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The Legacies of Althusser

One consequence of the pan-European demise of the hitherto dominant forms of historical Communism is the opportunity provided—indeed, the duty enjoined— to assess its theoretical heritage. If the political dynamic of the Third International was given its ultimate quietus in 1989–92, it is by no means certain that its intellectual resources are equally spent. Much talk circulates about the end of any viable class politics in the advanced industrial societies, at the same time that the brutalities of capitalist accumulation continue unchecked around the globe. At the very moment when traditional mass parties of the working class appear to have forfeited their popular legitimacy (and in most cases have either dissolved or splintered into competing tendencies), the analytical value of social class for comprehending these same political processes remains undiminished.

Among the congeries of theoretical programs typically lumped together under the label "Western Marxism," none has consistently provoked more passionate response *pro et contra* than that associated with the name of Louis Althusser. One could hypothesize a variety of reasons for the extraordinary vehemence with which Althusser's writings have been defended by acolytes and denounced by opponents. In retrospect, it would appear that the principal source for the heat they generated can be located in their novel project to unite two seemingly incompatible tendencies of twentieth-century thought in a singular theoretical program aiming to advance revolutionary politics. Drawing upon the resources of (primarily) French historical epistemology to account for Marxism's emergence out of the classical philosophies of history, Althusser at the same time insisted upon the scientificity of

YFS 88, *Depositions,* ed. Lezra,

historical materialism, its absolute differentiation from the philosophical ideologies that had preceded it and, in his view, still threatened to impede its development within the official apparatuses of the international labor movement. Repeatedly insisting that he was both a Communist and a philosopher,[1] Althusser was labeled by turns a dogmatist for declining to repudiate Marxism-Leninism, or a relativist for asserting that Marxism stood in continual need of conceptual rectification. From these opposed theoretical indictments, political consequences could be summarily drawn, with Althusser standing accused of unrepentant Stalinism on the one hand, of at first flirting with Maoism while later harboring Eurocommunist sympathies on the other.[2]

No more than Marx's do Althusser's texts exhibit pristine theoretical consistency. Nor have they failed to promote different, often conflicting tendencies over time. The tragic *dénouement* that overtook and abruptly halted Althusser's own development has not prevented the continuation of what may fairly be termed the Althusserian problematic in the human sciences at large, especially in the work of some of those who were intimately associated with the project at the moment when it burst upon the European intellectual scene in the mid-1960s. In what follows, I shall be principally concerned with the itinerary of some of the earliest Althusserians over the thirty years since they participated in the seminar that produced *Reading "Capi-*

1. Etienne Balibar put the matter best in remembering his teacher and collaborator at Althusser's funeral: "To be *at the same time* totally a philosopher and totally a Communist, without sacrificing, subordinating, or subjecting either of the two terms to the other—such is Althusser's intellectual singularity, such was his wager and the risk he took" ("Adieu," in Balibar, *Ecrits pour Althusser* [Paris: La Découverte, 1991], 122). Here and throughout, unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

2. The most famous arraignment in English of Althusser's supposed Stalinism was the late Edward Thompson's essay, "The Poverty of Theory," in his *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review, 1978), 1–210. Gregory Elliott gives pride of place in the philosopher's development, from the moment of *Reading "Capital"* through the ISAs, to Althusser's Maoism, which was crystallized in an anonymously published text of 1966, "Sur la Révolution Culturelle"; see Elliott, *Althusser: The Detour of Theory* (London: Verso, 1987), 194–97. Elliott argues for a shift towards Eurocommunism during the middle to late 1970s, evident, for example, in the contrast between Althusser's lecture on the Twenty-second Congress of the French Communist Party and Balibar's essay on the dictatorship of the proletariat; see ibid., 289 ff. The charge that Althusserian theory is at once dogmatic and relativistic has also been lodged by Peter Dews in his "Althusser, Structuralism, and the French Epistemological Tradition," in Gregory Elliott, ed., *Althusser: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 104–41.

tal." While this preliminary survey of writings by some of Althusser's most famous students cannot pretend to draw up a definitive balance sheet either for their work or for Althusser's significance generally, it does attempt to locate a few of the more promising paths that the Althusserian intervention opened up. By implication, it also passes judgment on several of its less happy outcomes in politics and theory, outcomes for which Althusser cannot be held solely responsible but that his writings did certainly help to license.[3]

ALTHUSSERIAN THESES

The task of philosophy, Althusser famously insisted from 1967 onwards, is to present theses. The specificity of Marxist philosophy consists in proposing materialist theses to counteract the idealist tendencies that perpetually endanger progress in the sciences.[4] No reader of Althusser is likely to miss the self-reflexivity with which this proposition operated on Althusser's own texts, which often read like extended elaborations of a single concept presented in the form of a slogan. Some familiar examples: history is a process without a subject or goals; ideology interpellates individuals as subjects; philosophy is the class struggle in theory; the knowledge of history is no more historical than the knowledge of sugar is sugary.

From among these (and some others I shall enumerate in a moment), we can isolate a number of distinctively Althusserian themes that have achieved general currency (which is not to say they have been widely accepted), and that have, in addition, been subject to develop-

3. The longer version of this essay includes a section on Althusser's impact upon history writing, focusing on the work of Jacques Rancière. Space constraints dictated that this discussion be excised from the present text. Omitted altogether—primarily because of the limits of the author's scholarly competence—is the rich and complex work in political economy undertaken by the proponents of Regulation Theory. On their debt to, as well as their divergence from, "high Althusserianism" (viz., the moment of *Pour Marx* and *Lire le Capital*, including the Poulantzas of *Pouvoir politique et classes sociales*), see Alain Lipietz, "From Althusserianism to 'Regulation Theory,'" in E. Ann Kaplan and Michael Sprinker, eds., *The Althusserian Legacy* (London: Verso, 1993), 99–138. Also omitted is any sustained engagement with the most influential Anglophone post-Althusserians, Hindess and Hirst, Laclau and Mouffe, and Wolff and Resnick, who have found in Althusser the charter for their own retreat towards social democracy. The continuing challenge of Althusserianism requires, in my view, sustaining his commitment to Communism on both the theoretical and the political levels.

