

## Part III

### *The historical interactions of Marxism and psychoanalysis*

#### *Sex and the Russian Revolution*

An effect of revolution and indeed of social movements of sufficient depth and scale is that mental and intellectual life are convulsed in ways that previously were unimaginable: ideas deemed 'foreign' before, find a new home; theories developed in the cultural undergrowth of repressive states erupt into popular consciousness; and what once was strange and feared becomes familiar and influential. In the intellectual ferment that revolution creates, new creative *vistas* open up that overthrow the long-accepted modes of expressive output. This was true of revolutionary Russia during the 1920s.

New cultural movements emerged - such as *Proletkult* (striving to create a proletarian culture that would break decisively and immediately from bourgeois culture), the Scythians (advocating a 'Revolution of the Spirit', and attached to the left Socialist Revolutionaries, rather than to the Bolsheviks) and Futurism - that wedded themselves to the Revolution, albeit to different aspects of it. The Futurists particularly, the first artistic movement to attach themselves to the Bolsheviks, flourished throughout the 1920s.

*Iconoclastic towards the past, they and their most famous representative, the poet and playwright Vladimir Mayakovsky, considered themselves the vanguard of the new culture to be created by the revolution.*<sup>1</sup>

Along with novelty in the arts, new ways of organising personal life were thrown up by the Revolution. The sheer progressivism of the Bolshevik government became evident quickly after it took power in October 1917. The emancipation of women in its social, legal, political and sexual aspects, was a central concern. Issues that arose from or overlapped with questions of gender and sex were framed socially, rather than being medicalised or seen in terms of biological necessity. With respect to medical practices specifically, socially oriented types of practice were adopted. Under the Commissar for Health, Nikolai Semashko, the pre-Revolutionary tradition of social medicine associated with pioneering figures such as A. P. Dobroslavin and G. V. Khlopin became properly established.<sup>2</sup> Under the Code of Laws of the Russian Revolution, drafted within weeks of the October Revolution, the Czarist 'anti-sodomy' laws were repealed. The age of consent for same-sex sexual liaison was reduced to fourteen years.<sup>3</sup> So, where it was a crime in other parts of Europe carrying sentences of up to five years in Germany and 'life' in England, in revolutionary Russia in this period consenting same-sex sexual activity between men, from having been fiercely repressed before the revolution, became legal.

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<sup>1</sup> Rosenthal, b., g. (1993), 'Marxism and Spirituality: The Debate in Early Twentieth-Century Russia' in Page, B. B. (1993), *Marxism and Spirituality: An International Anthology*, Bergin and Garvey. P. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Kon. I. (1995), *The Sexual Revolution in Russia: Sexual Politics from the Age of the Czars to Today*, The Free Press. P. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Healey, D. (2001), *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia*, University of Chicago Press. P. 120.

Popular attitudes to sex were also a part of this ferment, especially amongst the young of the urban centres. Indeed, during the 1920s the 'sex question' was to become an intensely debated topic in all of its ideological, political and literary aspects. Moreover, the subject of sex resonated with the social turbulence of the 1920s *via* the notion of a political 'collective body' that served as its ideological metaphor.<sup>4</sup> After the 1905 Revolution a new fascination with sexual relations that was evident in literary outputs, newspapers, diaries and correspondences had fed into the emergence of a new liberal-civic culture in the metropolitan centres.<sup>5</sup> In 1917, an immediate consequence of the October Revolution was a surge of interest in matters of sexual life from young workers and students.<sup>6</sup> The revolutionary idealism regarding sex was evident also in the early policy of the Bolshevik government, contrasting starkly with the horrors of illegal abortions and the abandonment of illegitimate children that had characterised working-class and peasant life before it.

*"Deliverance from this hell was of immediate importance to the revolution. Only weeks after seizing power, with the country slipping into civil war, the Bolsheviks began to institute new laws and codes that reshaped the meaning and function of the family. Church weddings were no longer recognized. Divorce could be quickly granted to one party without explanation. Entering into or ending a marriage meant simply a reshuffling of paper. Doctors could perform legal abortions. Because illegitimacy was no longer a social category, a man was legally responsible for all his children, not merely those fathered in marriage. Later, cohabitation or de facto marriages were recognized as legal unions. The goal was to give women equal status in marriage and to protect them if a union dissolved; to ensure that no one was trapped in a union that had gone wrong; to allow women to terminate a pregnancy if they could not support a child (at this time the state could not always assume charge); and to safeguard all children, regardless of the condition of their birth. Sex was to be recognized in terms of both procreation and pleasure, and it was to be treated openly. A campaign of sexual education would focus on contraception, hygiene, and preventing venereal disease."*<sup>7</sup>

It was during the years of the New Economic Policy however, between the end of 'war communism' and the abrupt impositions of economic centralisation under Stalin by the late 1920s, that we find most evidence of a new climate of sexual liberation amongst the young. Despite the need for the regulation of family life, the responsibility for children, the exhaustions of the civil war period and its effect upon the nervous condition of thousands of young workers<sup>8</sup>, the difficulties of accessing contraception and so on, experimental attitudes

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<sup>4</sup> This is a theme explored by Eric Naiman (1997), tracing as he does the sexualised discursive patterns that inscribed the texts of contemporary literature and popular culture of the 1920s. Naiman, E. (1997), *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology*, Princeton University Press.

<sup>5</sup> The imbrications of the 'sexual release' of the professional classes in Russia, with the stirrings of political tolerance and democratic sentiment is the subject of Laura Engelstein's 1992 book, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siecle Russia*. [Ithaca: Cornell University Press].

<sup>6</sup> Carleton, G., (2005), *Sexual Revolution in Bolshevik Russia* *Sexual Revolution in Bolshevik Russia*, University of Pittsburgh Press. P.2.

<sup>7</sup> Carleton, G., (2005), *Sexual Revolution in Bolshevik Russia* *Sexual Revolution in Bolshevik Russia*, University of Pittsburgh Press. P. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Naiman, E. and Kiaer, C. (2006), *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside*. Indiana University Press. Pp. 154-182.

of sexual freedom and free love were influential amongst students, such as those of the Sverdlov Communist University. The attractions of unfettered individualistic sexuality for young workers attending university was in fact seen as a problem within the Soviet government during these years; raising concerns about a perceived new culture of essentially bourgeois self-indulgence that turned the individual away from the tasks of the Revolution.<sup>9</sup> However, even amongst sections of the politically austere Komosol youth movement, such ideas were sufficiently current to provoke controversy and eventually dissension in its ranks.

*'Sciences of the mind' in Russia: the impact of revolution*

With respect to understanding the mind and human behaviour, the theorising that had dominated Russian psychology in the years leading up to the 1917 Revolution derived from the work of the 19th Century neuroscientist, Ivan Sechenov. Sechenov had concentrated his scientific work upon physical reflex actions and had conflated mental processes with these. This emphasis upon outward and observable action and reaction made Sechenov's work a precursor to the behaviourism of later post-Revolution psychologists such as Ivan Pavlov and Vladimir Becheterev. This methodological insistence upon observable behaviour would later eclipse those types of psychology that looked instead to subjective inner states of the psyche. By the mid-1930s, Soviet psychological sciences operated under a state imperative that productivity, industry and the intensification of labour were the ultimate aims of the human sciences. Similarly, in the study of human movement, whilst Nikolai Bernstein made important breakthroughs in the study of physical reflexes, his achievements were celebrated within the Soviet Union for their contribution to the understanding of biophysical functionality and fine motor control during manual labour.

Despite this dominant behaviourist paradigm, for a decade and a half a new generation of Soviet psychologists pioneered the exploration of the inner world of the psyche. In the wake of the Revolution, it was this opening up of the theoretical horizons of psychology that made possible the introduction of Freudian psychoanalysis and more generally an enlightenment in the study of human behaviour. The full significance of the Revolution and the opportunities it afforded however, were not immediately apparent to the most established figures international psychoanalytical movement. In his 1921 report to the Viennese Psychoanalytical Society, the most prominent figure in pre-revolutionary Russian psychoanalysis, Nikolai Osipov, gave a picture of a movement in disarray.

*"...in fact it has been impossible to collect and publish accounts either of proceedings of meetings or of papers read and discussed. Scientific journals have entirely ceased to appear during the last three years; the only journal concerning itself with Freudian conceptions, Psychotherapy, stopped publication in 1917 [sic] owing to financial difficulties."<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> Halfin, I. (2003), *Terror in my Soul: Communist Autobiographies on Trial*. Harvard University Press. Pp. 96-147.

<sup>10</sup> Miller, M. (1998), *Freud and the Bolsheviks: Psychoanalysis in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union*. Yale University Press. P. 54

What Osipov could not have appreciated, having already moved to Prague at the time of his report, was how the terrain had changed for any discipline that came within the broad family of the 'human sciences'.

The great name of experimental psychology at the time of the October Revolution was Konstantin Kornilov. Kornilov's work, like that of the behaviourists, concerned outwardly observable physical and mental reactions. Kornilov however incorporated theoretical elements that made his approach distinct from the basic behaviourist model. Human actions for Kornilov, could not be conflated with physiological processes; human action was not seen as a simple matter of responsive reflexes to environmental stimuli. Rather, in Kornilov's *reactology*, a dialectic occurred between the external world and the interior world. This interior was no longer a merely an effect of objective causal factors. It was active in its own right, albeit in interaction with the external processes.

This view of human consciousness as being active and having a generative character, rather than passively reflective of objects outside of it, did have its precursors in a pre-revolutionary tradition of Russian psychology. Within the psychological sciences an Idealistic theoretical paradigm that attributed a mental activity with a dynamic that is independent of external reality, had become established with the founding of the Institute of Psychology of Moscow in 1912 and in the work of Troitski and Grot.<sup>11</sup> The Institute's founder, Chelpanov (Kornilov's immediate predecessor) brought a student, G. Shpet, to contribute to its work. Shpet was later to become a strong influence on a young Lev Vygotsky, in particular emphasising the roles of language and culture in the formation of conscious life.<sup>12</sup>

In the emerging area of child development then, the opening up the psychical interior had made possible Vygotsky's theoretical speculations and empirical work. In Vygotsky's theoretical model, intrapersonal experience is the result of the meeting of mental processes that emerge from within the psyche and of those that have their origins in its interactions with the objective world. The processes involved are mediated by cultural artefacts, and crucially language. The infant, argued Vygotsky, develops mentally along two lines: linguistic intelligence; and non-linguistic intelligence. In the first phase of language acquisition, the very young child develops a 'social language' that mimics what she hears in her world. Later the non-linguistic intelligence that she develops crosses the linguistic line, and in-so-doing she begins to *think* linguistically, eventually mastering her own inner language or 'ego-speech'. In this developmental movement, the language that she interiorises brings with it the social and historical context that she inhabits, so rooting her in the world. For Vygotsky this led to the development of 'higher mental processes', as the child's learning made possible the growth of her cognitive framework; this learning itself facilitated by the framework provided for it by her social environment, or 'zone of proximal development'.<sup>13</sup> Vygotsky was to alter his theoretical orientations towards a psychological 'objectivism' after 1932 as the field of psychology became increasing politicised. During the 1920s however, his work was characterised by a focus upon subjectivity in learning and child development. Affective

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<sup>11</sup> Gonzáles-Rey, F. (2015), 'Marxism, Subjectivity and Cultural Historical Psychology: Moving Forward on an Unfinished Legacy', *Annual Review of Critical Psychology (Marxism and Psychology)*, Vol. 12. P. 27

<sup>12</sup> Miller, M. (1998). P. 28

<sup>13</sup> Vygotsky, S., Lev, (1986), *Thought and Language*, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Vygotsky, S., Lev, (1978), *The Mind in Society. The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press

factors, personality, fantasy and imagination all feature in this phase of Vygotsky's output. The concept of 'perezhivanie' captured moments of 'deep learning' which transform the person's mental horizons; signs are active elements in complex and discursive subjective processes; and the notion of 'sense' as distinct from 'meaning' represented the world of feeling conjured up by a word, though not expressed in its formal definition. For the Marxist Vygotsky in this period, social-historical processes provided the cultural mediations that made possible the psychological growth of the child.

By the early 1930s a third position in psychology had emerged. Along with behaviourist 'reflexology' of figures such as Pavlov and Bechterev, and the 'reactology' of Kornilov, there had also emerged the 'dialectical-materialist psychology' of Rubinstein, who became the Chair of psychology at the Hertzen Pedagogical Institute of Leningrad in 1930. For Rubinstein, consciousness and outwardly observable activity formed a unity. Consciousness could not be understood in terms of mental processes that are independent of the objective world, but rather as operating in continuous conjunction with it. Rubinstein's approach was to become a dominant paradigm in Soviet psychology throughout the 1930s, and most of the 1940s. In 1948 however, he was ousted from his academic post as 'Pavlovianism' was imposed by bureaucratic fiat as the new orthodoxy for a 'Marxist psychology'.

### *The rise of soviet psychoanalysis*

The flowering of interest in the 'internal life' of the mind in experimental and theoretical psychology, as well as public interest in the 'sex-question' during the 1920s also fertilised a new movement in psychoanalysis. The concerns of the Russian psychoanalytical community however, were no longer those predominantly of personal neurosis recorded in a catalogue of individual analytical case studies - often of members of the minor aristocracy. Rather, as Russian psychoanalysis was to develop over the next ten years, its concerns would be those of social-psychopathology, of education and of social settlement. Its motivations would become rooted in humanist-rationalist enlightenment on the one hand, and in state imperatives on the other. Osipov in his 1921 report to the official international movement was unaware of psychoanalytical work that was in fact becoming established and beginning to flourish. In Petrograd, Tatiana Rosenthal for instance, chief physician at the Institute of Brain Pathology - and, unlike Osipov, a supporter of the Revolution - developed therapeutic techniques for educational work with learning-disabled children that drew upon the Freudian and Adlerian schools of psychoanalysis. She was also to employ psychoanalytical insights to literary analysis in her 1920 publication that explored 'the unconscious' in the worlds of the characters in Dostoevsky's novellas.

By 1921 Moscow had also become the home to a newly formed psychoanalytical group striving to understand the roots of human creativity. The leading figures in this group, principally Ivan Ermakov and Moshe Wulff, had published previously in Freud's own journal and so were known in the West. The group soon attracted new members and by 1922 had refashioned itself as the Russian Psychoanalytic Society. As it grew, its concerns became more diverse. So as we have seen, along with the continuing engagement with the roots of artistic expression and clinical analysis there was amongst the newer members an interest in the theory and practice of education and of child development. Otto Schmidt, who was

responsible for the pedagogical work of the group was now working with young researchers such as Pavel Blonskii, Stanislav Shatskii and also Vygotsky.

Independently of developments in Moscow a second centre of psychoanalytical work had by 1922 become established in the town of Kazan. Under the energetic leadership of Alexander Luria the work of the group spanned a similar range of medical, psychological and artistic interests as that of the Moscow society. By the Spring of 1923, the leading figures of the Kazan group had taken up an invitation to move to Moscow to join the burgeoning psychoanalytical community there. Luria himself took up a position in the Moscow Institute of Psychology. Here he entered into a seminal collaboration with Vygotsky and Alexei Leontiev who was later to develop the cultural-historical model of the analysis of human behaviour. Luria's new position was effectively a government appointment. Growing in numbers certainly, but also in professional status, the society had by the end of 1922 become the Institute for Psychoanalysis.

By establishing a properly constituted training programme, curriculum and clinic (all required for official recognition by the International Psychoanalytical Association) the Institute for Psychoanalysis had made Moscow the third centre of the international psychoanalytical movement, along with Vienna and Berlin (soon to be followed by London, Budapest and New York). This official status had been won in the face of stiff resistance from the many leading figures around Freud who viewed the Bolshevik government with deep suspicion. Indeed, it had only been with the intervention of Freud himself that the misgivings of the most avowedly anti-Marxist figures of the international society had been overcome.<sup>14</sup> The presence in Moscow of Sabina Spielrein who had been a member of the society in Vienna and whom Freud knew well seems likely to have been a factor in his decision to grant full status to the Moscow group. So also was the fact that by the end of 1923, Russian membership represented one eighth that of the psychoanalytical movement worldwide.<sup>15</sup>

The Institute ran introductory courses on psychoanalysis as well as courses on children's psychoanalysis and literary analysis. An ambitious publishing programme was launched that aimed to make available in Russian all of the most important psychoanalytical works. An out-clinic was established to which any and all Russian citizens could obtain access: a reversal of the necessarily elitist character of Austrian and German psychoanalytical practice that relied upon a paying clientele. A clinic for psychologically disturbed children was also established. This was important in the context of a Russian society emerging from the trauma of civil war. Many thousands of children had been displaced during the Civil War years and many had lost their families. These children, the *Priorsbrinskii*, were surviving in the tenements of Moscow's suburbs. Their rehabilitation and settlement posed a significant challenge to the Soviet state. Asja Lacis, a Latvian Bolshevik, had been charged with this task and achieved remarkable results with precious little in the way of resources. A clinic that specialised in children's therapy using the methods of European psychoanalysis in this context was seen as offering something important in the struggling socialist republic.

The Institute was also remarkable in becoming the first state sponsored psychoanalytical institute. The process by which this came about was not straightforward. Key to the success

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<sup>14</sup> Miller, M. (1998). P. 59

<sup>15</sup> Miller, M. (1998). P. 58

of the application for state support would be the acceptance of the State Scientific Soviet (SSS) and its pedagogical arm. In their report of September 1922 to the scientific-pedagogical committee of the SSS the Moscow group highlighted the contributions that psychoanalysis had made and could make to medicine, psychology, sociology and the problems of everyday life. They further stressed its relevance to “artistic creativity, labor relations, religious and philosophical formulations” and argued that “in psychiatry, psychoanalysis provides new and fruitful possibilities ...”.<sup>16</sup> This appeal for state endorsement and hoped-for support was followed by a submission of the Charter of the Psychoanalytic Society that outlined its extensive ongoing and planned clinical, pedagogical and publishing activities. It also explicitly confirmed the Society’s administrative (and by implication, political) subordination to the government. This latter element of the Society’s appeal for state support highlights a tension that was inevitable in the conjectural context of revolutionary Russian society in the 1920s. Ideological work was inevitably linked to the solving of practical problems in this period: not least in the areas of psychology and education. Moreover, any position taken within the human sciences had to establish its relationship to Marxist theory and any theoretical stance that could be interpreted as in some senses rivalling Marxism, would find itself caught up in a political game. This was truer still of interpretations of human behaviour premised upon the individualism and bourgeois prejudices intrinsic to many of Freud’s formulations. One consequence of this situation was the closing down in 1923 of the Institute’s children’s home that had been run by Vera Schmidt and Sabina Spielrein. Notwithstanding this setback, a high level of relative tolerance remained, allowing the psychoanalysts to continue their efforts for the rest of their programme. The Institute’s publishing through the State Publishing House for example continued unabated, with fifteen volumes of key psychoanalytical works appearing between 1922 and 1923. This publishing fed an eager and expanding readership with each volume rapidly selling out.

