing justice to history (it is not my intention to leave our later Maoist developments either), we cannot effectively give a perfect portrait here of the political climate of France at the time, but it is important to understand that Althusser was an important figure to Eurocommunism, and a vocal critic of the Left.

Eurocommunism, for Althusser, meant a new center could be formed for Communism in Western Europe. Within this current (as well as the rest of post-Stalin communist movements) a skepticism of old ideas was an impetus for new formulations of communist thought, and Althusser took full advantage of this. Althusser often found himself on the Left side of what he saw as Eurocommunism, leading him to retain some of the concepts that were centrally abandoned by Eurocommunists, namely the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

It is to note some of the consequences of breaks with Althusser in the academic sphere. Upon the outbreak of the student and worker protests of May 1968, Althusser made

what could be considered the most influential oversight of his political career, denouncing the protests. This alienated many of his students, one of which was theorist Jacques Ranciere, who in turn offered one of the most insightful critiques of Althusser that could be found at the time. Already familiar with the concepts from the source himself, with whom he collaborated with on some of his most major works at the time, Ranciere was able to deliver a critique by demonstrating the core of Althusser's ideas, putting them into context with the May 1968 dissociation, and formulating his own break with the ideas.

“In May 1968 things were thrown brutally into relief. When the class struggle broke out openly in the universities, the status of the Theoretical came to be challenged, no longer by the endless verbiage of praxis and the concrete, but by the reality of a mass ideological revolt. From this on, no ‘Marxist’ could continue to get by on the mere affirmation of its own rigour. The class struggle, which put the bourgeois system of knowledge at issue, posed all of us the question of our ultimate political significance, of our revolutionary or counter-revolutionary character. In this conjuncture, the political significance of Althusserianism was shown to be quite different from what we had thought. Not only did the Althusserian theoretical presuppositions prevent us from understanding the political meaning of the student revolt. But

further, within a year we saw Althusserianism serving the hacks of revisionism in a theoretical justification for the ‘anti-leftist’ offensive and the defence of academic knowledge. What we had previously chosen to ignore thus became clear: the link between the Althusserian interpretation of Marx and revisionist politics was not simply a dubious coexistence, but an effectively political and theoretical solidarity.” (Jacques Ranciere, “On the Theory of Ideology: The Politics of Althusser)

Part of Ranciere’s critique is the non-Marxian framework of Althusser’s thought. Ranciere demonstrates Althusser’s commitment to sociological analysis firmly rooted in other sociologists at odds with Marxism. Beyond this, Ranciere critiques Althusser for his fetishization of ideology in what should be its critique.

Ranciere was far from the first or only academic to break with Althusser publicly. Most notable of these is with that of post-structuralist and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. If anyone made up the core of the intellectual vanguard that was the “Paris Intellectuals”, it was Lacan. Althusser never truly recovered from this bout with his contemporary, but it has been said that Lacan would never let Althusser assert a definition of ideology in the name of Freudianism (and the closeted Freudo-Marxism): “representation of the imaginary relationship of

individuals to the Real” (7), opting instead for their very similar but equally controversial and slightly different: “Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (8).

It could be said that Althusser was his own worst enemy, and it could be said that Althusser came into tensions and contradictions between his allegiance to the French Communist Party and the academy. *We address here that Althusser was a critic of Marx from the school of Structuralism.*

Problems posed by Althusser’s interpretation of “Theory and Practice”

“Revolutionary theory is now the enemy of all revolutionary ideology and knows it.” (Guy Debord)

One of Althusser’s primary theses is that Theory (he loved it so much he frequently capitalized it) can be a form of practice, or rather for Althusser, *the* form of practice. This is hugely problematic because it attempts to discard and disinherit the concept most central to the Marxist methodology, the unity of theory and practice. We find a certain subordination to idealism here, it is strikingly evident in this portion of his “Theory”.

This was an open point of tension between the Althusser groupings (mostly academics like himself) and revolutionary leftists, with the former (courageously indeed) calling their journal “Theoretical Practice” in a way that seems to mock their opponents, a circular paradox that affirms itself, over and over again. (9) At the time, a wave of interest in younger Marx (from the News and Letters Committee in the US to The Praxis School in Yugoslavia) was producing theory which called for a unity of theory and practice through the analysis of human self-activity. It could be said that the Althusser camp felt that class-struggle is contained in Philosophy (10). We would say that we can derive a strong conclusion that can be held by the inversion of Althusser here: Philosophy, our theory and all our thoughts in abstract can only be contained, *can only be truly expressed, through our activity*.