4. See Louis Althusser, *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists and Other Essays*, ed. Gregory Elliott, trans. Ben Brewster *et al.* (London: Verso, 1990), 74–77.

ment and refinement in subsequent work. In no particular order of importance, these are:

1. The relative autonomy of the superstructures and the reciprocal action of the superstructures on the base
2. The permanence of ideology
3. The specificity of art in relation to ideology
4. The overdetermination in principle of any historical conjuncture
5. The distinction between objects of knowledge and real objects
6. The nonsubjective nature of historical processes
7. The imbrication of philosophy in politics
8. The ineluctability of class struggle in history

None was original with him. As Althusser himself repeatedly emphasized, all were either explicitly enunciated in or could be extrapolated from the classical texts of Marxism-Leninism. Althusser's accomplishment, to rate it no higher, was to extract these motifs from the tradition and to construct from them a distinctive problematic for historical materialism, one that would enable it to continue producing new knowledges by strictly delimiting its field of investigation. Insistence on the scientificity of historical materialism never had any other goal than this.

The measure of any science's maturity (whether it is "progressive" or "degenerating," in Lakatos's terms), that which distinguishes it from the ideological problematic out of which it is born, is the new knowledges, both theoretical and empirical, it produces. Like any other research program, Althusser's must submit to this test. How have the propositions enumerated above fared in subsequent research?

WE WERE NEVER STRUCTURALISTS, WE WERE SPINOZISTS

On several occasions, Althusser pointed to Spinoza as the key, indeed perhaps the only authentic, antecedent to Marx's materialism. Three features stand out in Althusser's invocation of Spinozist philosophy: 1) "the opacity of the immediate" (which founds a theory of reading to which Althusser will give the Freudian moniker "lecture symptomale"); 2) the absolute distinction between real objects and objects of knowledge; and 3) the notion of a "cause immanent in its effects."[5]

5. All are proposed with extraordinary brevity in Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading "Capital,"* trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1970), 16, 40,

These hints—they are no more—have been taken up at length by Etienne Balibar and Pierre Macherey, whose writings on the seventeenth-century philosopher are part of the important contemporary reevaluation of his work in France and elsewhere.[6] Macherey has followed Althusser's lead in commending Spinoza's value over Hegel's for Marxist theory. In particular, Macherey has asserted Spinoza's importance in posing the question of a materialist (i.e., non-Hegelian, nonidealist, nonteleological) dialectic, against the residual tendencies toward evolutionism in the Marxist conception of history.[7]

Balibar's engagement with Spinoza has been for the most part on another front, that of politics and the specific relation philosophy maintains with it. Balibar focuses on "the object or problem that, in a sense, *Spinoza and Marx have in common:* namely the problem of the 'masses,' or better said, of the determining role of the masses in history."[8] He poses this problem most emphatically and perspicaciously in one of his earliest texts on Spinoza, "Spinoza, the Anti-Orwell: The Fear of the Masses":

> In Spinoza the "mass," or to put it better, the masses, become an explicit theoretical object, because in the last analysis it is their different modalities of existence, according to historical conjunctures and according to economies or regimes of passion, that determine the chances of orienting a political practice toward a given solution. [*Masses, Classes, Ideas,* 5]

As in Marx, the concept of the masses cannot be approached without considerable ambivalence. In Spinoza, this takes the form of the simultaneously held conviction that: 1) the crowd or *vulgus* is inher-

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189, respectively. On the salutary effect of Spinoza's concepts of ideology and causality in avoiding the errors of Hegelian teleology when assessing Marx's theoretical revolution, see Althusser, *Essays in Self-Criticism,* trans. Grahame Lock (London: New Left Books, 1976), 135–41.

6. Among others, Pierre-François Moreau, *Spinoza* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975); Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: philosophie pratique* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1981); Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics,* trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); and Warren Montag, *Spinoza* (forthcoming from Verso).

7. See Pierre Macherey, *Hegel ou Spinoza* (Paris: Maspero, 1979), 259–60. On the recurrent tendency towards evolutionism in Marxist philosophy, from Marx's Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) through the texts of the Second International and the official doctrines of the Communist parties, see Etienne Balibar, *La philosophie de Marx* (Paris: La Découverte, 1993), 78–90.

8. Etienne Balibar, *Masses, Classes, Ideas: Studies on Politics and Philosophy Before and After Marx,* trans. James Swenson (New York: Routledge, 1994), xvi.

ently incapable of being governed by reason, since it must always fall prey to superstition and fear (hence, its members could never become citizens in the ideal city posited in the fourth chapter of the *Theological-Political Treatise*); and 2) it is the necessary basis for any democratic politics (which, as is well known, Spinoza advocated in his programmatic prescriptions for the Dutch Republic) (*Masses, Classes, Ideas,* 9). After the disaster (from his point of view) of the Orangist Revolution in 1672, Spinoza would develop this thought further, formulating the core of a most unfashionable—but thoroughly contemporary—politics. Balibar puts the matter thus:

> The constitutive relation between the masses and the state (*multitudo* and *imperium*) is thought in a rigorous way from the outset by Spinoza as an internal contradiction. The argument of the *Political Treatise* is thus the most explicitly dialectical of his writings: exploring the ways to resolve a contradiction means first of all developing its terms. [*Masses, Classes, Ideas,* 19]

Famously, that contradiction, to which Spinoza gives the name democracy, is never resolved. The *Political Treatise* remained unfinished at Spinoza's death, nor does it anywhere set forth the theory of democracy that commentators have ceaselessly attempted to read into it.

If the history of commentary has been consistently frustrated by the *Political Treatise,* this is due less to its incompletion than to its stubborn refusal to indulge in any facile—Spinoza himself would have called it "utopian"—reduction of the contradiction it discovers at the heart of political life. What Balibar elsewhere labels the "political anthropology" of the *Ethics*[9] undergirds a theory of political forms and action that denies in principle any supercession of the dialectic between political power and the masses, or the state and its citizens/subjects. Rather than an end form of historical development, as the liberal tradition would have it, democracy is, rather, a *tendency,* a constitutive aspect of the political process in all regimes. Every conceivable state form is confronted by the necessity to regulate internal conflicts and must thereby "in disengaging from the 'fluctuation of minds' a unique opinion and a choice," project "a union of hearts and minds around the common interest. But from that moment, it becomes thinkable that the multitude [can] govern itself" (*Spinoza et la Politique,* 90). This tendency or inherent potential will persist, even

9. See Balibar, *Spinoza et la politique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), 91–118.

when "the dominant class has been enlarged to the dimensions of the entire people," (ibid.) since the conflict between passion and reason, which on the authority of the *Ethics* determines all human action, is irreducible in principle. In other terms, Spinozist politics issues in the infamous Althusserian thesis on the permanence of ideology.