### *The demise of soviet psychanalysis*

The clinical and training activities of the staff and associates of the Institute continued through the 1920s. However, by the middle of the decade the relationship between psychoanalysis and Marxism had become an issue of increasingly intense theoretical debate. By this time the defensive position of Revolution internationally was beginning to shape and distort ideological positions in all areas of public life. Psychoanalysis, straddling the worlds of psychiatric practice and medical science on the one hand and ideology and politics on the other, was particularly vulnerable in this situation. Standing within a tradition that had originated in the West and at the high point of *fin de siècle* European society, with its associations of decadence and literary and philosophical irrationalism, the Freudians were to become increasingly politically isolated. Still, it is noteworthy that up until 1925, theoretically sophisticated articles defending psychoanalytical perspectives in the analyses of social behaviour and religion appeared in leading Bolshevik journals such as *Under the Banner of Marxism* and *The Press and the Revolution*.<sup>17</sup> That said, the increasingly polemical and aggressive tenor of the articles opposing ‘Freudism’ from 1924 onwards should also be noted as the prelude to the onslaught that was soon to follow. By 1929 Wilhelm Reich was to declare

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<sup>16</sup> Miller, M. (1998). P. 63

<sup>17</sup> Miller, M. (1998). Pp. 71-77

that “It is impossible to speak of a “psychoanalytical movement” existing in the Soviet Union ...”<sup>18</sup>

That psychoanalysis - and the schools of thought, clinical practice and pedagogy that were associated with it and that in many senses existed in tension with Marxist orthodoxies - was allowed to exist and indeed flourish at all in the early 1920s, was made possible by a political tolerance emanating from the most senior levels of the Bolshevik government. In the case of Lenin the evidence is mainly inferential. The reports of the pedagogical arm of the State Scientific Soviet for example, went directly to the Commissar for the Enlightenment and Education, Anatoly Lunacharsky. Lunacharsky, who was on personal terms with Lenin, would have had to approve any decisions regarding the Russian Psychoanalytic Institute. There is also the high governmental level of many of the supporters of psychoanalysis and contributors to the theoretical defence of psychoanalysis to consider.<sup>19</sup> Otto Schmidt for example, was a leading member of the Institute as well as being director of the State Publishing House at the time that it produced The Psychoanalytic and Psychological Library of Freud’s published works. Lenin, receiving regular digest reports from all the sections of government, could not but have known about these developments. For Trotsky, who had been acquainted with the psychoanalytic circles during his time in Vienna, we can say much more. In a 1923 letter to Pavlov he describes himself as being impressed by the Freudian approaches to psychological problems.<sup>20</sup> Other explicit statements on the issue suggest a supportive intellectual attitude to psychoanalytical theory on Trotsky’s part. For instance, whilst Freud’s formulations could be ‘exaggerated’ and ‘paradoxical’ regarding the ‘sex-element in the forming of individual character and social consciousness’, they were also ‘significant’ and potentially ‘fertile’.<sup>21</sup> Psychoanalytical theory was, he stated, compatible with materialism.<sup>22</sup> As to its relationship to Marxism “It would be too simple and crude ... to turn one’s back on it.”<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, transformation of the human psyche would be central to any future communist society.

*“There can really be no doubt about the fact that the humans of the future will be communitarian citizens, much more interesting and attractive beings with a very different psyche from ours”<sup>24</sup>*

Trotsky’s attitude to psychoanalysis can be broadly characterised as ‘scientific’: he regarded the ideas of Freud and the psychoanalysts as having a quasi-scientific hypothetical status comparable (reflecting the science of his day) to that of electrons, ions and relativity<sup>25</sup> For Trotsky certainly, they were not to be discarded for reasons of party stricture.

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<sup>18</sup> Reich, W. (2012), *Sex-Pol: Essays 1929-1934*, Verso. P. 77

<sup>19</sup> Miller, M. (1998). Pp. 87-88

<sup>20</sup> Tögel, C. (1989), Lenin und die Rezeption der Psychoanalyse in der Sowjetunion der Zwanziger Jahre. *Sigmund Freud House Bulletin*, 13. Pp. 16-27. Cited in Páramo-Ortega, R. (2015), Marxism and Psychoanalysis: Attempting a Brief Review of an Old Problem, *Annual Review of Critical Psychology (Marxism and Psychology)*, Vol. 12. P. 37

<sup>21</sup> Trotsky, L. (2009), *Literature and Revolution*, Haymarket. P. 76

<sup>22</sup> Miller, M. (1989). P. 87

<sup>23</sup> Trotsky quoted in Miller, M. (1989). P. 87

<sup>24</sup> Trotsky quoted in Páramo-Ortega, R. (2015). P. 37

<sup>25</sup> Trotsky, L. (2009). P. 227

Finally, as late as 1932, in a speech delivered to the Danish Social Democratic student group in Copenhagen, we see a now exiled Trotsky, celebrating the importance of Freud's work in presaging the new dawn of a future communist humanity.

*"Psycho-analysis, with the inspired hand of Sigmund Freud, has lifted the cover of the well which is poetically called the "soul". And what has been revealed? Our conscious thought is only a small part of the work of the dark psychic forces. Learned divers descend to the bottom of the ocean and there take photographs of mysterious fishes. Human thought, descending to the bottom of its own psychic sources must shed light on the most mysterious driving forces of the soul and subject them to reason and to will."*<sup>26</sup>

The surge of interest in psychoanalytical thinking measured in public readership and state support for the professional and literary activities of the Institute was brief. From the mid-1920s onwards the climate became colder for any working psychologists, clinical practitioners and theoreticians associated with the Freudian school. Certainly, by late 1920's, the situation had become very difficult indeed for such figures and for most, untenable.

By 1925 the figure of Stalin was looming large within the Soviet leadership. Lenin had died the year before. Trotsky had been sidelined into essentially technical work. Collaborating with Nikolai Bukharin and reacting to the defeat of revolutions abroad, Stalin had formulated the doctrine of 'Socialism in One Country'. The formal adoption of this slogan in January 1926 inaugurated an era of brutal industrial realignment. This was driven by an intensive process of state-capital accumulation and of forced collectivisation of the peasantry in large parts of Russia. The centralisation of political power required for this new direction now reached into all areas of intellectual and professional life. In this situation the 'science' of any given area of activity was increasingly subordinated to political imperatives. In the area of biological and agricultural research, to cite one notorious and well-known case, Trofim Lysenko's promotion of agricultural policy premised on the idea that vernalisation (the artificial cold treatment that triggers Winter wheat to grow in the Spring) is based upon a heritable trait (which it is not) on the Lamarckian model was given state endorsement because of its convenient ideological overtones. By the early 1930s Lysenko himself had been afforded the status of a hero of Soviet science despite the catastrophic implications of his doctrine for Russian agricultural production.<sup>27</sup> This politicisation of scientific debate spelt the end for psychoanalysis in the Soviet Union. By the time of the 1930 Congress on Human Behaviour, personal associations with Freudianism in particular were professionally dangerous. Speech after speech hammered home the message that the purpose of psychological work was that of socialist construction: to produce a 'socialist psychology' grounded in the categories of Marxism. Theoretical work premised upon an *integration* of psychoanalysis with Marxism, or upon notions of 'compatibility', was ruled out of court: reasoned debate was over.

Another motivation for the assault on psychoanalysis lay in state attitudes to sex and sexuality. The stabilisation of the family became an over-riding priority for the new Russian 'socialism'. Talk of free sexual relations, the need to overcome the repressive functions of

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<sup>26</sup> (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1932/11/oct.htm>)

<sup>27</sup> In 1941 he was given the State Stalin Prize for science.

the family and acceptance of homosexuality as an authentic expression of love, were now condemned in literature and in government pronouncements. The central concern with sex within Freudian thinking meant that it came squarely into the firing zone for the new generation of Soviet ideologists. In these circumstances individuals began to look to their own survival. Some, such as Zalkind, defected to the anti-Freudian camp.<sup>28</sup> Others such as Luria and Vygotsky retreated in to the safer field of *pedology* (the study of child behaviour and development). On that basis, active psychological research did continue into the early 1930s. Vygotsky in particular was to produce some of the most innovative theoretical formulations of his generation that were only fully appreciated with the re-issuing of his works after the death of Stalin and their translation and publication in the West. Still, by the end of that decade, notwithstanding the occasional respectful gesture towards its insights in official encyclopaedias<sup>29</sup>, psychoanalysis as a recognised professional discipline in Russia and its affiliated republics was dead.

### *Western Marxism and the 'turn to Freud'*

As the Russian psychoanalysts became increasingly - and dangerously – politically isolated from the mid-1920s onwards, interest in the potential for fruitful exchanges between Marxism and Freudianism was developing in other parts of Europe. In the early 1920s in Austria a young Wilhelm Reich had established a professional relationship with Sigmund Freud. In 1922 Reich took up a position at Freud's psychoanalytic outpatient clinic in Vienna, the Ambulatorium, and by 1924 had become its assistant director. In the same year he became director of training at Freud's Psychoanalytical Institute. Between 1924 and 1930 Reich was to conduct pioneering work in sex-counselling in the working-class districts of Vienna. As part of his 'Sex-Pol'<sup>30</sup> work he founded six clinics in the City and organised a mobile service that took sex-counselling advice out to its suburbs. This work had two consequential effects for Reich. The first was intellectual. His observations of the squalor of many of the working-class districts and of the mentally scarred and emotionally traumatised state of many working-class men and women as a result of the war, led him to focus upon the role of social environment as a cause of neurosis, rather than looking exclusively to purely biographical and internal factors. The second effect for Reich was reputational. The advice offered by Reich's clinics was entirely free of moral tone or inhibition. The philosophy was based upon an acknowledgement of unrepressed sexual experience; and the support given was practical and prophylactic in nature with on-the-spot contraceptive fittings for women. In Catholic Austria this was courageous and provides an early glimpse of Reich's personal radicalism that would tip over all too tragically into iconoclasm and borderline insanity in his final years. In the later 1920s Reich's Marxism was converging with his commitment to sex-therapy and psychoanalysis. In 1928 he joined the Austrian Communist Party following the shooting down of demonstrators during the Viennese workers' revolt of July 1927. In 1929 he had published his 'Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis'<sup>31</sup> in the bilingual (German/Russian) journal *Under the Banner of Marxism*. It was during his trip to the Soviet Union that same year however, that he became finally convinced of the need to achieve a synthesis of Marxism and

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<sup>28</sup> This did not in fact save Zalkind himself who continued to be hounded for his earlier associations with psychoanalysis, disappearing some time after the closing down of the field of pedology in 1936.

<sup>29</sup> Miller, M. (1989). P. 91

<sup>30</sup> 'Sex-Pol' was an abbreviation for the German Society of Proletarian Sexual Politics.

<sup>31</sup> Reich, W. (1972), *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis*, Socialist Reproduction.

psychoanalysis. We will return to Reich shortly to consider his applications of Freudian concepts to social analysis. For the moment it is enough for us here to note the concern for sexual liberation that motivated Reich's interest in psychoanalysis. His interest in the ideas of Freud in this period then, looked at in terms of their political meaning, was that of the revolutionary thinker committed to personal and social transformation.

Whilst the brief experiment in a Marxism open to psychoanalytical theory had risen and fallen by the beginning of the 1930s in Russia, a group of Marxist sociologists and philosophers associated with the Institute of Social Research (loosely affiliated to the University of Frankfurt at Mainz) were moving in apparently similar directions. Though the openness to non-Marxist thinkers was evident, the motivations of this group of theoreticians were different to those of the Moscow psychologists of the early 1920s and of Reich. By the early 1930s the chief names connected to the Institute were concerned above all to explain the retreat of the revolutionary tide in Western Europe, the rise of Stalinism in Russia and of fascism in Italy and Germany and the stabilisation of capitalism that was evident in countries such as France, Britain and the USA by the late 1920s. Their engagements with Freud, critical though they were, tended towards the most pessimistic side of his theorising: repression; deference to the father figure rooted in the Oedipus Complex; and the death instinct that runs through his meta-psychology. Freud was not the only non-Marxist thinker with whom the group engaged theoretically. Other influences included Weber, Durkheim, Kant, Simmel, and Tönnies amongst others. Key names of this first generation of what would become known as the (early) Frankfurt School of social theorists and sociologists were: Max Horkheimer; Theodore Adorno; Erich Fromm; and Herbert Marcuse. The wider orbit of the school included Walter Benjamin and Wilhelm Reich himself.

In the years that led up to the Second World War, during the War and in the years that followed, these social theorists through their various research projects and collaborations - and despite the underlying note of despair that was probably inevitable for a generation of radical intellectuals witnessing the twin horrors of Stalinism and Nazism in their own time - produced analytically insightful and empirically rich sociological studies of capitalist society. These were also studies in which 'Marxism' of a form - that is a form that whilst amalgamated with other theoretical traditions of thought, was also creative and non-dogmatic - was to survive, as 'official Marxism' became sclerotized under the rigid control of increasingly Stalinised communist parties across Europe. Some of the Marxists whose names are still with us as major reference points of modern social theory, at this time looked to psychoanalysis for answers to the questions confronting them. The published theoretical and empirical work of these figures from the late 1920s through to the late 1940s together represent the foundation of what was to become known as Freudo-Marxism. We will consider here some of these figures in brief for their part in the story, describing the ways in which, with varying degrees of success, they tried to combine Marxist and psychoanalytical theoretical categories.

Working under the darkening shadow of the European political scene and seeking to explain the failure of the Western European working-class to rise against, or even resist Hitler's rise to power, the theoretical Marxist Theodore Adorno, looked to Freudian conceptualisations. As early as 1932 Adorno identified Freudian themes in his analysis of what he called the 'culture industry'. Massified forms of entertainment for Adorno, employed the introjections of the superego to conjure up images and associations of commoditised consumable

products. However, it was in his work with Max Horkheimer that the full implications of the application of Freudian categories for a social psychology of support for fascist parties - and in relation to consumer capitalism in North America - became apparent. In their their joint writing in this period, they explored the cultural manipulation of the person, already weakened by the incorporation of the family into structures and processes of mass society. In the *Dialectic of the Enlightenment*<sup>32</sup>, they laid out a blueprint for the ways in which 'the individual' becomes increasingly prey to the control of repressive ideologies that oppose their own material interests. By the positing of the abstract individual - removed from organic collectivities of extended community roots - as the 'economic cell' that formed the basis of capitalist society and locating this also within powerful forces of psychological and emotional assimilation into commoditised social relationships Adorno and Horkheimer created a picture of the defeated and atomised person, incapable of critical thought. In this spiritually and mentally impoverished state the isolated person becomes vulnerable to the kinds of irrationalism, anxiety and paranoid fears that had once characterised the Dark Ages. With the rise of massified society under capitalism:

*"Culture became wholly a commodity disseminated as information without permeating the individuals who acquired it. Thought became restricted to the acquisition of isolated facts. Conceptual relationships were rejected as uncomfortable and useless effort. The aspect of development in thought, all that is genetic and intensive in it, is forgotten and levelled down to the immediately given, to the extensive. Today the order of life allows no room for the ego to draw spiritual or intellectual conclusions. The thought which leads to knowledge is neutralized and used as a mere qualification on specific labor markets and to heighten the commodity value of the personality. And so that self-examination of the mind which works against paranoia is defeated."*<sup>33</sup>

The economic dynamics of this process of isolation and constriction of critical faculties, also in their turn give rise to reified social relationships, valued transactionally for their marketised exchange value. Alongside this basically Marxist analysis, and exemplifying the methodological eclecticism that typified their approach, Adorno and Horkheimer brought psychoanalytical categories to bear. The diminished 'ego-autonomy' of the individual in their account arises from the incorporation of the middle class and working-class family into processes of capitalist consumption. In this analysis, echoing the use of the concept of 'parricide' by Paul Federn in his study of social revolt in Germany after the First World War<sup>34</sup>, this results in the erosion of the power of the father as a source of introjected social and moral authority. Without the presence of the traditional figure of the father, the superego develops in an attenuated form, leaving the individual vulnerable to the appeal of an abstract father-ideal in the form of the Fuhrer or Il Capo. It is this *combining* of Marxist and Freudian elements – as opposed to anything more theoretically *synthesising* - for the purpose of sociological analysis that characterises the work of Adorno and Horkheimer in this period.

*The Freudo-Marxists: Reich; Bernfeld; Fenichel*

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<sup>32</sup> Adorno, T. and Horkheimer, M. (1997), *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Verso.

<sup>33</sup> Adorno, T. and Horkheimer, M. (1997). Pp. 197-8

<sup>34</sup> Federn, P. (1919), *Zur Psychologie der Revolution: die vaterlose Gesellschaft*, Anzengruber-Verlag

As we have seen, Reich was ploughing ground that was theoretically similar to that of Adorno and Horkheimer, though conducted largely independently of them. Throughout the 1920s he had published a series of papers based upon his clinical practice. These works of clinical sexology were laying the foundation stones for his later published ideas regarding the centrality of the orgasm to human happiness and his theory of character formation. We will touch upon these presently, but of more direct importance here is the way in which his psychoanalytical thinking became radicalised by his sharp turn towards communism after 1927.

In his essay *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis*<sup>35</sup>, Reich tackled head-on the question of the compatibility of Marxism and psychoanalysis. In it he argued that psychoanalysis is an emancipating body of thought and that psychological insight is intrinsically opposed to reactionary outlooks. More specifically, his defence of psychoanalysis as an intellectual school that is both compatible with, and has something to offer Marxism, took three approaches: that psychoanalysis is a materialist doctrine; that its object of study, namely the human psyche, is a dialectical phenomenon; and that psychoanalytical insights have a sociological significance of application and value in the future socialist society. For the first part of Reich's argument, regarding the materialist status of psychoanalysis, Reich pointed to its empirical findings.<sup>36</sup> Chief amongst Freud's discoveries for Reich were the libido theory - premised upon the sublimating mechanisms by which primordial sexual instincts are transformed into higher social drives - and, related to this, infantile sexuality and the psycho-social processes of the family, that he named the Oedipus complex. The rooting of the fundamental processes of psychical development and character formation within a social institution, the family means, Reich argued, that since social institutions change historically, so also must the human psyche be seen as an essentially historical and therefore changeable object.