Another reduction here is that our ideas and concepts, contained in the form preferred by the Althusser camp, theoretical and academic journals, have some sort of “material essence”. This is not a viewpoint for any effectively dialectical praxis, that is to say, it is a direct contradiction to the ideas of Marx, who saw the struggle in uniting theory and practice, not the conflation of them as if they come packaged together and delivered by a series of already ascended subjects. If this is the case, revolution is not imperative. One needs only to realize.

The problem first and foremost posed is that capital is the wedge between our theory and our practice, that makes for separation. If the presumptively the revolutionary navigates an alienated class, we find ourselves fighting alienation with alienated forms (11). From the viewpoint of theory, there can be no separation if we believe that proletarian action precedes proletarian consciousness. However from our immersion in our own real conditions, the viewpoint of theory is at tension with our practices. The transcendence of these tensions manifests in a leap, a movement, *an ascension*.

Althusser's oversights on subjectivity, or rather the complete dismissal of it, leaves us with a disabled Marx. This means Marxism takes a different character without a dialectic of praxis, and this is a Marxism that only requires thought. We reject this, Marxism requires first and foremost, iteration. Beyond this is the overthrow of interaction in the current state of things. Althusser is Marxist ideology in inertia, a Marx that accepts the sum of current social relations as innate to humanity, leaving us with nothing but superstructural remedies to our most basic social maladies.

Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses

“The standpoint of the old materialism is civil society; the standpoint of the new is human society or social humanity.” (Marx, the 10th Thesis on Feuerbach)

The question of ideology is central to Althusser's thought, so it here that we must pay close attention. Althusser's primary thesis produces the logical conclusion that "humans could never be without ideology", and also that "ideologies are material". We have seen this before, in Marx's critique of Feuerbach. Althusser suffers the same fault, he merely turns Feuerbach on his head. (12) What we are faced with instead of Feuerbach's idealization of matter, is Althusser's methodology of "the materialization of ideas". This is fundamentally incorrect and equally fatalistic of an error in understanding the dialectics of Marx.

Marx set forth a materialism that will be outlined in the next section as understood by the author, but it is worth noting now that is through his break with the Feuerbachian ideas now awoken from slumber by Althusser, that Marx was able to make his dialectic. Althusser falls to the error in wanting contemplative objects (of a material ideology). This contemplative object is not obscured in Althusser's thought, but rather elaborately and articulately developed as the "Ideological State Apparatus".

The ideological state-apparatuses is directly dependent on Althusser's thesis that ideologies are material: ideology has material manifestation in the state and practices. This is the source of Althusser's affinity for *Eurocommunist social-*

democracy and Party Dictatorship. Rather than ideological apparatuses (the state, family, gender relations, trade-unions, everything) being points of class-conflict that the communist movement negates in a revolutionary process, these apparatuses are here to stay, innate to humanity as ideology is (13). This is a philosophical deviation from Marx. Marx wanted the permanent and complete dissolution of these institutions as we know it.

To Marx, our lives determine our consciousness (and therefore our ideas), and it is not our ideas which determine our lives. (14). Therefore, our ideology is determined by our own life experiences, the wage-worker and their performative life-affirming activity comes into conflict and assumes a particular set of beliefs based on the contradiction between labor and capital. Ideology in this form becomes subject to alienation, the process in which one is separated from the product of labor, their class, and ultimately their species. It here we can refute Ideological State Apparatuses as alienated forms (15).

The communist theory of Marx remains a methodology of thought, but in terms of a practical activity, the Marxist thought is subordinate to the concrete material conditions which it produces. Just as communist movements of the class have a certain self-negating character to them, ideology even in the socialist fashion has the same consequences. In his

opposition to both Feuerbach and Hegel, Marx quite in both theory and practice, put an end to ideology – as it was understood by the classical German philosophical movement. The finality of this produces a particular and distinguishable character to Marxism.

So Marxism is to be understood, uniquely and exceptionally, as an ideology of activity, underneath labor assumes a certain life-affirming capability in the absence of capital, which alienates the laborer from their need. Dissolution of capital will not come from reproducing its forms via a socialization of capital management, the forms of this have been subsumed.