EVEN A COMMUNIST SOCIETY COULD NOT DO WITHOUT IDEOLOGY

From such a model of sociopolitical life, either optimistic or pessimistic (or, if one prefers, progressive or conservative) conclusions can equally be drawn. The latter interpretation has been forcefully advanced by Aijaz Ahmad, who writes apropos of Althusser's postulating the necessary persistence of ideology under socialism:

> In other words, there is no end to domination and control; even in a classless society, human beings simply cannot be "left to spontaneity," nor can they *live* the relations of knowledge (which come only through theoretical practice and are not, in any case, *lived*). This entrapment of humankind in ideology, now and forever, is eerily close to Foucault's notion of the power of discourse.[10]

Leaving aside the unwarranted conflation of Foucault and Althusser with so-called "discourse theory"—as is well known, ideological conditioning in Althusser and subject formation in Foucault are never purely intradiscursive—principally at stake here are differing conceptions of a future classless society. The passage from "Marxism and Humanism" on which Ahmad is commenting continues as follows:

> It is in ideology that the classless society *lives* the inadequacy/adequacy of the relation between it and the world, it is in it and by it that it transforms men's "consciousness," that is, their attitudes and behaviour so as to raise them to the level of their tasks and the conditions of their existence.[11]

Althusser maintains, with perfect justice, that no one is born a communist, not even if one is born into a communist society. The social relations of production, indeed all social relations, must be constantly reproduced, in the family, in schools, in the workplace, in political

10. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), 327n34; cf. Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: New Left Books, 1976), 84–85.

11. Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1977), 235.

meetings, in short, at the myriad sites and institutions where social life is carried on. Eliminating the fundamental antagonism between classes will not render society transparent to immediate inspection—although it will remove those massive sources of mystification associated with the wage and commodity forms. The role of ideology in a classless society will be formally the same as that which it plays in class-divided societies: namely, to produce subjects who understand and affirm the social relations governing life in that society. That a constitutive feature of communist ideology is the liberation of its members from material exploitation—"from each according to his ability, to each according to his need"—does not render this principle any less ideological in an Althusserian sense. The lessons of communist ideology will, *ex hypothesi,* be more readily accepted in a classless society than under capitalism; they will remain lessons to be learned and constantly repeated for all that.

One needs to recall the general context in which Althusser wrote his early essays and to bear constantly in mind the object of his critique. His assertion of the permanence of ideology is at one with his general critique of economism and reformism, viz., of Stalinism and of the parliamentary road to socialism proclaimed by the PCF during the 1960s. Transforming the relations of production—e.g., Stalin's famous assertion that class struggle had been banished from the Soviet Union when private ownership of the means of production was eliminated—does not by itself guarantee ideological cohesion. Stalinist state terror was, among other things, a sign that political and ideological struggle in a postcapitalist society remained bitter and widespread long after the fundamental material conditions giving rise to and sustaining it had been removed. Nor would a "peaceful transition to socialism" abolish at a stroke the forms of capitalist domination. This characteristic error of social democracy was relentlessly attacked by Lenin, who insisted on the necessity for a revolutionary transformation of the state apparatus, hence, of a society's political and ideological structures. When the Twenty-second Congress of the French Communist Party eliminated the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" from its statutes, Balibar argued strenuously—if in the end unsuccessfully—that to do so was to abandon the ultimate project of socialist transformation by accepting capitalist society's terms and many of its underlying conditions of existence.[12]

12. See Balibar, *On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,* trans. Grahame Locke (London: New Left Books, 1977).

Reformism thus mirrors economism: both rely on the mistaken notion that production relations are expressed without contradiction in politics and ideology; change the one and everything else follows—forever. Althusser and Balibar rightly challenge this view, insisting upon the perpetual necessity for ideological struggle, even beyond the historical rupture of socialist revolution. With the experience of three quarters of a century of socialist economic experiments in a variety of historical situations to guide us, we are in a position to recognize Althusser's and Balibar's superior theoretical insight on this point.

THE MOTOR OF HISTORY

I shall discuss Balibar's important writings on the Marxist concept of ideology below. For now, though, I wish to rejoin his exegesis of Spinoza's political theory, which, as we have seen, turns decisively on the latter's understanding of the masses in all its contradictory complexity. In one respect, Spinoza's Enlightenment progeny (whom Balibar is generally at pains to criticize)[13] were not wrong to discern in his political prognostics the precursor of that *communauté des lumières* which they postulated as the goal of their own ideological struggle. Observations like the following from the *Theological-Political Treatise* disclose the unmistakable utopianism motivating Spinoza's political thought: "For it is almost impossible that the majority of a people, especially if it is a large one, should agree in an irrational design. And, moreover, the basis and aim of democracy is to avoid the desires as irrational and to bring men as far as possible under the control of reason, so that they may live in peace and harmony."[14] Provoked in the first instance by an acute consciousness of the many forms of superstition and intolerance that have historically dominated politics—and were spectacularly evident in the social upheavals of seventeenth-century Europe—Spinoza's thought nevertheless aims at what his psychology and anthropology pronounce to be by definition impossible. Balibar's concluding judgment is to the point:

> If we admit with Spinoza . . . that communication is structured by relations of ignorance and of knowledge, of superstition, of ideological antagonism, in which are invested human desire and which express an activity of bodies themselves, we must also admit with him that

13. See, for example, *Masses, Classes, Ideas,* 32.

14. Cited in Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy,* vol. 4, "Descartes to Leibniz" (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1965), 256.