*"The superego of a woman in the age of Plato was fundamentally different from that of a woman in capitalist society: and to the extent that a new society is ideologically foreshadowed within the existing one, the contents of the superego naturally change also. This applies to sexual morality, say as much to the ideology of the inviolability of the ownership of the means of production; it also changes of course with the position of the individual in the production process."*<sup>37</sup>

In this essay, Reich does identify idealist tendencies within Freudianism, particularly with respect to Freud's metapsychology and more particularly still, in relation to the 'death instinct'. Nonetheless, for Reich, the basing of an understanding of the development and final character of the person, upon biological and social principles made psychoanalysis fundamentally materialist. This moved him into his second defence. The psyche Reich argues is riven with the tensions that are its animus. The inner contradictions involved in the neuroses that originate in the repression of instinctual urges by the ego (under the command of the superego) were one example of the kinds of dialectical processes that Reich had in mind. Another was the tension created by the conflict between the 'pleasure principle'

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<sup>35</sup> Reich, W. (1972), *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis*, Socialist Reproduction.

<sup>36</sup> In *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, first published in English in 1946, Reich lists four 'discoveries' of psychoanalysis: the unconscious; infantile sexuality; repression; and the origin of morality in the suppression of early childhood memory. Reich, W. (1997), *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Souvenir Press. Pp. 26-27.

<sup>37</sup> Reich, W. (1972). P. 30

(rooted in the unconscious or the 'id') and the 'reality principle' that governs the ego's calculations regarding the outside world. Others would include: the intertwining of irrational desires into otherwise outwardly rational forms of social behaviour; the sublimation of basic drives into higher cultural strivings redolent of the transformation of 'quantity into quality' that formed one of Engel's dialectical principles; and the transferability of cathectic energy between outwardly opposing expressions *e.g.* from sexual frustration to ambition. This *dialectical* character of the psyche Reich argued, could never have been discovered without psychoanalysis.

Reich's third defence of psychoanalysis was that it is of sociological value. One important example here for Reich was the discovery of the sexual repression in society. Here Reich makes a direct comparison with Marxism:

*"Just as Marxism was sociologically the expression of man becoming conscious of the laws of economics and the exploitation of a majority by a minority, so psychoanalysis is the expression of man becoming conscious of the social repression of sex."*<sup>38</sup>

With the establishment of capitalism, and the increasing incorporation of the proletarian family through co-optive state policy, this sex-repression spreads into working-class life, though never to the same extent as that of the lower middle classes - which is "more Catholic than the Pope".<sup>39</sup> The sociological importance of psychoanalysis however, lies primarily in its potential applications for rational insight in three areas: research into early human history and the understanding of myth; the theory and practice of mental health therapies premised upon the principle of 'libido-economy' and the elimination of neurosis; and in the study of child development and, consequent upon this, for the development of principles of socialist education rooted in a comprehensively rationalist understanding of the needs of the person, from the infant to the early adult stages.<sup>40</sup>

Reich was to integrate these 'compatibilities' into many of his studies from this time onwards. In his analysis of fascism in Germany for example he applied his theory of character formation from an early key work, *Character Analysis*<sup>41</sup>, premised upon the 'blocking' of cathectic energies that congeal into 'armour'-like rigidities in the behaviour of the person. Combining this theory of character formation with a social analysis of the family under capitalism Reich described the constraints that acted upon the lower middle class family: its members struggling to maintain their precarious position 'above' the stratum of the industrial working-class, yet out of reach of the social stratum above them. This hemmed-in social position for Reich, characterised by the repression of sexual desire, gave rise to irrational attachments, mystical outlooks and a vulnerability to the seductions of the charismatic leader. In his discussion of authoritarian ideology and commenting on the propaganda techniques used by the Hitler and Goebbels in their rise to power he observed:

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<sup>38</sup> Reich, W. (1972). P. 49

<sup>39</sup> Reich, W. (1972). P. 50

<sup>40</sup> Reich, W. (1972). Pp. 53-54

<sup>41</sup> Reich, W. (1980), *Character Analysis*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux Inc.

*“Again and again we run across series such as this: personal honor, family honor, racial honor, national honor. This sequence is consistent with the various layers in the individual structure. However, it fails to include the socio-economic basis: capitalism, or rather patriarchy; the institution of compulsive marriage; sexual repression; personal struggle against one’s own sexuality; personal compensatory feeling of honor; etc. The highest position in the series is assumed by the ideology of “national honor”, which is identical with the irrational core of nationalism”<sup>42</sup>*

The defence of a ‘compatibility thesis’ in the manner formulated by Reich was echoed by his early collaborator, Siegfried Bernfeld.<sup>43</sup> Indeed Bernfeld, whose work on understandings of child development, borrowed directly from Freud’s libido theory as it applied to the infant and combined with specific cultural studies<sup>44</sup>, employed the same three analytical elements in his argument. According to Bernfeld, psychoanalysis, in exploring the origins of neurosis and adult character in early experience - its ontogenetic aspect - is historical. It is also, for Bernfeld, materialist: though in a non-reductive and non-mechanical sense. Finally, the antinomies of psychoanalysis – of Eros and Thanatos, of id and superego *etc.* - make it dialectical. All of these characteristics together, for Bernfeld as for Reich, meant that Marxist social science and psychoanalysis, were capable of integration with one another.<sup>45</sup> This was a position he was to develop in his pedagogical writings in the 1920s.

In his essay *Sisyphus or the Limits of Education*<sup>46</sup>, Bernfeld deployed Freud’s theoretical formulations, principally the Oedipus Complex, for his analysis of the educational system under capitalism. Comparing schooling in his own time with the initiation rites of tribal societies, he argued that the ‘natural pedagogy’ that is the spontaneous development of the infant under its mother’s influence, is insufficient for all human societies - including the most primitive. At an early stage in the young child’s life, it is necessary to break up the ‘mother-child group’ in order to begin acculturation into its society. At this point a dramatic re-ordering of the child’s psychical make up is instigated. The libidinal attachments to the mother, developed in the first years of life, are now redirected towards elders in tribal societies and the teachers and pedagogical environment of the modern school. The ‘violence’ of this shift from mother-love to the cold processes of social control becomes literal at puberty in many tribal societies, and in some senses also under capitalism.<sup>47</sup> Under capitalism however this process occurs over a decade at least, and is structured less through specific initiation *rites*, than through prolonged formal processes of repression and social prohibition. Society then, for Bernfeld, as well as being structured by economic class, is also *Oedipal*.

Another figure of note in this era is Otto Fenichel. Fenichel developed the compatibility thesis to argue further that the integration of psychoanalysis was actually *necessary* if shortcomings within Marxism were to be overcome. So, whilst Marx had successfully shown that the means of production in any given historical epoch gave rise to forms of consciousness which then

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<sup>42</sup> Reich, W. (1997), *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Souvenir Press Ltd.

<sup>43</sup> Bernfeld was later to turn against Reich for the latter’s communism and was instrumental to him being expelled from the International Psychoanalytical Association in 1934.

<sup>44</sup> Bernfeld, S. (1929), *The Psychology of the Infant*. Kegan Paul.

<sup>45</sup> Bernfeld, S. (1925), *Psychoanalysis and Socialism*, Der Kampf London: Socialist Reproduction. (Reprinted 1972)

<sup>46</sup> Bernfeld, S. (1925), *Sisyphus, or the Limits of Education*, University of California Press. (Reprinted 1973)

<sup>47</sup> *Op Cit.*, pp. 41-41.

reacted back upon the economic 'base' of society, he had not been able to discuss how this occurred in detail. For Fenichel, considering the forms and means of the exertion of ruling class power, it was not enough to simply point to the fact that the ruling class control the education system, religious institutions and the press.

*"[Marxists'] unawareness of the details of dynamic interactions can become a great impediment of their cause. Hence, they need to study the details of the influence through school, religion, the press, and the radio. In attempting to arrange a hierarchy of "mills of ideology," they might discover even more effective mills of this sort such as the family and the suppression of sexuality by society. [...]. If man is the product of his material relationships, then he is to be understood in the sense Marx had in mind. Economic circumstances influence the individual directly and indirectly through the detour produced in his changing psychic structure."*<sup>48</sup>

From this 'integrationist' position, Fenichel goes on to argue that early life events - organised through 'mills of ideology' that alter the psychic structure of the individual - produce what he called 'unconscious enthusiasms' underpinning the 'manifest enthusiasms' of which the person is aware and that make up their conscious self. These 'unconscious enthusiasms' are the result of structured processes that regulate self-esteem, partially meet the physical and emotions needs of the child on the condition of approved behaviour and operate to frustrate the child's strivings towards satisfactions, to block the outlet of aggressive tendencies and to control the sublimations of basic drives and conflicts towards resolutions that are socially passive in form. Importantly also, Fenichel repeatedly made the link between the nature of child-rearing and processes of character formation familiar in psychoanalytical discourses, and industry:

*"There is a great difference between a nursing mother and an industrial employer; nevertheless the employer makes use of the fact that once there was a nursing mother; because it is the memory of the pleasurable dependence of the infant upon the mother which makes people long for external supplies and ready to believe promises and fulfil conditions."*<sup>49</sup>

#### *Freudo-Marxism and the rise of a 'New Left'*

Reich, Bernfeld and Fenichel were all central to the development of the Freudo-Marxist school in the 1930s. However the figure that connects the work of the school from that era with the generation following the war, as a seminal influence in the re-emergence of Marxism in the form of the New Left in the West and of Socialist Humanism in Eastern Europe, was Erich Fromm. From his earliest empirical work that applied Freudian character analysis to the study

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<sup>48</sup> Fenichel, O. (1967), 'Psychoanalysis as the Nucleus of a Future Dialectical-Materialist Psychology', *The American Imago: A psychoanalytical journal for the arts and sciences*. P. 298

<sup>49</sup> Fenichel, O. (1954), 'Psychoanalytic Remarks on Fromm's Book *Escape from Freedom*' [1944] in *The Collected Works of Otto Fenichel: Second Series*, eds. Fenichel, H. And Rapaport, D. New York. Norton. P.261.

of political orientations of workers in Weimar Germany<sup>50</sup> Fromm was concerned with the problem of conformity and worker passivity in the face of the Nazis' rise to power in Germany. In *The Fear of Freedom*<sup>51</sup>, a book that was to achieve large public on both sides of the Atlantic, he posed the question of freedom as a 'psychological problem'. Tracing the phenomenon of the 'individual' historically both as a political entity and as a felt experience, he identified what he termed a lag between the emergence of individuation and the development of the self. Socially atomising economic and political forces, Fromm argued, marched ahead of the inward ability of the personal psyche to cope with the degrees of isolation it encountered. More often than not, in Fromm's analysis, this resulted in psychical strategies of denial and flight from reality.

*While the process of individuation takes place automatically, the growth of the self is hampered for a number of individual and social reasons. The lag between these two trends results in an unbearable feeling of isolation and powerlessness, and this in its turn leads to psychic mechanisms, which are later on [in Fromm's text] described as mechanisms of escape.*<sup>52</sup>

Fromm suggested three such 'mechanisms of escape'. The first was 'authoritarianism'. Here, the individual, in abandoning their own autonomy and in fear of social ostracism<sup>53</sup>, seeks salvation in the forming of 'secondary bonds' with a force, whether it be that of a person or a social or material object, outside of themselves. Borrowing from Freud, Fromm identified both masochistic *and* sadistic personality tendencies as the outward manifestations of this form of escape. The second form of escape Fromm termed 'destructiveness'. Destructiveness, for Fromm was distinct from sadism. Whereas sadism represented the desire to dominate and incorporate the 'other', destructiveness represented the desire to *eliminate* the external object, whether human or inert. Still, like sadism it was also a reflex response to the sense of isolation and powerlessness in the world. The third of Fromm's 'escapes' was that of 'automaton conformity'. Here, the person labours under the delusion of their individuality. The suppression of any critical self-knowledge early in life produces a disconnection with any actual or potential inner self. The result is that the person borrows thoughts, opinions and even feelings from sources and influences outside of themselves in ways that make them susceptible to conforming behaviours, even where these are clearly harmful to their own rational interests.<sup>54</sup> These 'escapes' formed the basis of Fromm's theory of social character.

As Fromm developed his social theory between the wars he was to move by steps away from Freudian orthodoxies, resulting in conflict with the leading figures of the Frankfurt School.<sup>55</sup> Fromm's crucial theoretical breaking point concerned Freud's libido theory and, at a more general level, his theory of instincts. Whereas the other principal names of the Frankfurt School adhered to Freudian orthodoxy on the question of the sex-drive and its repression and

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<sup>50</sup> *The Working-class in Weimar Germany. A Psychological and Sociological Study.* (1984). (Based upon a report from empirical work conducted in 1929: *German Worker 1929- A Survey and its Methods*).

<sup>51</sup> Fromm, E. (2001), *The Fear of Freedom*, Routledge.

<sup>52</sup> Fromm, E. (2001). P. 25

<sup>53</sup> Fromm, E. (1962), *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*. Abacus. Pp. 119-20.

<sup>54</sup> Fromm was to develop the concept of 'automaton conformity' into the 'marketing orientation' (or type) in *Man for Himself* (1947). Pp. 67-81

<sup>55</sup> See Burston, D. (1991), *The Legacy of Erich Fromm*, Harvard University Press. Pp. 207-229.

sublimations as providing *the* key to understanding culture, Fromm increasingly came to see it as one – albeit important - factor amongst a range of others. Departing from the ‘biological materialism’ upon which figures such as Adorno and Horkheimer built their critique of capitalist society<sup>56</sup>, Fromm insisted upon an analytical framework within which the biological drives did not simply exist as a socially repressed substratum to human behaviour, but rather interacted with other factors such as interpersonal relations and the individual’s conscious ‘relationship to the world’. Fromm was to summarise his modification of Freud’s libido theory in the following way:

*At this point we can restate the most important differences between the psychological approach pursued in this book and that of Freud ... we look upon human nature as essentially historically conditioned, although we do not minimize the significance of biological factors and do not believe that the question can be put correctly in terms of cultural versus biological factors. In second place, Freud’s essential principle is to look upon man as an entity, a closed system, endowed by nature with certain physiologically conditioned drives, and to interpret the development of his character as a reaction to satisfactions and frustrations of these drives; whereas, in our opinion, the fundamental approach to human personality is the understanding of man’s relation to the world, to others, to nature, and to himself. We believe that man is primarily a social being, and not, as Freud assumes, primarily self-sufficient and only secondarily in need of others in order to satisfy his instinctual needs ... Therefore, in our approach, the needs and desires that centre about the individual’s relations to others, such as love, hatred, tenderness, symbiosis, are the fundamental psychological phenomena, while with Freud they are only secondary results from frustrations or satisfactions of instinctive needs.<sup>57</sup>*

Other leading names in the field of Freudo-Marxism were to sharply attack the position that Fromm laid out here.<sup>58</sup> To his opponents, Fromm’s reformulations of Freud’s key concepts represented a step away from the dispassionate rigour of the Freudian paradigm, and a drift into vague humanism and diffuse commentaries upon the human condition. Indeed, it is true that much of Fromm’s later writing conforms to this type. Books such as *Man for Himself*<sup>59</sup>, *The Art of Loving*<sup>60</sup>, *The Essence of Man*<sup>61</sup> and *To Have or to Be*<sup>62</sup> addressed largely ethical, humanistic and existentialist concerns. However, it is also true that Fromm remained a passionate defender of Marxism<sup>63</sup>, always regarding Marx as the intellectually greater and more historically significant figure when compared to Freud who “did not transcend the

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<sup>56</sup> McLaughlin, N. (1999), ‘Origin Myths in the Social Sciences: Fromm, the Frankfurt School and the Emergence of Critical Theory’, *Canadian Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 24 (1). Pp 109-39.

<sup>57</sup> Fromm, E. (2001). Pp. 247-8

<sup>58</sup> Fromm was to continue with this critical engagement with Freud’s work throughout his life and it was the subject matter of the last book he was to publish: *The Greatness and Limitations of Freud’s Thought* (1980). His critique covered the theory of the libido, the Oedipus Complex, character theory and Freud’s theory of the Death Instinct.

<sup>59</sup> Fromm, E. (2003), *Man for Himself*, Routledge.

<sup>60</sup> Fromm, E. (1995), *The Art of Loving*, Thorsons

<sup>61</sup> Fromm, E. (1968), *The Nature of Man (Problems of Philosophy)*, MacMillan USA.

<sup>62</sup> Fromm, E. (2013), *To Have or to Be*, Bloomsbury Academic

<sup>63</sup> See Fromm, E. (2011), *Marx’s Concept of Man*, Bloomsbury Academic.

principles of bourgeois society".<sup>64</sup> Living in Mexico between 1950 and 1973, along with figures such as Marie Langer he would go on to establish a tradition of Latin American Marxist psychoanalysis. It is also the case that that Fromm's writings were to connect with a mood of intellectual and social revolt that germinated in the west throughout the 1950s and exploded over the following decade. For those seeking lives and a world built upon principles of rationality, personal and sexual fulfilment and peace, Fromm assumed the status of *zeitgeist* figure: even for some a 'prophet of the age'. More importantly, he was also a bridge for Marxist and socially radical critique from the generation of revolutionaries of the 1920s and 1930s to that of the 1960s.

The other great transitional figure, whose philosophical and political influence - and activism - spanned the decades before and following the Second World War, was Herbert Marcuse. In 1955 Marcuse published *Eros and Civilization*.<sup>65</sup> At the heart of the book lay a re-working of Freud's theory of the libido. Freud had argued that the unconscious pleasure-seeking impulses and drives (including the sex-drive) that comprised the Id, caused the conscious self, the ego to collide painfully with 'reality'. The behaviour and social orientations of the self then were modified through the intercession of the superego that began to develop in the person's eighth or ninth year. The superego, in Freud's famous psychical architecture, exerted a repressive force against the id in order to curb its potentially destructive tendencies. The force of the id then, its cathectic energy, frustrated in its full expression, became channelled or *sublimated* into other, less potentially harmful ends. The result was forms of socially acceptable behaviour that allowed the person to navigate their way in the world, to work and to maintain outwardly successful familial relationships. The culture of any given society then was the resultant outcome of these conflicting forces: repression (and accompanying neuroses) the price paid for the stability it afforded.

Freud's prognosis for humanity was gloomy. The root of neuroses and the various types of psychological disturbance that were all too apparent in the society of Freud's time as they are in our own, lay in un-reconciled conflicts between competing psychical structures. Most notably, unresolved struggles within the person's Oedipal complex could cause deep-seated problems for their ability to form stable relationships, find sexual fulfilment and ultimately achieve personal happiness. Psychoanalysis could intervene to aid the individual in identifying the unresolved complexes that troubled them, bringing into consciousness conflicts that may have lain beneath the surface of their self-awareness for years and even decades. The result however, even with the most successful interventions, could never be more than a normative adjustment to the *limits* of personal fulfilment. The individual's happiness and especially their sexual happiness, lay in the acceptance of the inevitability of the repression of their deepest desires; in other words, in the acceptance of disappointment.