“In opposition to the project summarized in the Theses on Feuerbach (the realization of philosophy in praxis which supersedes the opposition between idealism and materialism), the spectacle simultaneously preserves, and imposes within the pseudo-concrete of its universe, the ideological characteristics of materialism and idealism. The contemplative side of the old materialism which conceives the world as representation and not as activity—and which ultimately idealizes matter—is fulfilled in the spectacle, where concrete things are automatically the masters of social life. Reciprocally, the dreamed activity of idealism is equally fulfilled in the spectacle, through the technical mediation of

signs and signals-which ultimately materialize an abstract ideal.” (Guy Debord)(16)

Here, we find Debord in great understanding of the Marxist break with idealism and the old materialism. The subjectivity of the Proletariat was far from as lost on the Situationists as it was Althusser. Marx says one of the main failures of Feuerbach is that he conceives sensuous objects, objects we can conclude are the proletariat in Althusser’s historical analysis in the absence of subject.

Marx defined and theorized communism as such with consequences *irreconcilable* later with the ideologically and superstructural theory of Althusser. The ideological systems of a society can be described as having the purpose of servitude and negation of real life-affirming activity.

We can easily find another understanding of revolutionary ideology here. We know that capital (and therefore its ideology) contains within itself its own anti-thesis. *We are that anti-thesis*, the movement to abolish the present state of things. Beyond that, philosophical theory of Marx entails a certain leap outside of ideology altogether. It is in this leap, this particularly communizing process, that Marxism renders itself meaningless. It is rather not Marxism as a process, but communism as a process. Marxism represents for us *the ideology to end all ideologies*, a particularly historically

context which gives to a disunified and unstable thought. Human ideas do not so much collect around fixated or contemplative objects, or even their own conditions if we are talking about such as a vacuumed, static, and reduced to all inertia. The impossibility of this is that the contradiction between labor and capital, what some have called the primary contradiction, is one that is moving and constantly changing every moment of every day.

If ideology, whether it's manifestations in the realm of consciousness or the "Unconscious", should be rendered any useful determinant, then it is within the threat to *its very existence* that we can cite a communist realization. This is not to say in a classless society that we will not encounter problematics of a certain fundamental nature as we navigate our daily lives, as truly free individuals in the Marxist sense. We will however be able to formulate them into a framework currently impossible in a class society: the framework of a moving and transforming humanity ascending to subjectivity.

Irreconcilability of Historical Materialism and Althusser's Historicism

"History is itself a real part of natural history, of the transformation of nature into man" (Marx)

As said in the previous section, Marx's realization of his own dialectic in opposition to both Feuerbach and Hegel did not directly emerge from his formulation of dialectical materialism, but by the theorization of historical materialism.

Althusser frequently asserts what is deviation from the dialectics of Marx, his theorization of history as a "process without a subject", and therefore always making humanity the object of history. (17) We must here draw the biggest line in the sand, not simply for the sake of delegitimizing Althusser, but to affirm Marx.

We find that at the center of Marxist theory, where historical materialism could be found "inconvenient" to the trajectories of class-struggle, Althusser would have in its place self-criticism (18), the same "self-criticism" we found replaced dialectics when Stalinist USSR began to resemble capital (19), we can affirm Martin Glaberman here, that Althusser's "proper" reading of the Marxist canon (which grew smaller and smaller through "self-criticism" until only *Critique of the Gothe Programme* was left) held not only the purpose of affirming the Soviet Union as genuinely and legitimately Socialist, but also to purge the dialectic from Marxism entirely, which was a task in common for Althusser and Stalin.

If activity and social relations are not at the pinnacle of Marx's dialectic, but rather a strange mix of "self-criticism", non-

Marxian sociological and psychoanalytical thinkers, and “Marxism-Leninism always subordinates the dialectical theses to the materialist theses” (20), then it must be said that it is Althusser, and not Marxist-Humanism, which does not believe that Marx’s thought does not constitute a given whole and cohesive frame and methodology of thought. (We are not saying that it is not wrong to take things at historical development of thought, we certainly should not value writings prior to 1844 as valuable as those written in the 1860’s.) We should *affirm* Marxism as a methodology of not only thought but activity, and as a distinct dialectic existing in opposition to idealism and materialism, which objectifies human activity for the reason of deriving from it human subjectivity. This is a dialectic of human movement.

We assume, naturally, that this movement is meant to be the sum of the class against capital. This is wholly irreconcilable with Althusser’s thought of history, and therefore communism, as a “process without a subject”. This is the direct rejection of the Marxist idea that oppressed social categories can have any independent life or development, the heart of subjectivity.

Instead in the Althusserian analysis, we have in its place *structures*, innate to the human experience, namely ideology and state. This is the core of his affirmation of not just Stalinist Russia, but insidious forms of capital, the existence of which would make communism an impossibility.