> knowledge is a practice, and that the struggle for knowledge (philosophy) is a political practice. In the absence of this practice, the tendentially democratic processes of decision described by the *Political Treatise* would remain unintelligible. We understand thereby why the essential aspect of Spinozist democracy is from the outset liberty of communication. We understand also how the theory of the "body politic" is neither a simple physics of power, nor a psychology of the submission of the masses, nor the means of formalizing a juridical order, but the search for a strategy of collective liberation, for which the password is: *to be the greatest number possible to think the most possible* [thoughts] (*Ethics*, V, 10). [*Spinoza et la politique*, 117–18; Balibar's emphasis]

Epistemology and ontology—the focus of Althusser's and Macherey's promotion of him—aside, Spinoza opens the door to a concept of politics that, if it found no resonance in the dominant theory of his own time, would become increasingly the norm a century after his death and continues to demarcate the horizon of Left strategic thought two hundred years later. No socialist politics worthy of the name can dispense with the projection of a future society in which all humankind will enjoy equally the freedom of thought and expression postulated in Spinozist democracy. At the same time, this very freedom must perforce create conditions for conflict and internal upheaval—held in the *Political Treatise* to be the most potent cause of the dissolution of existing regimes[15]—that would threaten the order that enables it.

Marxist political theory has never ceased dreaming of a realm of freedom in which social conflict has been abolished, where classes having been eliminated, and where the hitherto ineluctable struggles of history will be deprived of their nurturing conditions. Spinoza, too, dreamed this dream, nowhere more explicitly than in the *Political Treatise*. Balibar identifies its contours, and comments:

> The "best regime," by definition, is thus that which realizes the strongest correlation between the security of individuals and the stability of institutions. . . . If this correlation could be total, that is to say, if the

15. See *Spinoza et la politique*, where it is argued that the "*illegal actions* of individuals," motivated by the tendency to "interpret the sovereign's decisions according to one's whim," provoke the "*arbitrary power* [of the sovereign to] tyrannical degeneration," which in turn, "at the point when the 'delirious' State threatens the incompressible minimum of individuality of the men who compose it," will result "finally in *the indignation of the multitude*, which destroys it [viz., the State]" (82–83).

> form of the State no more "threatened" the security of individuals than the activity of individuals placed institutions in danger, one would have a perfect body politic, which one could call free or rational (*Political Treatise*, V, 6; VIII, 7). But also, in a certain way, there would no longer be either history or politics. . . . [*Spinoza et la politique*, 80–81; the final ellipsis is Balibar's]

As Spinoza himself opined, and as Balibar and Althusser have consistently reaffirmed, such a society is, strictly speaking, an illusion. Althusser's famous interdiction, licensed, he insisted, by historical materialism, of an ideology-free communist society (and, by implication, one liberated from politics as well), accords with a famous pronouncement of Marx and Engels, who said of communism that it would usher in, not the end of history, but of humankind's prehistory. To reverse the valence of Oscar Wilde's famous *mot*, among the pleasures of socialism will be that many of one's evenings will be taken up by meetings.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN THEORY

Balibar's most recent book[16] is an introduction to Marxist philosophy that undertakes "to defend a somewhat paradoxical thesis: whatever one may have thought, *there is not and there never will be a Marxist philosophy*; for this very reason, *Marx's importance for philosophy* is greater than ever" (*La philosophie de Marx*, 3). This thesis is glossed in the following pages, wherein Balibar argues that all of Marx's works are engaged in philosophical labor: they mobilize and elaborate theoretical concepts in a ceaseless process of philosophical critique. At the same time, these works precisely put into question the traditional conception of philosophy from Plato to Hegel, not excluding the materialists from Epicurus to Feuerbach (ibid., 5–8). Taking his cue from the *Theses on Feuerbach*, Balibar maintains that in order to realize "what was always his highest ambition: emancipation, liberation," Marx understood the necessity to effect "a definitive exit [*sortie, Ausgang*] from philosophy" (18). But however much he sought to make a "revolution against philosophy," he found himself "installed not only at the heart of philosophy, but of its most speculative movement, that which

16. With the exception of four previously published essays, *Lieux et noms de la vérité* (Paris: Editions de l'Aube, 1994). It contains an interesting text on Hobbes's and Spinoza's differing conceptions of knowledge, "L'Institution de la vérité: Hobbes et Spinoza."

endeavors to *think its proper limits*, if only to abolish them, to establish itself in discovering them" (21).

Balibar's account of Marx's philosophical problematic is far from intraphilosophical; that is to say, the Hegelian ring of the preceding sentence notwithstanding, Marx came to occupy a unique position in relation to philosophy for determinate material, historical reasons. The biographical facts are well known and need not be rehearsed here. Balibar draws attention to the significance of the term "revolution" in the *Theses*, locating its origins in the radical democratic tendencies of 1789 (whose most notable representative was Babeuf), its contemporary incarnation in Marx's lifetime in the communists. Far from a pure idea, "a speculative conception, that of an ideal or experimental city," communism signifies "a social movement whose demands represent simply the consequent application of the principle of the [French] Revolution: measuring the realization of liberty by that of equality and reciprocally, in order to end in fraternity" (22). Famously, from the 1840s onwards, Marx equated this social movement with the real existence of the proletariat. His theoretical itinerary, his production of new philosophical concepts, was only possible because of bourgeois society's evolution, which culminated in the emergence of the proletariat as a class. As Althusser once observed: "It was by *moving* to take up absolutely new, proletarian class positions that Marx realized the possibilities of the theoretical conjunction from which the science of history was born."[17]

What, from the point of view of philosophy itself, was Marx's major philosophical innovation? In Balibar's account, it consisted in Marx's absolutely novel conjugation of two types of human activity classically counterposed in the tradition from Aristotle on down:

> Here, then, is the basis of Marx's materialism in *The German Ideology* (which is effectively a *new* materialism): not a simple inversion of the hierarchy, a "theoretical workerism" I should dare to call it (for which he has been reproached by Hannah Arendt and others), that is to say not a primacy accorded to *poiesis* over *praxis* by virtue of its direct relation with matter, but the identification of the two, the revolutionary thesis according to which *praxis* passes constantly into *poiesis*, and reciprocally. There is no effective liberty that is not at the same time a

17. Althusser, "On the Evolution of the Young Marx," in *Essays in Self-Criticism*, 157.

> material transformation, that is not historically inscribed in *exteriority;* but neither is there any labor that is not a transformation of the self, as if human beings could change their conditions of existence while conserving an invariant "essence." [*La philosophie de Marx,* 40–41]

The further consequence of this conceptual innovation is to alter the very notion of theory itself, which is now necessarily "identified with a 'production of consciousness.' More exactly, with *one of the terms* of the historical contradiction to which the production of consciousness gives rise. This term is precisely ideology . . ." (ibid., 41). Rejecting Althusser's so-called "first definition of philosophy"—which held philosophy to be the "theory of theoretical practice," hence, on a par with the empirical sciences—Balibar programmatically situates philosophy squarely within ideology. Small wonder that philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways. But how might they (help to) change it?