In a radical re-working of libido theory that would be later taken up within the counter-culture of the 1960s and by the gay-liberation movement in the 1970s, Marcuse identified its 'explosive' kernel, trapped within the social conservatism and philosophical pessimism of its Freudian theoretical framing. This explosive potential was described by Marcuse as representing a 'hidden trend' within psychoanalysis, of repressed memory within the individual and within their wider culture. In the process of individual psychoanalytical work

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<sup>64</sup> Fromm (E.), *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* (1962). Abacus. P. 164

<sup>65</sup> Marcuse, H. (1998), *Eros and Civilization: a philosophical inquiry into Freud*, Routledge.

forgotten memories, brought once more to the surface of the person's consciousness, brought with them truths too difficult to manage in the course of a conventional life. With them also come 'critical standards' by which the person can assess their inward states and public self.

*The psychoanalytic liberation of memory explodes the rationality of the repressed individual. As cognition gives way to re-cognition, the forbidden images and impulses of childhood begin to tell the truth that reason denies. Regression assumes a progressive function.*<sup>66</sup>

The challenge as Marcuse saw it was to liberate this revolutionary content: this he set out to do through a *historicising* of Freud's theory.

Freud had posited a 'reality principle' that blocked and frustrated the 'pleasure principle', continuously forcing it back into the unconscious and semi-conscious parts of the person's psyche. Marcuse saw in the reality principle an undifferentiated construct that floated above history, constituted as the universal resistance to the deepest strivings of the unconscious self. Of all the elements of Freud's theoretical edifice however, the reality principle appeared to be the one that most obviously begged for historical contextualisation. In Marcuse's treatment the reality principle, re-constituted now in terms of the structures and material culture of any given society, was something that the individual had to master in their real and particular social life and against which they had to *perform*. So, the reality principle, for Marcuse, was a 'performance principle' that arose concretely and differently from and for each material-historical epoch.

This historical reframing of Freud's libido theory, particularly considering its cultural aspects (its phylogeny), would make little difference to the outward result of the competing physical forces in Freud's model for the greater part of human history. Throughout the millennia human-kind had lived in circumstances of absolute scarcity (*Ananke*) that had made psychological repression and often brutality a social necessity. Repression had for most of human history been the *necessary* price paid for civilisation. Moreover, it was only with the repression of the libido and the re-channelling of its energies into *work* that human society and its cultures had progressed at all.<sup>67</sup> With the rise of capitalism however, and especially of the form that was flourishing in the US society that Marcuse observed, this had changed. In affluent consumerist society the repression that was exerted by the superego upon the strivings of the Id, whilst crucial for the maintenance of the social order and its systems, was no longer justifiable in terms of existential necessity; it was no longer a matter of *survival*. This 'problem' was captured by Marcuse *via* a modification of the concept of 'repression' itself. The normal repression that arose from needs created by scarcity was now accompanied by a 'surplus repression' that was imposed by social constraints and required of the individual that they accept its results for their lives: repression in affluent society must function as a *self-repression*. Furthermore, Marcuse argued that the degree of the surplus-repression required for the stability of any society provides a measure of how repressive to conscious behaviour it is overall.

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<sup>66</sup> Marcuse, H. (1998). P. 19

<sup>67</sup> O'Casey, J. (2009), 'Eroticizing Marx, Revolutionizing Freud: Marcuse's Psychoanalytic Turn', *Kritike*, Vol. 3(1). P. 14

*Within the total structure of the repressed personality, surplus repression is that portion which is the result of specific societal conditions sustained in the specific interest of domination. The extent of this surplus-repression provides the standard of measurement: the smaller it is, the less repressive the stage of civilization.*<sup>68</sup>

Moreover, for Marcuse this surplus repression provided a crucial means by which consumerism was perpetuated as the dominant mode of social behaviour. For Freud the striving for libidinal pleasure that emanated from within the id, repressed by the superego, became sublimated into social moralities and value systems. This repressive sublimation was the root of (and the price paid for) culture.

In his modification of Freud's libido theory as he developed it a decade later in *One Dimensional Man* surplus repression, rather than being sublimated into higher order motivations, becomes *de*-sublimated into myriad libidinal appetites to be met by the consumer products of everyday life and commoditised entertainment and distraction. The partial release of the id in conservative forms that works for 'the *status quo* of general repression', regulated through processes of '*institutionalized desublimation*', for Marcuse provides the psycho-social material that fuels capitalist consumption.<sup>69</sup> According to Marcuse, in modern consumerist society the pleasure principle absorbs the reality principle.<sup>70</sup> In no other area of life was this more obviously evidenced than the sexual. In a style that anticipates Foucault's observations upon the ubiquity of sex and its coincidence with continuing repression<sup>71</sup>, Marcuse describes the joyless and non-erotic nature of the uses of sexual imagery so familiar in consumer culture.

By emending the key elements of Freud's theoretical architecture Marcuse was presenting a new picture of the workings of the psyche; an altered understanding of its mechanics and animus in consumer behaviour. The full significance of this however only becomes apparent when, with Marcuse, we consider its implications for Eros. As we have seen, for Freud Eros (the life-instinct) remained forever trapped under the socially necessary control of the superego. Desire could never be satisfied: the human being never fulfilled. The impossibility of human happiness beyond the most borderline and compromised forms, equated for Marcuse with the impossibility of human liberation and as a corollary the futility of belief in the communist society. It was this anthropological ontology that Marcuse had set out to critique and overthrow in his historicising of Freud.

We have already seen the way in which Marcuse reconstructed Freud's universal 'reality principle' into the historically concrete *performance* principle. In a society structured by repressive systems of social control and sexual regulation, naturally Eros itself could be expressed in only the most constrained and distorted forms. In a free society this would not be the case. Given free-reign in a non-repressive society the pleasure seeking instinct would find creative rather than destructive outlets. As a consequence, the libido could become free

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<sup>68</sup> Marcuse, H. (1998). Pp. 87-88.

<sup>69</sup> Marcuse, M. (1991), *One Dimensional Man*, Routledge. P74

<sup>70</sup> Marcuse, M. (1991), *One Dimensional Man*, Routledge. P72.

<sup>71</sup> An observation made by Aronowitz (2013:45). Aronowitz, A. (2013), 'Marcuse's Conception of Eros', in *Radical Philosophy Review*. Vol. 16(1).

without ensuing chaos. But more than this, Eros would be freed of the repressively sexualised forms that dominate in capitalist consumer culture. The 'erotic', understood as life-enhancing human activity as opposed to exclusively sexual behaviour, would now permeate all areas of life.<sup>72</sup> The rigidifying distinctions between labour and leisure, the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic, the quotidian and the profound *etc.* would no longer apply. In this Marcusean sense, work itself would become *erotic*. As he was to put in his 1969 *An Essay on Liberation*:

*Freud's last theoretical conception recognizes the erotic instincts as work instincts – work for the creation of a sensuous environment. The social expression of the liberated work instinct is cooperation, which, grounded in solidarity, directs the organization of the realm of necessity and the development of the realm of freedom.*<sup>73</sup>

For Marcuse, the liberated person, developing their creative potential and flourishing through personally fulfilling social relationships, was both the *sine qua non* and justification of the free society. In *Eros and Civilization*, against Freud's Oedipal pessimism, communism was restored as both an ethical ideal *and* as a concrete human possibility.<sup>74</sup>

If Marcuse can be seen as the intellectual bridge - both in historical time and geographical space – that produced the peculiarly Anglo-American river of radical Left psychoanalysis after the war, his equivalent on the European Continent was Jaques Lacan. Lacan's influence on all aspects of the human and social sciences is vast: too vast to list in detail in the short space available here. Suffice to say that Lacan created what we call the 'Franophone river' of critical psychoanalytical theory. Here we will consider only the main concepts that moved his thought and that had influence within movements 'of the Left'.

#### *Lacan and the French 'turn to Freud'*

Lacan's first major contribution to psychoanalytical thought was that of the 'mirror stage' of infant development that he presented in full at the 1949 16<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Psychoanalysis in Zurich.<sup>75</sup> Lacan's mirror stage drew upon the empirical work of the French psychologist Henri Wallon who in his 'mirror test' had observed the obsessive interest of the infant with their own reflected image between the ages of six to eighteen months. The concept also echoed that of the 'looking glass self' that was a core theoretical category in

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<sup>72</sup> This trans-sexual aspect of the eroticisation of life is counter-posed to Reich's notion of a liberated *genital* sexual fulfilment in a socialist society by Garland (2013) [Garland, C. (2013), 'The Freudian Moment: Reflections on Herbert Marcuse', in Gellner, D. (ed.) 2013) *Illuminations*. <http://pages.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/Illumina%20Folder/garland%5Bmarcuse.htm>]

<sup>73</sup> Marcuse, H. (2000), Beacon Press, Boston. P.91.

<sup>74</sup> Despite the later uptake of Marcuse's subtle reworking of Freud's libido theory by the post-war counter-culture there were those within the traditional North American Left who at the time of the publication of *Eros and Civilization* could not see past the individualised and intrinsically theoretical nature of Freud's thought. For an example of this stubborn refusal to allow Freud to be 'rescued' for the Left see Mattick, P. (1956), 'Marx and Freud', *Western Socialist* (March-April 1956). [<http://www.marxists.org/archive/mattick-paul/1956/marcuse.htm>]

<sup>75</sup> Lacan's first attempt to present the 'mirror stage' had been thirteen years earlier at the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress. Before his ten minutes were up Lacan's presentation was abruptly cut short by Ernest Jones who was in the chair: an early portent of Lacan's difficult relationship with the mainstream of the international psychoanalytical community.

work of the American sociologist Charles Cooley and for the school of symbolic interactionism with which he was associated.<sup>76</sup> For Cooley, the 'reflected-self' (understood both in literally visual terms *and* as a cultural metaphor) provided the means by which the expectations of 'the other', for example the mother, entered into the processes of the formation of self-hood. However, whereas for the symbolic interactionists, the continuous modifications of social behaviour demanded by the literal, social and cultural reflections of the self still presumed a stable and enduring 'I', for Lacan there was no such thing.<sup>77</sup> In terms that took his theoretical framing of the mirror stage way beyond mere clinical observation, he posited instead a fractured and unstable self, continuously threatened with annihilation. In his introduction to his 1949 paper, alluding to his psychoanalytical practice, he highlighted the fundamental philosophical consequence of this methodological starting point:

*It should be noted that this experience sets us at odds with any philosophy directly stemming from the cogito.<sup>78</sup>*

The mirror stage for Lacan represents a moment of primary structuration, a 'rootstock' of all subsequent structuration including crucially, that of gender. The steps in his formulation, as well as how they align with other aspects of his *oeuvre*, need to be understood in order to appreciate how this can be so.

In Lacan's formulation of the mirror stage, the infant of about six months onwards sees in their reflected image a unary being, and so come to experience themselves now not as a disassociated set of fluid sensations but rather as an integrated whole. In the same moment they see in the emerging motor control that is evidenced for them in their own reflected image, the means by which to overcome the distress of their hitherto entirely helpless condition. Whilst this ontogenically formative stage is a moment of self-recognition - a primary narcissism that precedes society - it is also overwritten by the myriad social symbols that constitute the external social world. The infant does not of course simply recognise itself in an unmediated fashion. Rather a host of 'others' are on hand to welcome the moment with encouraging prompts and social cues. The event is *over-determined* by the socio-linguistic context of the infant's family, community and cultural landscape. This context provides a force-field of powerful signifiers that cut into the emerging mentalities of the child and become buried deeply in its socio-cognitive processes. The result is an ego that sits, cuckoo-like, in the psyche of the individual. This notion of the ego as a virtual entity, an extimate (as opposed to an intimate) interloper, falsely presenting itself to consciousness as an authentic self, is for Lacan also the root of a constitutive alienation that haunts the person throughout their life. This primary alienation in turn produces a ceaseless and never-fulfilled striving for mastery and realisation through the creation of alter-egos and emendations to the self's portrayal of itself to itself.

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<sup>76</sup> For Herbert Mead, the major theorist of symbolic interactionism, the continuous mental impressions, perceptions and constructions of the other person are what make socially meaningful and empathetic relationships possible: the source of 'sociality'.

<sup>77</sup> Wiley, N. (2003), 'The Self as Self-Fulfilling Prophecy', *Symbolic Interaction*, Vol. 26 (4). Pp. 501–513.

<sup>78</sup> Lacan, J. (2002), 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience', in *Écrits: a selection*. P.3.

In the early development of the person then, what they perceive as their autonomous self - their ego - is in fact an introjected entity created by 'Others' who organise their physical, social and psychological environment. What they take to be 'social reality', and including their notions of self-hood, is in fact, to use Lacan's phrasing, an 'Imaginary'. In other words, it is a 'veil of appearance' that occludes direct perception of the world and therefore the person's capacity for rational apprehension of things as they truly are. This Imaginary, however, cannot operate alone in a pure state of simple delusions. Its development is encrypted by the active involvement of the 'Symbolic': the matrix of signifiers that comprise the socio-symbolic order into which they have been born.<sup>79</sup> It is the combination of the Imaginary and the Symbolic that produces the social reality of lived experience with all its variegated richness and falsehood. Finally, there is Lacan's 'Real'. This is not the 'social reality' just described. Indeed the Real in Lacan's theoretical framework is something of a mystery. It is that which cannot be captured by the Imaginary or by the Symbolic. It eludes both and in so doing remains continually 'beyond' what the person can know. The opacity of the Real makes of it an enigmatic 'thing-in-itself' that is known by its effects, but never by its presence cognitively apprehended. This tripartite scheme of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real is Lacan's 'Register Theory'; and his concerns with each of the three Registers at different points in his life, provide the organising spine to an understanding of his intellectual trajectory for much of his active career.

Of particular interest here for our larger theme of the political dimensions of psychoanalysis, is Lacan's understanding of the unconscious and its implications for interpretations of ideology produced by later thinkers he influenced. Here the Symbolic register is key. For Lacan, the unconscious is not a dark churn of irrationalist impulse and unchained desire (*qua* Freud), but rather is a complicated and highly enmeshed socio-linguistic lattice: the unconscious for Lacan, is 'structured like a language'.

*Symbols in fact envelop the life of man with a network so total that they join together those who are going to engender him "by bone and flesh" before he comes into the world; so total that they bring to his birth, along with the gifts of the stars, if not with the gifts of the fairies, the shape of his destiny; so total that they provide the words that will make him faithful or renegade, the law of the acts that will follow him right to the very place where he is not yet and beyond his very death; and so total that through them his end finds its meaning in the last judgement, where the Word absolves his being or condemns it – unless he reaches the subjective realization of being-toward-death.<sup>80</sup>*

It is the Symbolic then that structures, even 'writes' the unconscious. In the French Lacan says 'L'inconscient est structuré comme un langage'. His choice of terms is precise in that 'comme' translates into the English as 'like' rather than 'by'; and 'langage' (as in *de Saussure's* original distinction) translates as language *per se* (or, as Lacan emphasises, 'letters') rather than any specific natural language.<sup>81</sup> The Symbolic, drawn as it is from the world of social signifiers, is

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<sup>79</sup> The direct influence of Saussurian linguistic theory is evident here. So too is the anthropological structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss with which Lacan was deeply engaged in the 1950s.

<sup>80</sup> Lacan, J. (2002), 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis' in *Écrits*, Norton. P.67.

<sup>81</sup> Lacan, J. (1999), *Seminar XX, Encore, On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge*, Miller, J., A. (ed.), W.W. Norton. P48.

the creation of the 'others' that populate the developmental environment of the infant and growing child. The unconscious that results is trans-subjective in character, criss-crossed by a multitude of conflicting and paradoxical social influences. Significantly, this means that along with being linguistically structured the Lacanian unconscious is also non-biological (again, unlike Freud) and is the result of the work of the Symbolic upon the human subject. Finally, the Symbolic register, animated as it is by the dynamic structures of language, provides the spaces – the gaps created by the shifting alignments of signifier and signified – through and between which the unconscious 'slides'.<sup>82</sup>

Lacan's Register Theory is central to his re-working of Freud's Oedipus Complex. For Lacan persons outside of the individual's own psyche come in three types each corresponding to one of the Registers. He distinguishes the first – that of the Imaginary Register – with a lower case 'o'. The Imaginary 'other' is the other of normal daily interactions. It is the other to whom we broadly attribute the same 'qualities-of-self' as ourselves. It is our assumptions about the nature of the others with whom we interact that enable us to move competently within and through our social world. Over against these others there is the Symbolic Other. This is the Other that resembles Freud's superego. It brings with it the entire socio-linguistic world of norms, expectations and morality. It most nearly approximates to the parent-carer in the early years of the infant's life. However it is more than the parent: it is the bearer of authority and the guardian of the 'rules-of-behaviour' that will govern the person's life. Finally, there is the Real Other. We have noted already the enigmatic nature of the Real. But now we see this played out in the forms of the Mother and the Father. To the infant, the figure of the Mother (or the fixed socio-cultural presence that the Mother-figure represents), emanating from the unfathomable darkness of the Real, is a source of anxiety. She is the source of life, sustenance and comfort: in that sense she is the entire world. But by her presence she is overwhelming - whilst if she is absent she creates terror. In the psyche of the infant there is the constant and urgent question: 'what does the Mother *want*?' The Mother in Lacan's cosmology is always 'too much or too little'. In its distress the small child turns to the Father seeking a countervailing force to her dominating power. In the child's growing mind, the Father (or the fixed socio-cultural presence that the Father-figure represents: a *symbolic* Phallus, representing all that the Mother does not have) is the means by which the demands of the Mother can be met, controlled, negotiated or even blocked. To the child, the Father is protector.

Finally, it is this dance of cultural signifiers that structures the libidinal energies and hedonic patterns of the psyche of the person. Each of us has a biological substratum, an ontic body that has needs that must be met simply to survive. This is manifested as *demand* that goes further than what is physically required to meet this need.<sup>83</sup> The surplus that is left is for Lacan, desire. So, in a mathematically-styled expression of desire being the remainder of demand minus need, Lacan brings us to his reworking of Freud's libido theory.

*What is thus alienated in needs constitutes an Urverdrängung [primal repression], as it cannot, hypothetically, be articulated in demand; it nevertheless appears in an offshoot that presents itself in man as desire (das Begehren).<sup>84</sup>*

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<sup>82</sup> Homer, S. (2005), *Jacques Lacan*, Routledge. P.69.

<sup>83</sup> NTS: is there a comparison with Marcuse to be made here re: surplus repression?