Because of this affirmation, we are faced with the historical impossibility of the workers revolts of Hungary as revolutionary in Althusser's eyes, because in 1956 a revolutionary socialism was already the ideology of the State Apparatus, and thus a social revolution would be impossible. In addition, we find the impossibility of May 1968 as a revolutionary moment, because it was not led by a singular and dominant Communist Party, nor did it have the initial support of trade-unions. We fundamentally reject both of these historical oversights. It could be said that his Stalinism is there in the former and his revisionism is there in the latter, following and affirming the disaster course of Socialism in the 20th century.

We offer a very simple alternative and it can be found as the opposite of Althusser. Communism is a social movement which will *tear and burn down the existing social structures as they exist*, as they all serve the forces of capital which objectify the worker. *Everything must go* of course does not come without the critique and understanding of *everything*, but we want negation of the negation itself. Marx makes the leap from the critic to the fighter.

Conclusions on the Relationship of Althusser to Marx

We know we are selling the rather monolithic thought of Louis Althusser short here. We have yet to directly engage with his

concepts of “interpellation” and “overcontradiction” and this is intentional. This is meant to suffice as a mechanism to introduce and orient revolutionaries to the more basic concepts of Louis Althusser, and how they relate to Marx when placed side by side with his “predecessor”. This piece also lacks a positive counter-part. This is also intentional, as while we have an obligation to critique Althusser and affirm the Marx he deviates from, we also have an obligation to develop the humanist content that produced by this critique and affirmation. Expect more to come.

Beyond this, we must bring a human imperative to the crisis of capital. This means subjectivity. Instead of the dichotomy between a deterministic or inevitable revolution, and one delivered by the will and thought of revolutionaries, we can sketch two trajectories here, both determined by human subjectivity: humanity will overthrow capital, or face extinction.

We know we are not alone. Even the “post-Althusserian” Žižek has delivered these two trajectories (21). Ecological crisis and the ability of capital to subsume social-capital forms are two characteristics of the present moment which Marx could not see from his standpoint in history. Regardless, it should be known that the new materialism must be that of a

realized human society, which Marx described, not the civil society bound together by ideology that Althusser describes.

We know that the common slogan that Marx is “Hegel turned on his head” is not exactly true, or rather that this requires more elaboration. Instead, we find that a younger Marx rejected this in the German Ideology and Theses on Feuerbach. Marx took a number of Hegelian ideas, particularly the dialectic, and applied them to a materialism (Feuerbachian) understanding of the world. Not satisfied with this, Marx decided definitively that his dialectic would be one of activity and subjectivity, not a crude materialism where consciousness only interprets the world. Rather, Marx made a dialectic where exchange and interaction with the material world could be theorized. The dialectic of Marx is the dialectic of Praxis.

Althusser does not leave us with nothing, this would be a similar shortcoming to the Althusserian idea that Hegel left Marx with nothing (22). On the contrary, we propose a very primitive but intriguing question: “What is alive in Althusser’s opposite?”

In this conversation of “who inverts who” or “who deviates from who”, we should first invert Althusser. In Althusser’s theoretical inertia, we find ourselves affirming theory as something of motion. Beyond this, the inversion of his theses produce for us new theses and therefore new tasks. The new

theses produced is that ideology is somewhat of a social construct that exists in inertia, which represents the relationship of humanity to its unreal (rather suicidal) conditions. The task produced by this conclusion is to overthrow the social hegemony of ideology.

Further reading:

[Marx, Karl, “Estranged Labour”](#)


[Marx, Karl, “Theses on Feuerbach”](#)

[Marx, Karl, “The German Ideology”](#)

[Althusser, Louis, “For Marx”](#)

[Althusser, Louis, “Lenin and Philosophy”](#)

[Ranciere, Jacques, “On the Theory of Ideology: The Politics of Althusser”](#)

[Ignatiev, Noel; Glaberman, Martin; Hamerquist, Don; “The Politics of Louis Althusser: A Symposium”](#) 

[Boyer, Anne, “Kill the Philosopher in Your Head”](#)

[Choi, Won, “Althusser and Lacan: A Structuralist Controversy”](#)

Some Notes and Citations:

1. Our insertion here of “the Real” is strategic. We do not wish to dismiss the discourses of reality produced by Structuralists and Psychoanalysts. This may even include those who seem to be influenced by Althusser or claim some of sort of theoretical heritage to him. Our assertion is that the ideological revolt of Althusser is over and we should assess the problems produced by it. The content of particular contemporary post-structuralist thinkers in question here, from Zizek to Butler to Theorie Communiste, can be seen not in their relation to Althusser, but the rifts and breaks with his thought that are produced.