The idealist temptation to imagine that thought will revolutionize reality cannot easily be banished from philosophy. Balibar himself succumbs to it on occasion.[18] Marx's signal achievement was not merely to recognize—and denounce—idealism in its many forms, but to account for its existence—indeed, its persistence. The error of the *philosophes* was to stigmatize ideology as pure illusion, to locate its origins in the deceptions of priests and kings, a view aptly summarized in Diderot's famous slogan. By contrast, Marx insisted on: a) the universality of ideology; and b) its origin in the material conditions of human existence.

Balibar follows a widespread tradition within Marxism (whose most notable contemporary representative is Alfred Sohn-Rethel) in characterizing the fundamental division in society as that between manual and mental labor. Those whom Marx openly calls "ideologues" are among the most important agents for sustaining this basic

18. For example, in an unpublished paper delivered at the colloquium on "Cultural Diversities: On Democracy, Community, and Citizenship," sponsored by the Bohen Foundation in New York City, February 1994, in which he proposes that "a practical transformation in the 'real' structure of politics is necessarily reflected, or expressed, in the use of such notions as Universality, Community, Rights, etc., albeit this transformation is not always immediately 'conscious,' which can produce distortions and blockages. To help becoming aware of this complex relation is where theoreticians, or philosophers, can be useful."

social division and thus for reproducing the domination of owners over producers. In the "bourgeois public sphere," ideologues promulgate the illusion that the rule of the dominant class is determined solely by the power of their ideas, an illusion generated not out of cynical lucidity, but because of their objective social position, as Balibar argues in *La philosophie de Marx* (50). Intellectuals—to give this group a more familiar, currently fashionable name—are no more exempt from the objective processes that create ideology than are the classes whom they either represent or help to dominate.

How, then, can there be such a thing as Marxist philosophy? Balibar takes up this challenge in a seemingly paradoxical way. Recalling the imbrication of philosophy in ideology—"ideology designates for philosophy the very element of its formation"—he then refers once more to the youthful Marx's counterposing of ideology with the revolutionary practice of the proletariat, which latter Marx "exalted to the level of an absolute." To follow Marx down this path, however, requires

> holding *at once* two antithetical positions: philosophy will be "Marxist" as long as, for it, the question of truth is put in play in the analysis of the fictions of universality that it autonomously produces; but it must from the outset be "Marxist" *against Marx*, making the denegation of ideology in Marx the first object of its critique. [*La philosophie de Marx*, 117]

Philosophical discourse is rational—it is concerned with adjudicating between truth and falsehood in competing accounts of the world—but Marxist philosophy is not a rationalism. It is, rather, to use the Althusserian term, a practice, i.e., a transformation of preexisting materials into a new product. Its materials are the ideologies that crowd the social world and compete for hegemony in the thoughts and actions of the masses, in particular those elaborated by the ruling class's ideologues. Marxist philosophy is just another instance of the class struggle, carried out on the terrain proper to philosophy, namely, theory. Its ultimate success or failure cannot be decoupled from other instances of class struggle in a given conjuncture. At the same time, even in the darkest periods—the counter-revolutionary moment of the Holy Alliance, the aftermath of 1848, the white terror that followed upon the Bolshevik seizure of power—its singular vocation persists. In the words of another distinguished contemporary Marxist philosopher, that vocation is to assist in "the building of a movement for socialism—in which socialism wins a cultural-intellectual he-

gemony, so that it becomes the enlightened common-sense of our age."[19]

IDEOLOGY HAS NO HISTORY

In the Anglophone world, Althusser's most enduring, and also his most ambiguous, legacy has been the *rifondazione* of cultural studies for which his writings provided the ostensible charter. Even among those who would now repudiate nearly every aspect of their Althusserian past, the occult force of Althusser's various indications concerning ideology persists.[20] Two closely related topics will concern us here: 1) What is the distinctively Althusserian contribution to the Marxist theory of ideology? 2) How are art and ideology at once intimately connected and yet analytically distinct in Althusserian theory? I shall approach the first through Balibar's essays on "the vacillation of ideology," and the second by taking up Macherey's writings on literature.

Althusser once provocatively remarked that ". . . *The German Ideology* does offer us, after the *1844 Manuscripts*, an explicit theory of ideology, but . . . it is not Marxist. . . ."[21] Balibar elaborates on this seemingly scandalous assertion by showing how the concept of ideology, while it is definitive for historical materialism, nonetheless exhibits a curious textual history in Marx and Engels: "Omnipresent in the writings of 1845–1846, reduced to a few peripheral appearances in the period 1847–1852, ideology is almost nowhere to be found after that until its full-blown restoration in the 1870s, chiefly from the *Anti-Dühring* on" (*Masses, Classes, Ideas*, 88). In the earlier texts—those primarily authored by Marx—the concept of ideology marks the site at which historical materialism stakes its claim to theoretical originality, its absolute break from all the philosophies of history that have preceded it:

> Historical materialism is primarily a program of analysis of the process of the formation and real production of idealist representations of history and politics—in short of the process of idealization . . . historical

19. Roy Bhaskar, *Reclaiming Reality: A Critical Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy* (London: Verso, 1989), 1.

20. See Francis Mulhern's evocation of the fate that befell Althusserian motifs when they migrated into British cultural studies during the 1970s and 1980s, in his "Message in a Bottle: Althusser in Literary Studies," in *Althusser: A Critical Reader*, 167–72.

21. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review, 1971), 158; the second ellipsis is Althusser's.