<sup>84</sup> Lacan, J. (2002), 'The Signification of the Phallus' in *Écrits*, Norton. P. 275.

This 'desire' must be understood in its peculiarly Lacanian inflexion. The desire is for an object, naturally. In the child however, the 'object' in question is that of the *Mother's* desire: the phallus (as the *representation* of that which she does not have). This is the Lacanian *objet petit a*.<sup>85</sup> So, the desire of the child is to *be* the phallus: the object of the Mother's desire. In Lacan's cosmology, beneath our desires are the desires of the *other*: or more prosaically, we might say the wish to *be* the object that is cherished by another.

For Freud, the pleasure principle had been one of the two primary psychical impulses (the other being the reality principle). For Lacan it was rather the perpetually frustrated desires of the subject, always and forever circling their intended objects without ultimate satisfaction, that was the source of what he called *jouissance*: the restless energy that results from the constant failure of subjective gratification. This *jouissance* was the *suffering* constitutive of the human condition.

### *Psychoanalysis and oppression: of the colonised; of the women; of the worker*

The influence of the Freudo-Marxist tradition was pervasive throughout the Western counter-cultures of the 1960s and 1970s. In broad terms we have seen how this influence flowed in two tributaries: that of the Anglo-phone Marcusean school; and that of the Francophone Lacanians. However, it is the directly political aspects of this legacy that are of most concern here. Various intellectual traditions within social and liberation movements were influenced by politico-psychological theorising of one type or another during the post-war era. We will describe three examples: firstly, the influence of Left psychoanalysis within anti-colonial struggles; secondly, the role of Freudo-Marxism in Western feminism; and thirdly theoretical developments within Western Marxism. For the first we will consider the thinking of Franz Fanon; for the second, that of Juliet Mitchell; and for the third the work of Louis Althusser.

Before embarking upon any critical appraisal of the thought of Franz Fanon, charting the complex and heterogeneous admixtures of his political philosophy, it is important to acknowledge the sheer extent of his influence. The readership of his last published 1961 work, *The Wretched of the Earth*<sup>86</sup>, throughout the colonised world and within anti-colonial, national liberation and minority anti-oppression movements was and remains enormous. There have been many armed insurgencies particularly, in which Fanon's great key work has been cited by leaders and activists as having been an important intellectual reference in their political trajectory towards a revolutionist stance. In the jails of apartheid South Africa, the H-Blocks of the Maze Prison in Long Kesh, Northern Ireland and the internment camps of the state of Israel, *The Wretched of the Earth* has circulated as an educational text.<sup>87</sup> Figures of the stature of Malcolm X in North America, Che Guevara in Cuba and Steve Biko in South Africa were affected by Fanon's call for cultural renewal and the overcoming of colonial psychologies. A later readership of his earlier published book, *Black Skin, White Masks*<sup>88</sup> grew out of the interest in Fanon that this influence had created. Across these two seminal works

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<sup>85</sup> The 'a' standing for *autre*,: 'other'.

<sup>86</sup> Fanon, F. (2001), *The Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin.

<sup>87</sup> McCoy, L. (2011), 'Frantz Fanon's Call to Anti-Colonial Violence', ProQuest Discovery Guides, <http://www.csa.com/discoveryguides/discoveryguides-main.php> (accessed 5 September 2013). P.10.

<sup>88</sup> Fanon, F. (2008), *Black Skin, White Masks*, Pluto.

we can trace the imbrications of the quite eclectic philosophical and conceptual layers of his political outlook and activism. More specifically, through them we can see the degrees to which Marxism and psychoanalysis in differing, unorthodox and not always theoretically consistent ways<sup>89</sup>, shaped his analysis of the colonial psyche and the struggle for mental, bodily and political liberation.

The development of Fanon's philosophical outlook can be mapped by his geographical journey from the Antilles to France and finally to Algeria. Absorbing and critically assessing the diverse influences of *négritude*, French phenomenology, existentialism, Marxism, psychiatry and psychoanalysis, Fanon's thought comprises a patchwork of insights drawn from this range of traditions. It is the influences of Marxism and psychoanalysis however, upon which this discussion will focus.

Of the two works cited here, the political character of Fanon's Marxism is most evident in *The Wretched of the Earth*. It is there that we see his analysis of the intrinsic and even constitutive role of violence in the position of the colonised and the struggle for liberation. It is there that he warns of the dangers of co-option of the nationalist bourgeois by the colonial powers. It is there also that he provides his assessment of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry and his scepticism of the potential of the industrial working-class of the Third World.

*... it is clear that in the colonial countries the peasants alone are revolutionary, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain. The starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays. For him there is no compromise, no possible coming to terms; colonization and decolonization are simply a question of relative strength.*<sup>90</sup>

It is in this best known of his works also that he stresses the role of spontaneity against the control of indigenous elites and importance of cultural nationalism. In this treatise hues of psychoanalysis also are present throughout. Fanon's discussion of violence and cultural renewal for example employs the metaphors of libido, cathexis, discharge and orgiastic release.

*The native's relaxation [in dance] takes precisely the form of a muscular orgy in which the most acute aggressivity and the most impelling violence are canalized, transformed, and conjured away... There are no limits -- for in reality your purpose in coming together is to allow the accumulated libido, the hampered aggressivity, to dissolve as in a volcanic eruption.*<sup>91</sup>

In the final essay 'Colonial War and Mental Disorders', Fanon speaks directly as a psychiatrist; but still with a *political* purpose. In this discussion, Fanon draws upon his experience as a

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<sup>89</sup> Nursey-Bray (1972) for example has explored the tensions between influences of Sartre and Marx within Fanon's thought. (Nursey-Bray, P. (1972), 'Marxism and Existentialism in the Thought of Franz Fanon', *Political Studies*, Vol. XX (2). Pp. 152-168).

<sup>90</sup> Fanon, F. (1990), *The Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin. P. 47.

<sup>91</sup> Fanon, F. (1990), P.57. Quoted by Fairchild, H. (1994), 'Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in Contemporary Perspective', *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 25 (2). P. 192.

doctor with the *Front de Libération Nationale* (F.L.N.) in the Algerian war of independence. From his case notes he identifies four types – or ‘series’ – of psychiatric disorders. These were : ‘reactionary’ cases in which the disorder arises directly from the experience, whether as perpetrator or victim, of the violent ‘event’; cases in which the disorder arises from the atmosphere of violent conflict – of total war - more generally; affective-intellectual ‘modifications’ and morbidities that had resulted from torture; and psycho-somatic illnesses and cortico-visceral disorders that are associated with war. In all of these case-types Fanon treats the associated symptoms, not as the result of personal idiopathies or family histories (*qua* Freud) but rather as the result of environment. For Fanon the psychiatrist, disturbances of the mind arise directly from the injuries visited upon the psyche in the real violence of war.

*The Wretched of the Earth* can in many ways be seen as Fanon’s final political manifesto to the world: his cry to the ‘wretched’ to rise. It is in his earlier work however, that his more philosophical and psychoanalytical influences are most evident. The great theme of *Black Skin, White Masks* is the dense and violent dialectic of race that runs through the European Enlightenment. In his discussion of the recognitions, mis-recognitions and non-recognitions that constitute the antagonisms of race, he demonstrates and explicitly acknowledges the influence of Hegel’s master-slave relationship. For Fanon, the white colonist creates the ‘Negro’. Fanon rejected the thesis put forward by the ethnologist Octave Mannoni<sup>92</sup> that, by virtue of psychology and culture, there can be such thing as a colonised ‘type’. Fanon argued that it was the synchronic collision of the European and the non-European in the creation of empires that lies at the root of oppression.

*I believe that the fact of the juxtaposition of the white and the black races has created a massive psychoexistential complex. I hope by analysing it to destroy it.*<sup>93</sup>

For Fanon, the entire architecture of colonial relations, behaviours, tropes of speech and communication, modes of postural deference and social deferment comprise a ‘psychological-economic system’.<sup>94</sup>

Considering more specifically the influence of psychoanalysis, it is actually the *ambivalence* of Fanon’s uses of that tradition that is striking. He rejects for example the ego-psychology of Alfred Adler out of court. Linking Adler’s ‘goal-oriented’ psychoanalysis with Mannoni’s belief in a ‘dependency-complex’ by which a colonised people in some predeterminist fashion, accept their fate, he argues instead that it is environment and society that give rise to passivity.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, citing Malinowski’s studies of the Trobriand people of Papua New Guinea,<sup>96</sup> he argues that Freud’s Oedipus Complex is not found amongst the essentially matriarchal family structure of much of the colonised world. Even *repression*, so central to psychoanalysis, he argues finds no place in the psyche of the negro :

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<sup>92</sup> In *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (1950) [Publisher: Editions du Seuil. Paris], Mannoni had argued that the Malagasi of Madagascar had deep within their culture and social-psychology, a ‘dependency-complex’ that transferred to the colonial situation.

<sup>93</sup> Fanon, F. (1967), *Black Skin, White Masks*, Grove Press. New York. P.12.

<sup>94</sup> Fanon, F. (1967), *Black Skin, White Masks*. P. 35.

<sup>95</sup> Fanon, F. (1967), *Black Skin, White Masks*. P. 216.

<sup>96</sup> TTTTTTTTTT

*Since the racial drama is played out in the open, the black man has no time to "make it unconscious"<sup>97</sup>*

If this was all that Fanon had to say on the subject, we could conclude that he had rejected psychoanalysis in its entirety and exclude him from our study. However, with respect to the 'white race', Fanon remained a Freudian. Indeed the deep-seated sexual repression Fanon saw in the interaction between colonised and coloniser for him demanded a Freudian interpretation.

*Every intellectual gain requires a loss of sexual potential. The civilised white man retains an irrational longing for unusual eras of sexual license, of orgiastic scenes, of unpunished rapes, of unrepressed incest. In one way these fantasies respond to Freud's life instinct. Projecting his own desires onto the Negro, the white man behaves "as if" the Negro really had them ...<sup>98</sup>*

Furthermore, the use that Fanon made of the conceptual innovations of Lacan in psychological theory means that we cannot lightly dismiss the psychoanalytical vein in his thought. In an extended footnote<sup>99</sup> Fanon discusses the relevance of Lacan's 'mirror stage' of child development. As we have seen, according to Lacan at around six months the infant develops the singular self-realisation that results from seeing itself in the Other: the Other that is 'not itself'. In this moment of self-awareness, the multiple and dynamic layers of recognition (and misrecognition) that drive the processes of socialisation commence. In the context of the coloniser-colonised nexus the *imago* of the Other was infused with an "imaginary aggression". Fear of the 'non-white' then, churned through developmental processes of the 'colonial infant' as described by Lacan, ensures that the colonial native enters the imagination of the child as the presence of danger: the negro, in bodily form, is seen as forever a threat. In Fanon's formulation we can still detect the distant influence of Freud, albeit in a complicated, selective and Lacanian form.

For much of the post-Second World War period the feminist consensus surrounding Freud was that he represented nothing less than the 'rationalisation in theory' of the submission of woman from the very origins of humanity. Across Freud's extensive publications and private correspondences there are quotes aplenty that can be used to present Freud in this light. His focus upon the sexual development of the boy (the 'masculine model') and terms such as 'penis-envy' and 'hysteria' used to describe normalising gendering processes and female neuroses respectively, did not help Freud's reputation in this regard.

One figure who emerged from the New Left of the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s and who stood out from this consensus was Juliet Mitchell. Mitchell was critical both of Marxism on the question of women and of her forerunners and contemporaries within the Women's Liberation Movement itself. She highlighted what she considered to be the eclipsing of 'the woman' as a real subject within both the philosophical humanism of the early Marx and the category of 'the family' in its economic function in the later Marx and in the work of

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<sup>97</sup> Fanon, F. (1967), *Black Skin, White Masks*. P. 150.

<sup>98</sup> Fanon, F. (1967), *Black Skin, White Masks*. P. 165

<sup>99</sup> Fanon, F. (1967), *Black Skin, White Masks*. Pp. 161-164

Engels.<sup>100</sup> However, even amongst her fellow socialist feminists she detected the same tendency towards economistic analyses of women's oppression: by adopting an 'evolutionary economism' that anchored the position of 'the woman' in property relations throughout history in the case of Simone *de* Beauvoir; and by treating 'patriarchy' as itself a mode of production by Kate Millett.<sup>101</sup> However it is the matter of psychoanalysis with which we are most concerned and about which Mitchell had much to say that is of interest to us here.

In her critical sweep of some of the most important names within the women's movement Mitchell found that overlooking the scientific content of Freud's thinking was a consistent feature of their dismissals. Betty Friedan for instance in *The Feminine Mystique*, whilst she acknowledged Freud's radicalism in shedding light on the importance of sexuality in the development and life of the person whether female or male, nonetheless emphasised the prejudices and offending foibles in his work that can only jar against modern liberal sensibilities surrounding the position of women in society. This raising of what we might call the 'biography of Freud' over any more scientific critique of his thought results in an historicism that renders Freud only a product of his times, and so easy to dismiss on political grounds. Commenting on other accounts of Freud by significant feminist thinkers, Mitchell noted dominant theoretical mistreatments such as the tendency to displace the primacy of sex by losing it in diffuse constructs such as a generalized 'life-energy' (in the case of Shulamith Firestone)<sup>102</sup> or in socio-existential categories (in the case of Simone *de* Beauvoir).<sup>103</sup>

In iconoclastic style Mitchell was to break with the feminist conventions regarding Freud. In doing so she was acting in the spirit of Lacan's call to 'return to Freud' on the matter of sexual difference and its centrality to the structuring of the subject. She did so also by adopting an explicitly Lacanian approach to the question of how 'maleness' and 'femaleness' occur. The question at hand for Mitchell (and for Lacan before her) was this: are we *born* male or female, or do we *become* so? Beyond the given anatomical differences between boys and girls then, Mitchell and Lacan (and Freud before them) were concerned with sexual difference in its behavioural sense. Why is it that humans *couple* in the way they do? What is working at the root of sexual attraction? What explains the social and personal *consequences* of our anatomical differences? Beyond the myriad cultural variation of human sexuality, how do we explain its universality. More popularly we might say, are our sexual differences, looked at in the general sense, essentially biological and innate, or are they cultural and so fundamentally changeable? For Mitchell the answer was that sexual difference was the result of a 'becoming' after birth. We will trace the logic of this position through Mitchell's discussion of Freud's 1925 essay, *Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Differences Between the Sexes*.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Mitchell, J. (1966), 'Women: the Longest Revolution', *New Left Review*. No. 40. This was republished with minor changes in Mitchell, J. (1971; 1977), *Woman's Estate*. Pp. 75-96; 100-122; and 144-151.

<sup>101</sup> Mitchell (1977). Pp. 81-84.

<sup>102</sup> Mitchell, J. (1974), *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, Allen Lane. P.349.

<sup>103</sup> Mitchell, J. (1974). Pp. 305-318.

<sup>104</sup> Freud, S. (1925), *Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Differences Between the Sexes*. ([http://www.aquestionofexistence.com/Aquestionofexistence/Problems\\_of\\_Gender/Entries/2011/8/28\\_Sigmund\\_Freud\\_files/Freud%20Some%20Psychological%20Consequences%20of%20the%20Anatomical%20Distinction%20between%20the%20Sexes.pdf](http://www.aquestionofexistence.com/Aquestionofexistence/Problems_of_Gender/Entries/2011/8/28_Sigmund_Freud_files/Freud%20Some%20Psychological%20Consequences%20of%20the%20Anatomical%20Distinction%20between%20the%20Sexes.pdf) . Accessed 14 March 2014).

In 1905 in the famous 'Three Essays on Sexuality' Freud had published in full-form his theory of the Oedipus Complex. Focused exclusively on the attachments and frustrated jealousies of the boy child, Freud had established a 'male model' of sexual development. With regard to the sexual development of the girl child however the Oedipus Complex had little to say that was truly distinctive of later female sexuality. At this point Freud, resorted to a type of parallelism by which, whilst the boy fought the father for the mother's affections (later transferring these energies to womankind) the girl merely mirrored this dynamic and so 'therefore' came to form an attachment with the father (and so later an attraction to the phallus). Freud was aware of the theoretical gap that this created in his account of human sexuality, revolving around the simple question of 'why?': why should it be that the girl, suffering the same disruptive intrusions by the father, should go on to form such an attachment with the father and not, just as in the case of the boy, her mother? It was a problem that Freud struggled with for the next twenty years through a series of disputes within the psychoanalytical community.

Some of Freud's followers in the International Psychoanalytical Institute tried to solve the riddle in different ways. Working under the theoretical influence of Melanie Klein and led by Ernest Jones, a number of notable figures within the psychoanalytic movement began to question the fundamentals of Freud's account of feminine sexuality based upon his 'dynamic' theory of mind and a general 'drive-theory', and specifically the status of the Castration Complex. Focussing upon the pre-Oedipal months of the infant's development, Klein had elaborated instead an 'object-relations' theory of psychological development in the small child. In the first months of life the object of comfort and sustenance was naturally the mother's breast. The loss of this 'part-object' ('part' that is of the mother) during short periods of separation created a psychological trace of the breast as a 'phantasy', marking the beginning of the sexual unconscious. With the periodic return of the mother, the infant increasingly understands the breast to be a part of something larger: the mother herself, seen eventually as the 'total-object' by the infant. In this first phase of life the process for the girl-child and the boy-child are the same. Increasingly aware of the social dynamics of the familial relations in which it is enmeshed, and crucially of the gendered differences of those dynamics, the child strives to maintain its access to the nurturing mother. The strategies adopted by boys and by girls are different however in this 'already gendered' family world. This, for Klein and for the predominantly British object-relations school, was the basis of sexual identity in later stages of child development.

Another position in the controversy was that held by Karl Abraham who put forward the concept of 'vaginal receptivity' by which, during the girl's sexual development and by stages, a desire for the phallus (and for a baby as a phallic proxy), occurs naturally and universally in all human cultures. Freud was to rail doggedly against this notion. His main concern was that such an account was essentially *biologistic*. If it was indeed the case, as Abraham argued, that psychological structures were the result of undifferentiated bodily impulses then an original femininity (and by implication an original masculinity) was established that determined the destiny of the person at birth. Moreover, this created also a 'normality' that made any complications such as homosexuality, the result of a *mal*-development. For Freud sexual difference lay in its own theoretically obscure realm between the biological-anatomical substratum and social influences: the human psyche. Certainly, he was determined to keep biology out of the story. Other prominent figures such as Jung with his 'Electra Complex' (a

mirror of the Oedipus Complex) and rival biological accounts such as that of Fleiss, suffered similar rebuttal's by Freud; and to the consternation of many of the leading figures of psychoanalysis.