2. Althusser, Louis: Preface to the French edition of Capital and Lenin and Philosophy

I therefore urge on the reader the following method of reading:

1. Leave Part I (Commodities and Money) deliberately on one side in a first reading.

2. Begin reading Volume One with its Part II (The Transformation of Money into Capital).

3. Read carefully Parts II, III (The Production of Absolute Surplus- Value) and IV (The Production of Relative Surplus- Value).

4. Leave Part V (The Production of Relative and Absolute Surplus- Value) on one side.

5. Read carefully Parts VI (Wages), VII (The Accumulation of

Capital) and VIII (The So-called Primitive Accumulation).

6. Finally, begin to read Part I (Commodities and Money) with infinite caution, knowing that it will always be extremely difficult to understand, even after several readings of the other Parts, without the help of a certain number of deeper explanations.

3. We are greatly indebted to the Soljourner Truth Organization and their Althusser Symposium here, published in the Fourth Issue of Urgent Tasks by Noel Ignatiev, Martin Glaberman, and Don Hamerquist in Summer 1978. The Glaberman section sums up a different approach but one we can also affirm as perhaps Althusser's practical "objet petit a": "Althusser's concern for the proper reading of Capital conforms to his dual interest: to root dialectical materialism out of Marxism and to defend Russian state capitalism as a socialist society.

4. Ibid. pg. 14

5. Althusser Louis, For Marx pg.32-38

6. Hamerquist, Don, "A Tension Between Theory and the Politics" published in Urgent Tasks No. IV, Summer 1978

7. Choi, Won, "Althusser and Lacan: A Structuralist Controversy"

8. Althusser, Louis, “Lenin and Philosophy” pg. 190 (Usually found in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”)

9. Althusser was notorious for being difficult to debate in academia. Noel Ignatiev writes under the pen name “Jasper Collins” in Urgent Tasks 4: “Althusser has played a cat-and-mouse game with his critics for nearly a decade. An essay would appear, and his critics would respond. He would then write, “They don’t understand,” and would reveal the secret of what he was supposedly driving at in the first place. (When he bothered to answer at all, that is.) The current book continues Althusser’s intellectual unscrupulousness masquerading as scholarship by including a lengthy bibliography of his critics, a dozen or so of whom get passing mention in Lock’s Introduction, but only one — British Communist John Lewis — is actually debated by Althusser.” We find that Althusser’s lack of comradarie and scholarly conduct is due to his “Theory”, which is circular and self-affirming.

10. Althusser, Louis “For Marx, Part Six, On the Materialist Dialectic.” Louis Althusser

11. Debord, Guy “Society of the Spectacle” Section 122

12. Theses on Feuerbach, Marx, Karl. While we consider the ten theses an outline to the thought he produced alongside Engels in the German Ideology, it should be understood the

when the theses stand on their own, they stand in contrast to the theses of Althusser. The German Ideology supports this but is more subject to Althusser's theoretical perversions than the Theses on Feuerbach do on their own. For our purposes we number the these in reference by it's Roman Numeral here: (8-I-XI)

13. Althusser, Louis: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses

14. Marx, Karl, "The German Ideology" Section 1 "It is not life determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life"

15. Debord, Guy, "Society of the Spectacle" (Sections 112-124)

16. Ibid. (Section 216) It should be known here that all that Debord is doing is affirming Marx, no original thought is being produced here. This is the Theses of Feuerbach being contrasted with the "Real" ISA that Althusser theorizes, not the concept itself. It is rather Althusser's theorization of the concept as having organizational potentialities that is problematic. Regardless, the backdrop of the late 1960's in France means that Debord must have been very indirect here, he wanted to taunt Althusser.

17. Ranciere, Jacques: “On the Theory of Ideology (the Politics of Althusser)”

18. Glaberman, Martin, “Attempts to Subordinate History to the CP” as published in Urgent Tasks 4, 1974

19. “Teaching of Economics in the USSR” was a Soviet state document published in 1941, translated for English speakers by Raya Dunayevskaya, who subsequently delivered new and stronger critiques of the Soviet Union as a state-capitalist nation, and the document also served for critiques from other revolutionaries.

20. Althusser, Louis: “Letter to John Lewis” 1972

21. This is most apparent not Žižek’s most academically advanced works such as “The Sublime Object of Ideology”, but rather in many of his more post-modern works, such as “Living in the End Times” and many of his speeches in which he expresses an apocalyptic outlook.

22. This reading of Marx is most explicitly apparent to the author is chapter 6 of “For Marx” (“On the Materialist Dialectic”)|