> materialism is constituted to the extent to which it can prove that the idealization of history is itself the necessary result of a specific history. [Ibid., 91]

So much is uncontroversial; it has never ceased being repeated in the Marxist tradition. But the canonical interpretation presents a difficulty, one that has haunted Marxist theory from the late Engels to the young Lukács to the mature Sartre and beyond: to wit, from what position can the ideological character of ideology be recognized (and criticized)? Marx's answer, explicit in *The German Ideology,* strongly implied in the *Manifesto,* is in one sense straightforward: only from the standpoint of the proletariat can ideology be recognized as such. But what is the proletariat for Marx? An apparently naive question, it discloses, when one attempts to answer it by closely examining Marx's texts, a constitutive aporia in the concept. On the one hand, the proletariat is that class which, by virtue of its position in the social relations of production, stands opposed to the bourgeoisie and struggles against the hegemony of bourgeois ideology to establish its own dominance in society. On the other hand, it is not a class at all, but the bearer of universal values that are, *stricto sensu,* beyond all ideology. "Because the proletariat is the act of practical negation of all ideology, there is no such thing as a proletarian ideology," Balibar abruptly observes (ibid., 95). This is the position that undergirds the historical (and theoretical) claims of *The German Ideology.* To sustain it, Marx must evacuate all historical or political specificity from the proletariat. Balibar explicates Marx's view, but only in order to put it into question.

As we have seen, the withering away of the state in the classless society of the future does not imply a corresponding disappearance of ideology as such—all Marx's and Engels's indications to the contrary notwithstanding. But how can this be known? Isn't it a symptom of Althusser's and Balibar's own dogmatism that they insist on the permanence of ideology, even in communist society? Their prediction of an ideologically saturated classless society is, one could say, scarcely less "ideological" than the contrary proposition it vehemently denies. Similar in this respect, the two positions are nonetheless not symmetrical; they posit alternative, incompatible concepts of ideology.

In projecting a time when there will be no more ideology, the former implies that this time is already upon us, that the revolutionary practice of the proletariat unites politics with truth. From the Erfurt Program through the post-Leninist parties of the Third International, this

belief has provided the rationale for the major organizational forms of the working class to proclaim their theoretical rectitude (and thus their effective immunity from "external" critique) and to maintain their monopoly over political strategy. By contrast, Althusser and Balibar have written the charter for Communist dissidents (the former continuously from within the party; the latter at first within, now outside it) by defining ideology, not as the opposite of truth or an object of pure theoretical investigation, but as the condition of the emergence of knowledge. Following Lenin, who defined Marxism as "the concrete analysis of a concrete situation," Balibar designates truth as "a *conjunctural fact* and an *effect* of the conjuncture" insofar as it "contradicts the 'dominant' forms or criteria of universality, that is, it embodies a practical criticism of ideology" (*Masses, Classes, Ideas*, 170). Truth, or what might be better termed correct theory, is inextricably bound up with the ideological, with those forms of practical activity, of beliefs and their institutional rituals, that govern all our lives and constitute our fundamental relation to social reality. Knowledge emerges out of the real struggles within ideology, or, to be more precise, in the conflict between ideologies that is the irreducible condition of social life.

This conflict has, historically speaking, two elements: class struggles and mass movements, which Balibar avers always "remain relatively *heterogeneous* [to each other]" (ibid., 173), at the same time that they repeatedly coalesce in, more or less, decisive conjunctures. These latter are, strictly speaking, unpredictable, and yet their results are not simply random or without lessons for subsequent practice. The fundamental structure in which the two elements are combined is characterized thus:

> To parody Kant, it could be said that without the mass movements the class struggle is empty (which is to say, it remains full of dominant ideology). However, without the class struggle [for which read organizational forms] the mass movements are blind (which is to say, they give rise to counterrevolution, even fascism, as much as to revolution). But there is no pre-established correspondence between these two forms, no universal "schematism." The true is then produced as the critical effect of the unpredictable that obliges the class struggle to *go back over* and correct its own representations (and its own myths). [172][22]

22. Balibar's note to this passage refers the reader to "Althusser's thesis of the 'overdetermination' and 'underdetermination' of contradictions" in the programmatic essay, "Contradiction and Overdetermination" (*Masses, Classes, Ideas*, 240, n19).

Pace Marx, Engels, and a long tradition of their inheritors (not excluding Althusser in some of his writings), there can be no Marxist theory of ideology, indeed no Marxist science of society as such. The work of revolution, so Balibar implies here, does not result from controlled theoretical prediction but from contingent practices whose field of action is constantly being reconfigured. Revolutionary politics is less a science than an art.

ART IS NOT RANKED AMONG THE IDEOLOGIES

Pierre Macherey's *A Theory of Literary Production*[23] extends the Althusserian project of "lecture symptomale" onto the terrain of literary art. Specifically, it poses a series of questions implicit in the science/ideology problematic that forms the core of Althusser's work: what kind of knowledge does literature (or art) produce; what is the precise relation between literature and ideology; and, correlatively, what is the status of literary criticism in the science/ideology relation? Macherey will adhere strictly to the canons of historical materialism, which hold that literature is a production of ideology; at the same time he will attempt to define literature's specific mode of material existence, that which distinguishes it from other ideological forms. His project aims to bridge the gap between formalism and Marxism, both at the level of theory and in exemplary analyses of literary texts. The essence of his conceptual innovation is conveniently summarized near the end of the book's lengthy theoretical overture, "Some Elementary Concepts":

> What we are seeking is analogous to that relationship which Marx acknowledges when he insists on seeing the material relations as being derived from the social infrastructure behind ideological phenomena, not in order to explain these phenomena as emanations from the infrastructure, which would amount to saying that the ideological is the economic in another form: whence the possibility of reducing the ideological to the economic. [*A Theory of Literary Production*, 92–93]

As Macherey goes on to explain (in a passage to which we shall return), the symmetry between Marx's conception of ideology and the concept of literature proposed here can be expressed as a proportion: Ideology/Economy = Text/History. On both sides of the equation, the first

23. Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).

term does not simply or directly express the second; and yet neither can they be completely divorced from each other. A noneconomistic theory of ideology derived from Marx (via Althusser) implies an antimimetic theory of aesthetic representation.