Over these decades of intense controversy, Freud came to the view that the sexual development of the girl was *asymmetric* to that of the boy. Rejecting any homology by which anatomy *directly* determined sexual difference, Freud arrived by 1924 at a revision of the Oedipus Complex that radically altered its dynamic. This shift occurred through the mobilisation of a hitherto minor element in the earlier theory that was now to assume centre stage: the Castration Complex.

In his original theory the boy becomes aware at a very young age of the penis as the mark of sexual difference between his mother and father, and between himself and his mother and sisters. Pained also by the dominance of his father for his mother's affections, the boy develops an anxiety at the realisation that the penis is something that need not exist and so, in his infantile imagination, something also that he might lose. It is the suppression of this anxiety that creates the sexualised unconscious in the young boy and also marks the onset of the superego by which the principle of law (or authority) becomes established as the beginning of socially regulated behaviour.

This process could clearly not occur in the same way in the girl given the actual absence of the penis. Freud had talked of the girl's 'penis envy' resulting from her necessarily unsuccessful attempts to compete with the father. It is important to be clear at this point that again Freud was not advocating an anatomical reductionism. He was insistent that the penis 'cannot be the motive, only the trigger of the child's envy'.<sup>105</sup> In other words, the body could not alone confer meaning, sexual or otherwise on anatomy or sensations. Nonetheless, Freud did now see anatomical difference as the *trigger* of genderising processes, organised around the principle of castration. In the boy this meant the imagining of the literal loss of the penis as well as the behavioural prohibitions regarding the mother's affections imposed by the father. In the girl it meant the psychological suppression of the clitoris and its sensations. Within the family this meant the discouragement of boyish expressions of rivalry with the father and the prohibitive 'command' to remain by the mother's side. The suppression that this entailed created the feminine sexualised unconscious. Only with the onset of puberty did 'sex' return but now, in Freud's revised theory, centred on the vagina, the 'clitoris' remaining out the reach of consciousness. This transfer of the primary locus of female sexual identity to the vagina as a site of receptivity (awaiting the phallus), driven by the 'castration' of the clitoris, gave Freud his asymmetric model of gendering processes.<sup>106</sup> It was also the point from which Mitchell, following Lacan, took up a theoretical reworking and mobilisation of Freud that would lead her into conflict with the mainstream of the women's movement. As she put it, taking up where Freud had left off and summarising the main terms of the debate:

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<sup>105</sup> Cited by Mitchell, J. (1984), *Women: The Longest Revolution*. Pantheon. P. 267

<sup>106</sup> The notion of the repression of the clitoris reads oddly today given the profound impact of the Woman's Liberation Movement on awareness of its importance for female sexuality. We can only remind ourselves to understand Freud in terms of his historical and cultural context. We might do well also to keep in mind that the tension between outward 'clitoral' sexuality and passive 'receptive, vaginal' sexuality remains a battleground in our culture today.

*In the final analysis, the debate relates to the question of the psychoanalytic understanding both of sexuality and of the unconscious and brings to the fore issues of the relationship between psychoanalysis and biology and sociology. Is it biology, environmental influence, object-relations or the castration complex that makes for the psychological distinction between the sexes?<sup>107</sup>*

In Lacan's interpretative framework Freud had been limited by the conceptual tools available to him. Working still within the theoretical legacy of the nineteenth century, Freud's work was saddled with hydraulic and thermodynamic metaphors that limited his ability to adequately explain the interactions of the human subject and normalising social-sexual processes. Moreover, despite the use of symbols in Freud's analytical work, in relation to dreams in his early work and later with respect to biographical interpretations, the Lacanian standpoint viewed Freud's application of 'the symbol' as limited in its explanatory power. Crucially, without knowledge of the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, Freud was unaware of the role of the 'signifier' fore-grounded by the new linguistics that was developing contemporaneously. Lacan had applied the type of socio-cultural analysis to Freud that Saussure's linguistics had made possible, reworking the Castration Complex accordingly.

For Mitchell then, the gendering processes that determined sexual destiny pre-existed the infant in the form of a Symbolic Order. The erogenous zones of the body, not yet inscribed with social meaning, would come into sexual life only as part of a 'chain of signifiers' in which the phallus serves as *the* signifier of sexual difference. One consequence of this was that the literal presence of the father was not key to the sexual development of the person. Even with the father weakened or physically absent, normalising processes would nonetheless shape sexual identity. Fundamental to sexual difference now was not biology, sociological influences nor object-relations but a split in the subject that marked both the infant's realisation of itself apart from the world, and the beginning of the male and female sexual unconscious. The 'subject' in this cosmology was not a Cartesian 'self'; the unified, singular 'I' of the Cogito. Rather it was a fractured entity, always unstable and forever seeking an unattainable resolution of its contradictions by union with another. Pulled every way by life and circumstance, the subject's striving for heterosexual union was 'normal' now merely in the sociological sense. Whilst the dominant (*i.e.* more frequent) form of union was that of male and female coupling, the fact of homosexuality was no longer to be seen as a confounding aberration, but rather as one cultural variant of a complex universality. Finally, for Mitchell as for Lacan, the subjective 'split' from which sexual difference arose represented a primary *alienation* that would launch the person on their sexual life trajectory. In-so-doing it created also the moment of human ontogenesis: the end of nature; and the beginning of culture.

So, Mitchell had answered the question with which rhetorically she had begun. No original sexual difference existed. There was no essential 'male' and 'female'. Rather, a 'primordial split' in the psyche of the infant created the person *as* male or female within a pre-existent symbolic order. For Mitchell, sex did not arise from object-relations (Klein, Jones, Horney *et. al*), sociological factors (Adler) nor from a unitary biological drive (Freud)<sup>108</sup>, but from a sequence of symbolically mediated social interactions. This process was animated by

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<sup>107</sup> Mitchell, J. (1985) in Mitchell, J. and Rose, J. (1985), *Feminine Sexuality. Jaque Lacan and the école freudienne*. Norton and Pantheon. P. 8

<sup>108</sup> Mitchell, J. (1984), *Women: The Longest Revolution*, Pantheon. P. 305.

asymmetrical developments for the female and male infant, but in each case genital repression (castration) arising from the intrusions of the father, played the central role: of the penis in the boy; of the clitoris for the girl. In the case of the girl the drama was played to its end game at puberty with the re-presenting of the vagina as *the* site of sexual receptivity in the young woman. The consequences of the analysis were far-reaching. If correct then the sexualised split in the infant's psyche into male or female at the very beginning of personhood, represented a fundamental defeat of the free and unfettered human subject. As such it provided the irrational sub-soil into which ideology put down its roots. It also meant, something Mitchell was at pains to stress<sup>109</sup>, that in any future socialist society the type of sexual difference created by capitalist society would not simply fall away under socialism: it would require a generational change in modes of child rearing from the earliest stages of the life of the infant. Equally of course, it meant that sexual difference is not a natural fact of human development and can itself be quite differently configured in a different type of society. Seen in this light, it secured the *possibility* of human liberation - and of the most radical kind.

Whilst Juliet Mitchell pitched against the feminist consensus regarding Freud in the English-speaking work, 'across the channel' (once more) a psychoanalytical re-working of Marxism was underway in the work of Louis Althusser. Althusser had as his goal nothing less than the overturning of the Hegelian legacy within Marxism and the recasting of Marxism as a thoroughgoing science. His work to this end involved: considerations of the logic and 'reading' of Marx's key-work *Das Kapital*; the question of the historical subject and of human subjectivity in general; the rejection of familiar categories within Marxism such as 'alienation'; the teasing out of bourgeois humanism from Marx's own formulations; and the re-interpretation of the concept of ideology within Marxist sociology.

In his approach to the works of Marx, Althusser adopts a methodology of 'symptomatic reading' that, guided by Lacan, he takes from Freud.<sup>110</sup> Freud, in his psychoanalytical practice had paid close attention to the silences of his patients, their elisions and avoidances as well as their explicit statements. For Freud these were clues to the ways and means by which the unconscious evaded detection and capture by the conscious self – and by the analyst behind the couch. For Althusser a symptomatic reading of *Das Kapital*, to take his most important example, with careful attention to "the lacunae, blanks and failures of rigour"<sup>111</sup> could reveal the essential nature of Marx's logic that lay beneath its formal economic analysis and political imperatives. This type of 'reading' then could bring Marx's *epistemology* to the surface.

In his discussions of the logic of *das Kapital*, Althusser drew upon parallels he saw with the work of Freud. In his account of his own reading of Marx and of Freud, Althusser emphasises the historical nature of 'the objects' of both: Capital in the case of Marx; the psyche in the case of Freud. It is not simply that both exist and develop 'in time'; rather it is in the character of their movement in time that Althusser sees their commonality. For Marx, Capital evolves in successive forms from mercantilism in the late mediaeval period, through to the fully fledged commodity production and established factory system of Marx's day. For Freud the psyche also evolves through stages of Oedipal formation and suppression, latency, pubescent

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<sup>109</sup> Mitchell, J. (1966), *Women's Estate*, Penguin. 1971. P. 75.

<sup>110</sup> Althusser, L. and Balibar, E. (2009), *Reading Capital*, Verso. P. 16

<sup>111</sup> Althusser, L. and Balibar, E. (2009). P. 143

crisis and ('all being well') successful resolution and sexual transference. For both, the patterns of change are those of compression and intensification, displacement, concatenation and transformation.

*... I do not mean that this analysis suppresses the problem of the relation between component histories and general history – a problem which must necessarily be solved before it is possible to speak strictly of 'a history'. On the contrary, it shows that this problem cannot be solved unless history really constitutes its object, instead of receiving it. In this sense, the term analysis used by Marx has exactly the same significance as that given it by Freud when he speaks of the 'analysis of an individual history': just as Freud's analysis produces a new definition of his object (sexuality, the libido), i.e., really constitutes it by showing the variation of its formations, which is the reality of a history, so Marx's analysis constitutes his object (the 'productive forces') by constructing the history of its successive forms, i.e., forms which have a determinate place in the structure of the mode of production.<sup>112</sup>*

This observation, drawing on his reading of Marx's *Das Kapital* and particularly Freud's 1905 *Three Essays on Sexuality*, led Althusser to the notion of 'epistemological analogies'<sup>113</sup> that connected to two figures. Whilst outwardly Marx and Freud were of quite different historical, political and social milieus, they nonetheless shared a common approach towards understanding the objects of their critical inquiries.

Althusser's symptomatic reading of *Das Kapital* in particular gives his assessments of Marx's logic the character of linguistic-conceptual technique. His considerations of the 'object' of political economy for example revolve around a distinction between the 'real object' and the 'object-for-knowledge'. With this distinction providing the foundation of our approach to political economy we separate the empirical object-world as it is outside of consciousness, and its psychical simulacrum, operating as an animus within it whilst loaded with its own ideological excrescences. Without this distinction, we fall prey to the "fraudulent unity" of the word 'object'".<sup>114</sup> So, just as with Freud, for whom the unconscious became comprehensible (indeed apprehensible) *via* his symptomatic psychoanalysis, in Marx the object of political economy, Capital, becomes open to understanding by its separation from different forms of value (land value, rent value and so on) and its identification as value itself. By this distinction, between the object as it is in itself and its ideological expression, a new science is born.

*In this case, it is strictly correct to speak of a revolution, of a qualitative leap, of a modification affecting the very structure of the object ... In fact, this theoretical revolution which is visible in the break which separates a new science from the ideology which gave it birth, reverberates profoundly in the object of the theory, which is at the same moment itself the site of a revolution – and becomes peculiarly a new object.<sup>115</sup>*

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<sup>112</sup> Althusser, L. and Balibar, E. (2009). P. 249

<sup>113</sup> Althusser, L. and Balibar, E. (2009). P. 243

<sup>114</sup> Althusser, L. and Balibar, E. (2009). P. 40

<sup>115</sup> Althusser, L. and Balibar, E. (2009). P. 157

Considering the types of object that provided the bases for Freudian psychoanalysis on the one hand, and Marxist political-economy on the other, Althusser appropriated a key category from Lacan: that of 'metonymic causality'. Lacan had found in Freud a notion of causality quite different from that of the sequential 'X follows Y' type. Rather, Freud in his dream-analysis had used techniques of interpretation that found 'synchronic' causes acting as *effects* of the 'dream work' - to create the 'manifest dream' as an entire structure. In other words the causalities that worked upon the 'dream material' (taken from life) did not come from an exterior realm, but rather emerged from the structures of the dream itself. This immanent, metonymic process, operated for Freud through specific mechanisms such as the 'condensation' of partial fragments of reality and their 'compression' into meaning for the dreamer. This identification of the metonymic character of the psyche in Freud established it as an object of a special type; known only by its effects and self-generative status. For Althusser the same was true of 'Capital' constituted as a human relationship, rather than a thing amenable to external identification.

Althusser's interest in Freudian categories was more than a general eclecticism. He was concerned above all to identify a logic that broke decisively from what he saw as the vestiges of idealism in the Hegelian legacy Marx had inherited as a young intellectual. To take a central example in Althusser's philosophy, the metonymic notion of causality - applied to history - suggested a motive force in which the *totality* of each historical moment interacts in a complex fashion with its *specific effects*. *Contra* Hegel however (in Althusser's view), these complex interactions were not ones in which each element exerted equal effect. Rather, a structure inhered within each complex such that one would ultimately determine the outcome to a specific conjuncture. This would always, ultimately emerge from the economic realm, though never as a pure isolate of a historical process. This was the 'structure-in-dominance' which for Althusser captured both the contingent aspects of history as well as its underlying determinism. What is of interest for us here, is the fact that Althusser deliberately eschewed the familiar Hegelian concept of 'contradiction' looking rather to Freud (*via* Lacan) for his theoretical formulations. Specifically, it was the concept of 'overdetermination' he was to (reluctantly) adopt for a non-Hegelian language to express his philosophy of history.

*I am not particularly taken by this term overdetermination (borrowed from other disciplines), but I shall use it in the absence of anything better, both as an index and as a problem, and also because it enables us to see quite clearly why we are dealing with something quite different from the Hegelian contradiction.*<sup>116</sup>

Althusser goes on to make clear his distinction: the Hegelian contradiction is always *simple*. Of course, Hegel is aware of complexity in history. The multiple and interacting expressions of historical achievement and meaning, the accumulation of the past within the present and its presages of the future historical manifestations, all characterise Hegelian interpretations of history.

*However, it can be shown that this complexity is not the complexity of an effective overdetermination, but the complexity of a cumulative internalization which is only an apparent overdetermination.*

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<sup>116</sup> Althusser, L. (2005), *For Marx*, Verso. P. 101

and

[For Hegel] A circle of circles, consciousness has only one centre, *which solely determines it; it would need circles with another centre than itself – de-centred circles – for it to be affected at its centre by their effectivity, in short for its essence to be over-determined by them. But this is not the case.*<sup>117</sup>

So, in Althusser's view, these complexities remain for Hegel reducible to a unified essence-of-the-age; a striving of historical consciousness to come into the light as the ultimate quest of Spirit (*Geist*) lying at the centre of the historical juncture. This for Althusser, is the *simplicity* of Hegel's notion of contradiction. For Althusser (as for Freud and Lacan), there is no such unified centre that lies undifferentiated beneath the outward variety of consciousness. Rather historical complexity is *real*: the result of *de*-centred historical forces and of competing and conflicting determinations that interact with one another and with the totality of their historical conditions. It was to express this non-Hegelian historical *logic* and metonymic causality that Althusser looked to Freudian thought.

Driving Althusser's concern to shake off the Hegelian residue in Marxism and with it the notion of an underlying unity to consciousness, is a more fundamental desire to rid Marxism of historicism. Crucial to that was ridding Marxism of the idea of 'the subject' in history. For Althusser there is no historical 'Subject'. Rather our subjectivity, what we experience as our subject-selves, is always emergent; the result of concrete conjunctural factors and forces that shape our circumstance and that are beyond our control. Once our contingent subject-identities are constituted, we reach for an attachable essence by which we can root ourselves in the world. In-so-doing we lapse into the universalising tendencies of bourgeois-humanism that seek always to maintain the historical moment 'in stasis' (and wedded to its own interest) as an unchangeable natural order and organised around the abstract concept of 'Man'.

*'Man' is a myth of bourgeois ideology: Marxism-Leninism cannot start from 'man'. It starts 'from the economically given social period'; and, at the end of its analysis, when it arrives', it may find real men. These men are the point of arrival of an analysis which starts from the social relations of the existing mode of production, from class relations, and from class struggle. These men are quite different from the 'man' of bourgeois ideology.*<sup>118</sup>

For Althusser this rejection of bourgeois humanism then is driven by imperatives that are both epistemological and political. Abstracting from concrete historical circumstance, speaking of 'Man' as an essence removed from its social relationships - as does Sartre, avers Althusser<sup>119</sup> - is necessarily obfuscating and intrinsically inimical to a scientific understanding of both history and human action in the world. It is also dangerous to the destiny of human kind (and by inference, to the workers' movement). This Althusser insists, was Marx's meaning.

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<sup>117</sup> Althusser, L. (2005). Pp. 101-2

<sup>118</sup> Althusser, L. (1993), 'Reply to John Lewis' in *Essays on Ideology*, Verso. P. 85

<sup>119</sup> Althusser, L. (1978), *Essays in Self-criticism*, Verso. P.59-63

*Strictly in respect to theory [...] one can and must speak openly of Marx's theoretical anti-humanism, and see in this theoretical anti-humanism the absolute (negative) precondition of the (positive) knowledge of the human world itself, and of its practical transformation. It is impossible to know anything about men except on the absolute precondition that the philosophical (theoretical) myth of man is reduced to ashes. So any thought that appeals to Marx for any kind of restoration of a theoretical anthropology or humanism is no more than ashes, theoretically. But in practice it could pile up a monument of pre-Marxist ideology that would weigh down on real history and threaten to lead it into blind alleys.*<sup>120</sup>

The severity of this statement makes Althusser's meaning plain: any tendency to essentialise humanity (or 'Man') draws upon bourgeois ideology and has no place within Marxism – properly understood. This has consequences for the place of key terms within Marxism. Here Althusser highlights what he sees as the 'paradox' of Hegel's influence upon the young Marx. Despite Hegel's historical idealism - his cosmology based upon the self-unfolding of the Idea into manifold reality – there is for Althusser an implicit materialism also, in that the subject is always emergent, forever developing out of concrete circumstance and, crucially, never 'forever-fixed'. Considering the term 'alienation' there is never a fixed subject 'that is alienated' (*qua* Feuerbach); rather alienation always precedes the subject constitutively as its motive force. It is the historical process itself then that is the subject - animated of course by real men and women with all their subjectivity – with no eternal Subject that stands apart from it. This then was Hegel's great inheritance to Marx: the idea of the 'process (history) without a subject'. It is also a notion that, as Althusser stresses, 'underpins the whole of Freud's work'.<sup>121</sup>

Whilst Althusser freely acknowledges his debt to Freud, referring in one place to the 'new continent' that had been opened by his work<sup>122</sup>, it is the influence of Lacan in his theory of ideology that is most pronounced and for which he is best known. Echoing Lacan's Register Theory, Althusser tells us that, like the Unconscious, 'ideology is eternal'. By this he does not mean simply that it transcends history and that it has always been with us, but rather that it is 'everywhere' and all encompassing; a kind of medium for all mental representations. Indeed, there is a double aspect to ideology for Althusser. Ideology first of all is the imaginary representation of individuals to their world, their conditions of existence. This is perhaps a familiar use of the word that describes the realm of religious belief, notions of order and natural justice and so on. Although it is a realm that must always correspond to reality on some level, it is principally a sphere of illusion, mystification and obfuscation of social relations.

*To speak in Marxist language, if it is true that the representation of the real conditions of existence of the individuals occupying the posts of agent of production, exploitation, repression, ideologization and scientific practice, and from relations deriving from the relations of production, we can say the following: all ideology represents in its necessarily imaginary distortion not the existing*

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<sup>120</sup> Althusser, L. (2005). P. 229-30

<sup>121</sup> Althusser, L. (2006), *Politics and History: Montesquieu, Rousseau, Marx*, Verso. Pp. 182-5

<sup>122</sup> Althusser, L. (2001), 'Lenin and Philosophy' in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press. P. 42

*relations of production (and the other relations that derive from them), but above all the (imaginary) relationship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that derive from them. What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live.*<sup>123</sup>

The direct influence of Lacan becomes more apparent in Althusser's second aspect of ideology; its material existence in the world. Ideology for Althusser is not simply a matter of belief; an essentially *mental* affair. Rather, it is a practical matter. In Althusser's schema belief and action are interdependent. Citing Pagsal<sup>124</sup>, he uses the example of the supplicant who kneels in prayer *in order* to believe. An ideology then is a material practice that works within a world of rituals, obligations, expected behaviours and so on. Together this provides the 'material ideological apparatus' through which the individual exercises their belief as action-in-the-world. Ideology cannot exist in abstraction from human activity: it can be no other way. Coming to his central thesis however, whilst ideology can only exist for and through subjects, equally subjects *must* exist in and through ideology. Again, Althusser insists that there is no Subject, and are now no *subjects*, that can exist independently in abstraction from specific ideology. 'The person' then, lives 'spontaneously' in ideology: it is *constitutive* of the subject and *vice versa*.

Developing this line of thinking further, Althusser emphasises the pre-existence of ideology for the person. We do not choose our circumstances, of course. But more than this, in Althusser's materialist thesis, the ideologies that constitute the social world into which we grow and within which we conduct our lives, call upon us in myriad ways. With each beckoning we respond and in-so-doing become and confirm ourselves as subjects in that structure. This process Althusser calls 'interpellation'. When a friend at the door says 'it is me' we answer in familiar fashion, when we bump into an acquaintance we greet with mutual recognition and when the policeman on the street calls 'Hey, you there!' we turn, not out of guilt, but out of a spontaneous understanding that the hailing is 'for us'. And as we turn around, we become (once more) the subjects we are.<sup>125</sup> This reality, of the subject's *insertion* into the world, means that 'individuals are always-already subjects'.<sup>126</sup> The individual in other words does not create themselves; rather they are created and recreated as subjects by the ideological forces that *interpellate* them into a pre-existing social totality.

One consequence of this interpellated status of the subject is a distinction that follows between 'the individual' and 'the subject'. The sense that the individual has of their own self-as-subject, that is in some fundamental way *them*, is a delusion. This separation of the person and the subject brings us back once more to psychoanalysis:

*That an individual is always already a subject, even before he is born ... is not a paradox at all. Freud shows that individuals are always 'abstract' with respect to*

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<sup>123</sup> Althusser, L. (2001), 'A Letter on Art in Reply to André Daspre' in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press. P. 155

<sup>124</sup> Blaise Pascal. 17<sup>th</sup> Century mathematician and Christian philosopher.

<sup>125</sup> Althusser, L. (1993), 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' in Althusser, L. (1993). Pp. 44-51

<sup>126</sup> Althusser, L. (1993), 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' in Althusser, L. (1993). P. 50

*the subjects they already are, simply by noting the ideological ritual that surrounds the expectation of a 'birth', that 'happy event' ... it is certain in advance that it will bear its Father's Name, and will therefore have an identity and be irreplaceable ... It is clear that this ideological constraint and pre-appointment, and all the rituals of rearing and then education in the family, have some relation with what Freud studied in the forms of the pre-genital and genital 'stages' of sexuality i.e. in the 'grip' of what Freud registered by its effects as being the unconscious.<sup>127</sup>*

Althusser is not here simply making the banal point that the neonate comes into the world through processes and structures they have not chosen. Rather this entrance is a prelude to an ideological situation that will lay down deep and enduring foundations of identity, socialisation and thought. Here the presence of Lacan in Althusser's formulations is explicit. We have already seen that for Althusser (as for Lacan) there is no singular, fixed or eternal 'subject' that underlies either social or historical processes. But now we can also discern the direct influence of Lacan's Register Theory upon his account of the mechanisms at work to produce this result.

In the pre-Oedipal phase of the child's development the myriad interactions with others and crucially the Mother in the early years, creates for Althusser, an 'imaginary' realm. This imaginary phase (corresponding to Lacan's Imaginary) precedes the Symbolic Order that asserts itself with the successful resolution of the Oedipal Complex; so ushering social law into the behaviour and life-orientations of the young adult. Nonetheless, this imaginary phase prepares the way for the Law of the Symbolic with a thousand 'yes's' and 'no's', acceptances and rejections and the entire range of "*empirical* modalities of this constitutive Order".<sup>128</sup> With the formal entrance of this Order into the life of the person, so also commences the Law of Culture. This process of enculturation revolves around an external Subject that lies in wait, intending to 'centre' the subject in their ideological world. The particular Subject, a construction that whilst public in form is also responsible for moulding (or, *qua* Lacan, 'writing') the unconscious, may be 'the Nation', 'the State', 'God' etc. The entire process is also 'speculary' with a 'mirror-structure' by which the subject can recognise their own image (present and future) reflected in the Subject, confirming their absorption within it and guaranteeing their place in the Order it creates.<sup>129</sup> Althusser characterises this logic of socio-cultural internalisation as one of a 'quadruple system of interpellation'.

*The duplicate mirror-image of ideology ensures simultaneously:*

- 1. The interpellation of 'individuals' as subjects;*
- 2. Their subjection to the Subject;*
- 3. The mutual recognition of subjects and Subject, the subjects' recognition of each other, and finally the subject's recognition of himself;*

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<sup>127</sup> Althusser, L. (1993), 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' in Althusser, L. (1993). P. 50

<sup>128</sup> Althusser, L. (1996), 'Freud and Lacan' in *Writings on Psychoanalysis*, Columbia. P. 26

<sup>129</sup> Althusser, L. (1993), 'Reply to John Lewis' in Althusser, L. (1993). P. 54

4. *The absolute guarantee that everything really is so, and that on condition that the subjects recognize what they are and behave accordingly, everything will be alright: Amen – ‘So be it’.*<sup>130</sup>

Lastly, the acceptance of the ‘order of things’ for which the Oedipal drama is responsible, has also sexualising consequences for the person. In this process and its final resolution, the person becomes fully ‘male’ or ‘female’. In the Oedipal phase the child tests out its imaginary fantasies against the reality of the Symbolic Order that anticipates its arrival. The child’s realisation of the impossibility of their wishes to rival the Father for the Mother’s affections, become resolved into the assumption of the right to *eventually* have what Mummy and Daddy have: feminine attention in the form of a wife for the boy; and *femininity* (and so masculine attention in the form of a husband) for the girl. So, the ‘ideological-fixing’ of the person to their social order is simultaneously one of ‘*sexual-fixing*’. Ideology is not only constitutive of the subject, it is also ‘sexed’ at its root.

### *Modern currents*

- i. *The strange return of vitalism*

As we have seen, for two decades from the early 1960s onwards, the work of Althusser provided the route into French Marxism for psychoanalytical theory represented by influence of Lacan. From the early 1970s the work of Deleuze and Guattari can be seen as a counter-current – an ‘anti-psychiatry’ reaction - to that line of influence, which whilst drawing upon both Marxism and psychoanalysis, also critiques both traditions of thought; and in a most innovative (and on a first reading, confounding) fashion.

In their first collaboration, *Anti-Oedipus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia*<sup>131</sup> (henceforth *Anti-Oedipus*) published in 1972, Deleuze and Guattari addressed themselves to central concepts within Marxist and Freudian thought. In-so-doing they drew these concepts out from their established theoretical domains and onto new a terrain. From psychoanalysis, ‘desire’ was positioned as a generative force that pre-existed the individual subject or social group and that pervaded the social sphere. From Marxism, ‘production’ retained its historicising status, concretely defining the social structure and its class-character. The result in the hands of Deleuze and Guattari was the concept of ‘desiring-production’ representing a libidinal energy that moulds and flows through and across the social body. So, whilst ‘desire’ emanated from nature as a demiurgic vital energy, the forms of production it encountered provided the social ‘machines’ (social formations) that sought to both restrain it *and* to channel it; inscribing it with historical meaning. Where this process fails, where connections between ‘desiring-production’ and the social machines that harness it break down, the outcome for the individual can be catastrophic. The result is the ‘schizoid’ state; or to give it its clinical title, it is the schizophrenic case. For Deleuze and Guattari this state has a special significance in providing a fracture through which the deeper subject-creating processes at work can be seen: this they call ‘schizoanalysis’.

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<sup>130</sup> Althusser, L. (1993), ‘Reply to John Lewis’ in Althusser, L. (1993). Pp. 54-55

<sup>131</sup> Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2013), *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Bloomsbury Academic.

Apart from the vitalistic cosmology that is central to *Anti-Oedipus*, the work offers a theory of historical development. As a universal principle desiring-production has no particular form; it is a Spinozian 'substance', with no concrete modality. This, Deleuze and Guattari express as the 'body-without-organs'. The 'body' in question acquires 'organs' as it emerges into a historical setting. In primitive societies, binding patterns of desiring-production are forged as totemic rituals, behaviours and ornament that tie the person and their group to the earth. The flow of desiring-production is territorial. With the rise of class, this social-material flow is disrupted and re-channelled away now from the earth. Instead, it is directed towards the patriarch, the ruler or the despot. The social meaning created by desiring-production becomes mediated by the systems of exploitation that dominate, and the person's reliance upon them is sealed. This de-territorialisation is taken to new levels by capitalism. Under capitalism a shift occurs from cultural codes that attach symbolically to a person (the despot) to abstract axioms of quantification. These provide the material basis for the calculus of investment and reward that governs the relationship between capital and labour. Desiring-production, harnessed now to the economic realm of exploitation, finds its only cultural outlet in the privatised individual and fundamentally so within the family, so recreating the modern form of the Oedipal dynamic identified by Freud.

In the second major part of their *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* collaboration, *A Thousand Plateaus*<sup>132</sup>, published in 1980, Deleuze and Guattari apply these core concepts once more, but now developed and differentiated with applications across with a far wider range of topical references traversing geology, linguistics, biology, the political state and so on, each constituting 'strata' of reality that operate and emerge under their own dynamics. With respect to psychoanalysis, a largely negative critique is pursued in which the analyst is portrayed as a dictatorial figure, bolstered by a privileged position from which they can impose dominant discourses and 'codes' of interpretation. With respect to Marxism, whilst there are passages that suggest a formal adherence to some central Marxist categories, their applications are deeply unconventional. At issue for Deleuze and Guattari is the very architecture of thought itself. So, Deleuze and Guattari explicitly reject psychoanalysis as an oppressive and reductive discourse. However, their attitude to Marxism differs in that some positive use is made of concepts that are recognisable within a Marxist range of reference. This is true for instance of their discussion of the state in relation to labour in which we see terms such as 'division of labor', 'labor power', 'labor flows' and even 'surplus labor' appear. In their wider discursions however, the uses they make of classical Marxist theory are skewed by the fact that Marxism is also a target of their critique, albeit more obliquely compared to their assault on Freud.

For Deleuze and Guattari, whilst both psychoanalysis and Marxism are 'arborescent' modes of thought, characterised by a tree-like structure that develops in a linear fashion, schizoanalysis and the broader account that they develop of how things come-to-be, is 'rhizomatic'; conjuring up the image of an endlessly self-proliferating system of multiply-connecting generative points, without discrete starting- or end-points, and without an organising centre. So, where Freud saw an Id, an ego and a superego, Deleuze and Guattari see instead 'plateaus' of 'multiplicities' of 'intensities' ('properties') at the micro level of emergent reality that combine to create macro (or 'molar') level structures (or 'assemblages').

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<sup>132</sup> Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2013), *A Thousand Plateaus*, Bloomsbury Academic.

To illustrate, in their discussion of the 'Wolf-man', Freud's famous case in which he sees Oedipal significance in the dream-appearance of 'the wolf' as having a *representational* meaning ("It's daddy"), Deleuze and Guattari point out that there are 'many wolves' in this dream, each with their own status and concrete meaning for the dreamer. Their emphasis is on the empirical multiplicity, rather than upon the abstracted and, in their schema, artificial categories of interpretation imposed by the analyst (in this case Freud himself).

*No sooner does Freud discover the greatest art of the unconscious, this art of molecular multiplicities, than we find him tirelessly at work bringing back molar unities, reverting to his familiar themes of the father, the penis, the vagina, Castration with a capital C ... (On the verge of discovering a rhizome, Freud always returns to mere roots.)*<sup>133</sup>

*Freud tried to approach crowd phenomena from the point of view of the unconscious, but he did not see clearly, he did not see that the unconscious itself was fundamentally a crowd. He was myopic and hard of hearing; he mistook crowds for a single person.*<sup>134</sup>

Although Deleuze and Guattari are concerned with the micro-multiplicities that they insist are eclipsed by arborescent types of thought, they are also concerned with 'macro' reality. As assemblages work upon multiplicities that constitute the inchoate 'substance' (the 'body-without-organs') from which the modalities of the world are created, two major planes emerge: the 'plane of consistency' that exists as the realm of empirical multiplicities that drives their cosmology; and the 'plane of organisation' of macro-structure, representing a transcendent realm of law and cultural coding. In keeping with their 'rhizomic' metaphor, Deleuze and Guattari reject the notion of the singular 'subject' that provides a central node around which the person's sense-of-self become organised. Processes of 'subjectification' occur indeed; however they do not conform to the model of the Cogito in which a stable Subject, the 'I', commands centre stage within the psyche. Deleuze's and Guattari's meaning here is conveyed in their discussion of the Mexican magical cosmology of Being that revolves around the distinction between the *tonal* (the 'day' realm of the conscious self) and the *nagual* (the 'night' realm of the forces and animal-spirits from which it must be protected).

*The tonal seems to cover many disparate things: it is the organism, and also all that is organized and organizing; but it is also signifiante, and all that is signifying or signified, all that is susceptible to interpretation, explanation, all that is memorizable in the form of something recalling something else; finally, it is the Self (Moi), the subject, the historical, social, or individual person, and the corresponding feelings. In short, the tonal is everything, including God, the judgment of God, since it "makes up the rules by which it apprehends the world. So, in a manner of speaking, it creates the world."<sup>135</sup> Yet the tonal is only an island. For the nagual is also everything. And it is the same everything, but under such conditions that the body without organs has replaced the organism and experimentation has replaced all interpretation, for which it no longer has any use.*

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<sup>133</sup> Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2013), *A Thousand Plateaus*, Bloomsbury Academic. P.30

<sup>134</sup> Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2013), *A Thousand Plateaus*, Bloomsbury Academic. P. 33

<sup>135</sup> Quoting Carlos Castaneda, *Tales of Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), p.125.

*Flows of intensity, their fluids, their fibers, their continuums and conjunctions of affects, the wind, fine segmentation, microperceptions, have replaced the world of the subject ... The nagual ... dismantles the strata. It is no longer an organism that functions but a BwO that is constructed. No longer are there acts to explain, dreams or phantasies to interpret, childhood memories to recall, words to make signify; instead, there are colors and sounds, becomings and intensities (and when you become-dog, don't ask if the dog you are playing with is a dream or a reality, if it is "your goddam mother" or something else entirely). There is no longer a Self [Moi] that feels, acts, and recalls; there is "a glowing fog, a dark yellow mist"<sup>136</sup> that has affects and experiences movements, speeds."<sup>137 138</sup>*

This emphasis upon the disorganised realm of the *nagual*, with its 'flows', 'becomings' and 'intensities' (we might also say of 'multiplicities' on the 'plane of consistency') links the conceptual trajectory of *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* with their political influence. Deleuze and Guattari see in the 'State', any state, an organ (an 'assemblage') that seeks to colonise these flows, to over-code them with prescribed and sanctioned meanings, making them safe in the process. Whilst the 'war-machine' that is the free movement of resistance and opposition to all types of tyranny proliferates 'nomadically' across its fields of action and activity, the State works tirelessly to capture it, reterritorialize it and make it its own. The critique here is of 'statism' itself; whether of the political Right or Left. Insofar then as the Left espouses any type of political state as being 'the solution', the end-point, or even the 'means-to-the-end' it turns itself against the multitude that, by virtue of their sheer number assume the status of an overcoming and liberating force. The resonances here with the 'Arab Spring', the 'Occupy Movement' and other social movements that have been characterised by spontaneous organisational networks and modes of communication and organisation exploiting social media to great effect are easy to see. The works of Hart and Negri (2000; 2004; 2009)<sup>139</sup> for instance, have been a major influence within the most notable social movements against the institutions of global capitalism in recent years. Against the unaccountable power of the few they invoke precisely the democratic potential of the 'many'; working through decentred and networked movements; with a 'swarm intelligence'<sup>140</sup>; attacking their opponents from every side with unpredictable timing; and merging back into the landscape without trace. The influence of Deleuze and Guattari is evident: and it is explicit.

The notion of 'desiring-production' that we have seen is central to Deleuze's and Guattari's theory (especially in *Anti-Oedipus*), justifies their inclusion in a study of the interactions of Marxism and psychoanalysis; as does the *political* influence their works have gained. Thereafter their conceptualisations stray so far from either of these major traditions of thought – indeed, regarding their 'arborescent' conceptual architecture, rejecting them *in toto* - that there is sense of having reached a dead-end for any further pursuit of our central

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<sup>136</sup> Castaneda, C. (1974). P. 183

<sup>137</sup> Castaneda, C. (1974). P. 161

<sup>138</sup> Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2013), *A Thousand Plateaus*, Bloomsbury Academic. P.179

<sup>139</sup> Three principle texts by Michael Hart and Antonio Negri have gained audiences within contemporary social movements. They are: *Empire* (2000), Harvard; *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (2004), Penguin; and *Commonwealth* (2009), Harvard.