Macherey proceeds in an entirely orthodox Althusserian fashion, inaugurating his project to establish the conceptual foundations for literary science by delimiting its terms and defining its boundaries in relation to the ideological problematic with which it seeks to break. The latter is characterized as critical appreciation, the aim of which is to cultivate literary or aesthetic judgment, to produce educated subjects possessed of discriminating taste. To this still powerful model for reading and criticism, Macherey opposes the notion that the purpose of literary criticism is to produce knowledge, which involves, rather than a judgment concerning a text's aesthetic value, explanation of its "conditions and possibilities" (*A Theory of Literary Production*, 3). The "science of literary production" that Macherey proposes has, in the first instance, to produce its object; as in any science, the domain of investigation is never simply given. At stake here is the Althusserian offensive against empiricism, in this context the rejection of any concept of the text as immediately available to inspection. Against the far from moribund belief that texts are enclosed, self-sufficient, fully explicit, and the correlative (positivist) conviction that interpretation requires only that a reader approach the text without prejudice or prior conviction, Macherey asserts the irreducible complexity or unevenness of literary texts, what he terms in his essay on Balzac's *Les Paysans* their "disparate" nature. Texts for Macherey are necessarily and in principle overdetermined in their structure, hence also in their effects.

Flirting with the terminology of Russian Formalism and the later Bakhtin, Macherey attributes two principal properties to literature: autonomy and parody. What is it that literary texts parody? Macherey suggests three objects: ordinary language, previous literary forms, and ideology (*A Theory of Literary Production*, 52–53; 59). What distinguishes his conception of literature from formalism in the strict sense of that term is his locating the ultimate determination of literary texts in the third of these domains. The specificity of a given text emerges from posing questions to it on two distinct levels. On the one hand are those elements "properly interior to the work," what Macherey terms "a question of structure," or what traditional criticism would recognize as the work's themes. On the other hand are features that, while not purely external to the work, nonetheless demand inquiry that goes

beyond the work's own statements. These involve the work's position in "ideological history" as this is "present in the work in so far as the emergence of the work required this history, which is its only principle of reality and also supplies its means of expression" (93–94). How is this internalization of ideology realized? Macherey points directly here to his analysis of Jules Verne, but a somewhat clearer idea of the characteristic procedures involved can be obtained from his account of Lenin's essays on Tolstoy.

One might legitimately ask: of what value are Lenin's occasional pieces on art, not only for us, but for Lenin himself? These articles, written between 1908 and 1911, would seem on the face of it to be a distraction for a professional revolutionary whose immediate task was to comprehend the failure of the revolution of 1905. Macherey faces this objection head-on at the outset:

> Lenin's contribution to Marxist aesthetics was intimately connected with the elaboration of a scientific socialism. The literary articles were to play their part in this larger enterprise. In certain determinate circumstances, then, Lenin discovered a novel function for literary criticism within a general theoretical activity. . . . The general principle of Lenin's critical method is that the literary work only makes sense if considered in its relation to a determinate historical period. It derives its distinctive characteristics from this period, but it can also be used to illuminate the period. [107]

In assessing the possible paths forward for Russian revolutionary strategy, Lenin drew upon the historical lessons to be learned from Tolstoy's representation of the Tsarist social formation. "Art," Althusser says, "does not give us a *knowledge* in the *strict sense* . . . , but what it gives us does nevertheless maintain a certain *specific relationship* with knowledge" (*Lenin and Philosophy,* 222). Macherey's project attempts to delineate what this "specific relationship" of art to knowledge could be.

How, in Macherey's account, does Lenin proceed? The first task is to identify Tolstoy's historical period, viz., the material (including the ideological) conditions that produced Tolstoy's texts and in which they intervened. This spanned the years 1861–1905, the era in which, after the abolition of serfdom, the Russian peasantry emerged from feudalism and that witnessed, simultaneously, the birth of capitalism in Russia (*A Theory of Literary Production,* 108–10). Second, Lenin explores the complex ideological identifications that defined Tolstoy's

relation to this period. In the first instance, Tolstoy's social origins dictate his "spontaneous" representation of the landed aristocracy. But secondly, as a consequence of the "social mobility" he could achieve as a writer, he programmatically recommended an ideology "not 'naturally' his own, by looking to the peasant" (113–14). Tolstoy's work thus presents a series of ideological contradictions that establish a double relation: on the one hand to history (the real), on the other to ideology (the representation of the real) (115). The theoretical problem, Macherey recognizes, is to determine the way in which this double relation is made to appear in Tolstoy's texts.

The key to Lenin's analyses lies in his metaphors: mirror, reflection, expression (118). Contrary to what a too-hasty reading would conclude, these do not indicate his commitment to a naive theory of mimesis; rather, they point to that mechanism of figuration which Freud termed "considerations of representability" (*Rücksicht auf Darstellbarkeit*). Macherey writes:

> The secret of the mirror is to be sought in the form of its reflections; how does it show historical reality, by what paradox does it make visible its own blindness without actually seeing itself? . . . The work of Tolstoy is itself an assemblage. And, just as Freud has established that a dream has to be deconstructed into its constitutive elements before it can be interpreted, Lenin states that the literary text must be studied in the same way—not in the pursuit of a factitious totality, but according to its real and necessary discontinuity. [122]

But isolating the elements is only the first step. Macherey will argue that the object of scientific investigation in Tolstoy's texts is no individual, historically discrete ideology, nor any single social class. Scientific criticism investigates the structure or system of the text that produces a determinate contradiction. The contradiction produced in and by the text opens the door to the historical truth that the text, because of its own ideological limitations, cannot state openly.

IS IT SIMPLE TO BE A MARXIST IN PHILOSOPHY?

Macherey is not principally a theoretician of literature. Yet for an English-speaking audience, this is how he must perforce appear. His only two books, and the majority of his essays, to have been translated into English either develop theoretical positions on literature or engage in practical criticism of literary texts. The most recent of these, *The Object of Literature*, reopens the theoretical problematic inaugurated

by *A Theory of Literary Production:* What is the object to be studied, analyzed, explained in a yet-to-be-constructed science of literature? This early project was indicted for its unremitting formalism, while the Macherey of the 1970s was held to have succumbed to the opposite error of functionalist reductionism. Doubtless, both charges will resurface in response to *The Object of Literature.* Warrant for each can be adduced. We could turn, for example, to the formalist Macherey who appears virtually without adornment in his essay on Céline:

> We must abandon the attempt to look behind literature's statements for the other discourse of which it is the distorted and deformed expression, and which constitutes its authentic meaning. For if literature does deal with truth, the truth in question has no value other than that conferred upon it by literature. It is the truth of its style. Literature establishes a real stylistics of depth rather than a metaphysics, and stylistics is in itself a partial substitute for philosophy.[24]

Or we could consider the following lapidary observation from the programmatic essay that brings the book to a close: "In the final instance, all literary texts have as their object—and this seems to be their real 'philosophy'—the non-adhesion of language to language, the gap that constantly divides what we say from what we say about it and what we think about it." From Roman Jakobson to Roland Barthes, the specificity of literary language has been the mark of that "literariness" which Macherey has elsewhere been at great pains to deny is even a proper category for articulating literature's objectivity.