<sup>140</sup> Hart, M. and Negri, A. (2000). Pp. 91-93

inquiry. Considering their treatment of psychoanalysis and of Freud specifically, they are indeed better placed under the 'anti-psychiatry' label that is often attached to them.<sup>141</sup>

ii. *Subject and structure*

Considering the present, two names dominate as incarnates of the Freudo-Marxist intellectual legacy: Slavoj Žižek; and Alain Badiou. In both cases, whilst their Marxist (or more correctly, in the case of Badiou, Maoist) influences are direct (with Althusser as a referential lodestone for both), their psychoanalytical inheritances have taken a more complicated route, *via* Lacan. For both, however, in different ways, their principal project has been that of restoring the militant subject as a historical agent, where its role had been made redundant in Althusser's theoretical restructuring of Marxism. It is this aspect of the work of these two figures that will shape our final reflections.

For Lacan the human subject was characterised by a 'bar' (*barre*), borrowed from Saussurean linguistics, that separates the signified object from the signifier representing it. In the Lacanian rendering of this relationship, the signifier is connected, not directly to the object (as in Saussure's account), but rather to other signifiers in a chain that must be analysed in order to trace the object to which it refers. In the socialisation of which this 'chain of signification' is constitutive, the human subject is split, fractured into parts by a Symbolic Order that imposes itself *via* the structuring family processes of neonatal and early infant development. The outcome is a Subject that is defined by what it *lacks* (or cannot access within its Unconscious), rather than what it *is*. This 'lack', inaccessible to the conscious subject, coincides with Lacan's Real, residing stubbornly beyond symbolic organisation, and troubling the conscious Self with its uncontrolled effects. And so emerges a weak, divided and ineffective Self that is reliant on an authorising presence (the Father), that it hopes can achieve symbolic completeness, so that it may root itself in the world. It is from this starting

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<sup>141</sup> Briefly, 'anti-psychiatry' was a term of descriptive convenience that grouped together quite different figures in terms of theoretical lineage and political stance. Key names included Michel Foucault (author of: *Madness and Civilisation*, Vintage, 2006; *The Birth of the Clinic*, Routledge, 2003; and *The Architecture of Knowledge*, Pantheon, 1972), Ronald Laing (author of the *Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*, Penguin Psychology, 1965), Thomas Szasz (author of *The Manufacture of Madness: A Comparative Study of the Inquisition and the Mental Health Movement*, Syracuse University Press, 1997) and Erving Goffman (author of *Asylums: The Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, Penguin, 1991). Each of these figures critiqued the constructions of mental illness used by the orthodox professional psychiatry, rather psychoanalysis *per se*. In that respect, whilst they may be of general interest they need not be considered separately in a study of the interactions between Marxism and psychoanalysis. That said, 'anti-psychiatry' did become a target for a critique that came from a Marxist standpoint in the work of Peter Sedgwick. For Sedgwick, diseases of the mind also are social constructions; the result of value-based notions of health. In this sense however, they are on a spectrum that includes physical illnesses seen as constructions in just the same way. Putting it differently, mental ailments, whilst social in nature, are no less real for that. So, whilst the anti-psychiatrists tended to base their critique upon the idea of mental illness as a means of social control, operating through the medicalisation of manufactured definitions of normal behaviour, under Sedgwick's unitary definition of health, covering both its mental and physical aspects, psychological disorders were recognised as involving real pain, and so demanding sympathy and medical attention in the form of psychiatry, understood now as a legitimate area of medicine. (See Sedgwick, P. (1982), *PsychoPolitics*, Pluto. P. 37-8; and Sedgwick, P. (1981), 'Michel Foucault: The Anti-history of Psychiatry', *Psychological Medicine*, Vol. 11. Pp. 235-248).

point that Žižek sets out to restore the Subject to its previously central place in European philosophy and in the concrete processes of real history.

Žižek, against the tide of late 20<sup>th</sup> Century and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Critical Theory and in characteristically idiosyncratic style, positions his work as a defence of the 'I' of the Cartesian cogito. His defence however, is of a strongly Lacanian inflexion; drawing also upon Kant's critique of Descartes in his discussion of the 'Transcendental Analytic' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.<sup>142</sup> In that critique Kant rejects the notion of a substantial Subject that is separate from the objective world. Rather, the Subject is always attached to and mediated, articulated and expressed through an object. A consequence of this is that the subject can never confront itself, in some pure sense. This constitutive impossibility does not stop the subject striving to know itself, to see itself 'as it is'. The result is Kant's 'Empirical Subject', the subject-as-object or more intuitively, the 'Self' that is the construction that emerges from this struggle. However, tragedy lies in the fact that the true Subject remains elusive, existing in the Lacanian 'Real', beyond the reach of the subject-as-Self that in its self-awareness senses always what it cannot attain: that is a true image of itself. So, for Žižek, the Subject does not stand alone and is never identical with the Self. Rather, in the ever temporally forward subject-object movement of existence, it represents a 'turning-back', a 'looking behind' on the part of the Subject, a 'crack' or 'crease' in the 'universal field of Being'.

This striving of the Subject to know itself, does not occur in a vacuum, but in a social world. In Lacan's cosmology, as we have seen the social world is organised as a Symbolic Order. As the Subject moves through its world it asks of others 'che voui?' ('what do you want?') This question is fundamental to the social development of the infant as it begins to navigate and negotiate the wants and commands of its parents and older siblings. As it does so, the signifiers that constitute the symbolic structure of its world become internalised and incorporated into cultural codes and modes of behaviour. These come to represent the 'Big Other' that embodies the norms demanded by society and towards which the developing young child orientates itself. In learning of its place in the world however, the Subject experiences its own ever elusive nature as the Lacanian 'lack', the loss of *jouissance*. The object that it seeks, the full transparency of itself-to-itself, is now compensated for with a construction, an object that is inferred from the mystery of the Real and that masks the Subject's own creative agency from itself. This is the *objet petit à*, an object that eludes total capture; that is sublime to the Subject. This 'sublime object' becomes then a metonymic representative of the *jouissance* that has been lost but also the means by which the Subject seeks to secure itself in the world. Despite its opacity, it is a source of fascination and obsession; and its loss a source of terror. Žižek gives as examples of the *objet petit à*, of the 'sublime objects of desire', God, 'the king' and 'the nation'. For the Self they may include the sexual other, the precious object, the fetish; their 'reality' relying not upon their ontological status, but rather in the *belief* of subjects that they are real, and upon the performative subjective behaviour that follows.

*The subject is always fastened, pinned, to a signifier which represents him for the other, and through this pinning he is loaded with a symbolic mandate, he is given a place in the intersubjective network of symbolic relations. The point is that this*

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<sup>142</sup> Kant, I. (1999), *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Cambridge University Press. Pp. 201-266

*mandate is ultimately always arbitrary: since its nature is performative, it cannot be accounted for by reference to the 'real' properties and capacities of the subject. So, loaded with this mandate, the subject is automatically confronted with a certain 'Che vuoi?', with a question of the Other. The Other is addressing him as if he himself possesses the answer to the question of why he has this mandate, but the question is, of course, unanswerable. The subject does not know why he is occupying this place in the symbolic network. His own answer to this 'Che vuoi?' of the Other can only be the hysterical question: Why am I [a teacher, a master, a king ...]? Briefly: 'Why am I what you [the big Other] are saying that I am?'<sup>143</sup> [Sublime Object of Desire p 125-6.]*

The applications of insights that draw upon a combination of Lacanian psychoanalysis and German idealist philosophy to cultural and political analysis have been extensive and potent in Žižek's prolific output. However Žižek insists in some of his most influential texts, that the 'ontic' (familiar experience) and the 'ontological' (the conditions of the possibility of experience) are separate realms and that the former cannot be derived from the latter. Despite this, in his discussions of types of political regime, as well as in his cinema critiques there would seem to be an affect from one to the other. The manipulations of the 'sublime object' by political regimes of different registers for instance, is illuminating for our understandings of the irrationalities of political behaviour amongst the populace. However, Žižek defends not only the Cartesian 'I', but also the 'militant Subject' that critiques, challenges and confronts the pre-existing social limitations of the Symbolic Order. In doing so, he reasserts the possibility of the Subject that breeches the illusory veil hiding that Subject from itself, that approaches the truth lurking within the Real and that 'traverses the fantasy' so making the truly ethical act a concrete proposal.

*... what is so difficult to accept is not the fact that the true act in which noumenal and phenomenal dimensions coincide is forever out of reach; the true trauma lies in the opposite awareness that there are acts, that they do occur, and that we have to come to terms with them.<sup>144</sup>*

Here he touches base with the only current critical philosopher with whom he acknowledges an affinity: Alain Badiou. It is to the work of Alain Badiou that we now turn.

Badiou, as is the case with Žižek, seeks to restore the Subject as an historical agent. However, Badiou's Subject is quite unlike, indeed stands opposed to, the psychical human subjectivity that would be recognisable from traditional tropes of Enlightenment thinking. Rather, Badiou's Subject, far from being a substantial - or indeed human - presence in history, is rather a procedural moment in a larger historical logic. For this formulation to become comprehensible some stage setting is required using key elements from Badiou's philosophy of history.

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<sup>143</sup> Žižek, S. (2009), *The Sublime Object of Desire*, Verso. Pp. 125-6

<sup>144</sup> Žižek, S. (2009), *The Ticklish Subject. The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, Verso. P. 141

In *Being and Event*<sup>145</sup>, published in 1988, Badiou fastens upon an ontology – a theory of *Being* itself (or Being qua Being) as the condition of the possible existence of particular beings – that is grounded in mathematics. Commenting upon the replacement of philosophy by mathematics that this implies (and the resentments that result) Badiou avers:

*The philosophical rancour originates uniquely in the following: if it is correct that the philosophers have formulated the question of being, then it is not themselves but the mathematicians who have come up with the answer to that question. All that we know, and can ever know of being qua being, is set out, through the mediation of a theory of the pure multiple, by the historical discursivity of mathematics.*<sup>146</sup>

This ontology is based upon ‘the count’. In other words ‘things that are’ become self-identified as a group and, in so doing, enter together into a category, or ‘set’, the singularity of which is called by Badiou the ‘Count-as-One’. In this movement, a multiplicity of things becomes unified into an ordered reality. It is by this ordering, this categorisation, that the world becomes something that has structure and, with the accumulation of other categories, or counts-as-one, a meta-structure. It is only with the emergence of structure that reality becomes accessible to our cognition, something that we can know; before structure, knowledge is an impossibility.

The question of ‘what comes before’ structure (and therefore knowledge) is a matter of great importance for Badiou. This realm that is ‘not structure’ and so unknowable, is not nothing. Rather it is a realm of multiplicity also; but a multiplicity that is disordered, and so uncountable. This is, for Badiou, the ‘inconsistent multiplicity’, represented in his system as the unknowable ‘void’.

The void in Badiou’s ontological system is mysterious indeed. If it is a domain at all, it is one that is utterly beyond apprehension. A first reading brings to mind Kant’s *noumena* or perhaps even (and relatedly) Freud’s Unconscious. These comparisons fail however, in that both of these constructs are indirectly knowable to us in the effects that they exert upon our conscious experience. This is not true of the void that exerts no such effects in its own right. A better comparison is that of Lacan’s Real. Again, however there are limitations to the comparison. Lacan’s Real is far from being an empty space; rather it is full of signifiers that are yet to be brought into the Symbolic Order. The void does not ‘contain’ signifiers in this sense: it is empty of signifiers which are after all already identified as such within our cognitive frame of reference. The void is much more fundamentally an ‘absence’ without substance or meaning: an ontological ‘black hole’ that we can never know. It is from this void however, that emerges the ‘Event’.

It is a consideration of Badiou’s Event that really establishes the trenchant ahistoricism of his ontology. In contradistinction to Hegel - whose *Weltgeist* united historical eras and episodes in a striving towards a resolution of historical contradictions as a final World History - or Heidegger - for whom temporality and the positing of Being as movement in time constituted a concrete ontology of life – Badiou’s Event erupts from the void unannounced and

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<sup>145</sup> Badiou, A. (2011), *Being and Event*, Continuum.

<sup>146</sup> Badiou, A. (2011). P. 8

unconnected with what has been before; its radical novelty is the *sine qua non* of the historical rupture that it constitutes. It is 'the new' that destroys all previously held certainties, demanding as it does so a new sense of the world.

The Event then disrupts all previous structures as well as all prior knowledge: it is a moment of Truth, where before there had been only knowledge. Here Badiou's commitment to the possibility of Truth, in fierce opposition to the Nietzschean and post-structuralist fashion for epistemological scepticism is clear. An advocate of the unified, abstract and clear formal concepts of Plato's logic, and a staunch enemy of the Parmenidean empirical 'many', and its applications across a range of perspectival, epistemological and ethical domains, Badiou in iconoclastic style, cuts across post-modernist banalities, to assert a commitment to the 'what is' regardless of the 'what appears to be'. That said, it is also the case that the Event, and the structure that it creates, must be 'named' in order to come into being. In other words, it must be identified as something new. Here a degree of arbitrariness applies, in that the new structure must be decided upon; a 'decision' is required as to what is to be the 'one' that is 'Counted-as-One'. The radically new character of Event and its structure, means that there is nothing within the previously existing situation that can be used to identify and name it. This means in turn that the naming is always 'against the grain', and seen as non-legitimate; an 'illegal move'.

Despite its unconnected and constitutive singularity however, upon its arrival the Event also simultaneously makes a demand upon the past, as it retroactively claims what has gone before to insist for itself a historical meaning. In-so-doing, it creates a new sense of place and time, a new situation and a new knowledge in its wake.

All of the effects described here, occur if the Event is 'authentic'. Badiou does distinguish between the authentic Event and the false event. The authentic Event is the event that brings forth the completely 'new', without prior cause or rationale. Though it will claim upon the past retroactively for its sense, it does not rely upon the past for its existence. Events that Badiou considers authentic in real history include the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution. However, Hitler's seizure of power in Germany and the burning down of the Reichstag, was not authentic in Badiou's schema. The rise of the National Socialists in Germany did not in fact usher in 'the new'. Rather, it intensified the already existing processes of capitalist exploitation and persecution. The same criterion applies to the four domains into which the Event can erupt: politics; aesthetics; science; and love. For each of these domains then, the Event is a 'truth procedure', self-sufficient its revelatory power and independent of philosophy.

It is the question of the nature of the subject in history, however, with which we are most concerned. On this question Badiou's position can be presented as a very pure form of classical structuralism. Similarly to Althusser, his teacher at École Normale Supérieure, Badiou is adamant that all traces of humanism be banished from a philosophy of history. We have already seen that the undifferentiated and substantial 'I' of Cartesian philosophy has been jettisoned completely. Rather the 'subject' far from being expressed as the personal and self-aware actor in history, is now the 'formal procedure' of historical episodes and processes.

*Of course, the link between truth and the subject appears ancient, or in any case to have sealed the destiny of the first philosophical modernity whose inaugural name is Descartes. However, I am claiming to reactivate these terms within an entirely different perspective: this book founds a doctrine which is effectively post-Cartesian, or even post-Lacanian, a doctrine of what, for thought, both un-binds the Heideggerean connection between being and truth and institutes the subject, not as support or origin, but as fragment of the process of a truth.*<sup>147</sup>

This means that the subject is no longer the human agent operating with conscious orientation, albeit through a haze of ideological distortions and politico-cognitive inversions. Now it is seen as 'not-human', the sum total of its interventions at key historical moments. So, whilst Robespierre 'the man' will be seen within conventional historiography as a significant figure and, as a person, a figure more than worthy of biographical treatment, for Badiou it is not Robespierre that represents the subject in history, but rather 'Jacobinism' itself along with the Terror, the rise of the *sans-culottes* and the Convention of 1793. It is the formal and de-personalised aspects of these historical elements that is now the important thing.

Badiou identifies three 'dominant determinations' of the subject to which he counter-poses his own notion of the subject as a 'formal procedure'. These are: the familiar rendering of the subject as a 'register' of conscious experience; the 'inter-subjective' subject that is a 'category of morality'; and the subject as an ideological fiction by which an ideological state apparatus (*qua* Althusser) calls the individual into existence by its interpellating command.<sup>148</sup> Rather, for Badiou, the historical subject is not identified by its specific personal or peculiar characteristics, but its function with respect to the truth of the Event. It is not the person, with their motivations, biography, strivings and so on, nor the historical group or party with their traditions, organisational forms or social origins, that is of interest. The subject is instead understood formally, as a rare occurrence in its self-aware form and as an operation that exists in relation to the truth of a historical process – to which it is 'sutured' - acting to herald its coming into being, to obstruct its emergence or to obscure it.

*... we can present the figures of the subject right away, without yet possessing the means to think the effective or concrete becoming of a historically determinate subject, which in order to be thought requires a description of the body that functions as its support. We call this presentation of figures, which is indifferent to corporeal peculiarities, the formal theory of the subject. The fact that the theory of the subject is formal means that 'subject' designates a system of forms and operations. The material support of this system is a body, and the production of this ensemble – the formalism borne by a body – is either a truth (faithful subject), a denial of truth (reactive subject) or an occultation of truth (obscure subject).*<sup>149</sup>

So, whereas we might wish to protest that episodes in history are unimaginable without the people who made them, Badiou would only reply that these people (in their historical moment) are in fact the *result* of the historical Event that calls them into being, and that as a

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<sup>147</sup> Badiou, A. (2011). P. 15

<sup>148</sup> Badiou, A. (2009), *Logic of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, Continuum. Pp. 47-8

<sup>149</sup> Badiou, A. (2009). P. 47

Subject, together they are formally the necessary subjective side of impersonal and non-human chains of events. In their historical role then their *humanity* is not relevant; they exist *for their history* as the interventionist structure that they represent.

Finally, this structural intervention that constitutes the subject, must occur against the fixed and limiting local-spatial context of the situation that is overturned by the Event. Whilst *l'espace* (the 'space-place') of the situation is fixed and rigidifying, *hors-lieu* (the 'outside-place') represents the movement that overturns it. This distinction is important for our understanding of Badiou's historical subject. For example, the working-class is a socio-economic construct that belongs in its *l'espace* as a socially static and historically inert object. Only as the proletariat, the revolutionary subjective procedure that accompanies the Evental revolution, do workers break down this rigidity as the *hors-lieu* that overcomes all spatial limitations.