But these are not Macherey's only words. In another place he could write of literature and language (in collaboration with Etienne Balibar):

> The objectivity of literature is its necessary place within the determinate processes and reproduction of the contradictory linguistic practices of the common tongue, in which the effectivity of the ideology of bourgeois education is realised.
>
> This siting of the problem abolishes the old idealist question, "What is literature?," which is not a question about its objective determinance, but a question about its universal essence, human and artistic. It abolishes it because it shows us directly the material function of literature, inserted within a process which literature cannot determine even though it is indispensable to it.[25]

24. Macherey, *The Object of Literature,* trans. David Macey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 132.

25. Balibar and Macherey, "On Literature as an Ideological Form," trans. Ian McLeod et al., *Oxford Literary Review* 3/1 (1978): reprinted in *Untying the Text: A Post-*

Plainly it is possible to construe Macherey's pronouncements on literary language as other than formalist, viz., in the materialist spirit in which he certainly intended them. There is indeed such a thing as "literary language," distinct from and yet derivative of ordinary language. Its existence issues less from the intrinsic properties of literary texts, than from a system of social stratification that trains certain readers to identify (and identify with) literature, while consigning others to the lower ranks of mere users of the *lingua franca*. There is no inherent contradiction between the ostensible formalism of the early (and also the more recent) Macherey and the sociological criticism Macherey produced in the mid-1970s. The task of formal analysis is to expose the contradictions in a text's linguistic practices that sociological research demonstrates to be constitutive of literature as an ideological apparatus.

Compatible, then, with these two earlier Machereys, *The Object of Literature* nevertheless stages the literary problematic somewhat differently. It brings together in a single speculative project the philosophical and the literary, as if Macherey had sought here to unite the two poles of his *oeuvre*. These essays all concern the ways in which literature and philosophy, representations and concepts, are intimately entwined in a range of texts from Sade and Mme de Staël to Queneau and Foucault. The relationship between these two domains is conveniently summarized in the following passage from the essay on Hugo:

> By comparing texts borrowed from Marx or Tocqueville with texts written by Sue or Hugo, and by demonstrating that comparable schemas of representation are at work in them, we are not attempting to deny the originality of their content by arguing that, ultimately, everything is mere literature; the point is to call attention to that content by showing how fictional texts can, in their own way, not only convey but produce forms of speculation which are directly expressive of a determinate historical reality. They allow us both to understand it and to imagine it. [*The Object of Literature*, 109]

The concept of literature adumbrated here is in line both with the so-called "formalist Macherey" and with the much-vilified passage from Althusser's "Letter on Art" that surely inspired it. Literature is not

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Structuralist Reader, ed. Robert Young (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 86. The French original of this text was published as the introduction to Renée Balibar, *Les français fictifs* (Paris: Hachette, 1974).

history (or science or philosophy), but it stands in a quite particular relation to the historical materials out of which it produces its specific mode of existence.

What is the nature of that relation? Macherey remains an utterly impenitent Althusserian on this point, which he puts most directly near the end of *The Object of Literature:*

> The problematical thought which runs through all literary texts is rather like the philosophical consciousness of a historical period. The role of literature is to say what a period thinks of itself. The age of literature, from Sade to Céline, does project an ideological message which demands to be believed on the basis of the actual evidence. If taken literally, the message seems to be patently inconsistent and incoherent. It projects an outline sketch of its own limits, and that sketch is inseparable from the introduction of a relativist perspective. What, from this point of view, is the philosophical contribution of literature? It makes it possible to relocate all the discourses of philosophy, in its accredited forms, within the historical element which makes them the results of chance and circumstances, the products of a pathetic and magnificent throw of the dice. [234]

No one trained in the history of philosophy is likely to miss the way in which a certain Hegelianism has been turned on its head in this passage. According to Macherey, it is not philosophy that paints its grey on grey at the end of an epoch, but literature that exhibits the self-consciousness of an age. In a much-cited—if seldom understood—observation, Hegel opined that art "is and remains for us a thing of the past."[26] Macherey takes Hegel's point and gives it a characteristically Althusserian twist. Art is a thing of the past in the same way that historical science can be said to expose to view the ideological (and other) structures of a social form on its way to extinction. The literature of the bourgeois epoch—in Macherey's view there has never been any other—brings that epoch's ideological contradictions into plain view. We are not so far here from Marx's and Engels's celebration of Balzac, except that, as Macherey remarks elsewhere, it is not only generic realism that is capable of laying bare the contradictions of capitalist society: "The idea of reflection correctly understood teaches us that a product can very well be objective, i.e., determined by material reality, without being exact, i.e., conforming to this reality or to our idea of

26. G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art,* trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 11.

reality: Kafka is no less objective than Thomas Mann, even if he is differently so."[27]

If there ever was a functionalist Macherey—a description I hope to have shown is open to challenge—he would appear to have been given his quietus in *The Object of Literature.* The ambiguities and contradictions that admittedly adhere to the term "Althusserian" (evident in the first instance in Althusser's writings themselves) cannot, for all that, disguise the fact that the research program launched in *For Marx* and *Reading "Capital"* has been continued on a variety of fronts by his first students and collaborators. That program, which insisted on, among other things, the necessity for any science to produce its object of investigation, is carried forward in *The Object of Literature,* with results that will ultimately be judged not by this book alone, but by the future research that it inspires. I shall hazard the prediction that this project is unlikely to be without issue.

27. Macherey, "The Problem of Reflection," *Sub-stance* 15 (1976): 15.