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How the Legacy of Leninism Still Structures the Intellectual Debate in France

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Abstract. It should be interesting to study here the moment when Louis Althusser, just before the "sixty-eight" period, poses the doctrinal return to Lenin as a precondition towards "theoretical anti-humanism". This concept opens the way to ideas such as the "death of Man", the ideological underpinning of trans-humanism, borderless, and transgender movements. It is necessary, therefore, to draw the theoretical path of this return, as happened to the detriment of this other model of theoretical explanation of history's grammar, such as "social interaction" (which thinks the morphology of complex societies as a dynamic movement dialectically generated by the permanence of the so-called "social conflict"), and that it is possible institutional resolution, at least in a democratic regime.

Keywords: Lenin, Althusser, Bataille, Blanchot, Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze, Nietzsche

> The interest in Nietzsche and Bataille was not a way to distance ourselves from Marxism or Communism. It was the only way to get to what we expected from Communism
> (Foucault 1966, 50)

We shall first establish the normative filiation, in apologetic shape, to Lenin, operated in France by Althusser in 1968 with *Lenin and Philosophy*[1], and especially in *Marx & Lenin before Hegel*[2]. Derrida confirmed this in 1971, in *Positions*[3]. There will be also seen the vicissitudes of this affiliation in Bataille, Blanchot, Derrida, Foucault, and Lyotard. It is a question of empirically showing, through some texts, how this filiation could have been practised there.

The French filiation is very different, even opposed in some ways to the German one, operating from Adorno to Honneth via Habermas. These critical and interactionist positions are different from the hypercritical negativist ones, like those belonging to the first. The French concept of "domination"[4], for instance, is perceived by Honneth and Habermas as "behaviorist"[5] style in contrast with "social interaction"[6] (as the root of "social conflict" in that it establishes in permanence new practices favourable to the greatest number of people, since these one fight for this and not just stays in a passive way, as suggested by the French direction. According to the German filiation, the social struggle is reminiscent - in addition to the question of the permanence of structural problems in order to build a society, as Leo Strauss states (Strauss 1988, 39) - the Simmelian definition of the permanent conflict as a vector of all social forms; without forgotten that of Machiavelli's (conceived in the same line as Aristotle when it comes to speak about the very notion of politeia or belongings), when he states in his Speeches on the first decade of Titus-Livius that "the disunion of the Senate and the people has made the Roman Republic powerful and free" (Machiavelli 1980, 44).

The althuserian filiation to Lenin can be seen as a return to the frame genuine of 17 October (Althusser, *Thesis 7*), observed already in 1963 within the PCF (*French Communists Party*) elite, for example in the French theorist journal *Pensée*, where Roger Garaudy is accused by Althusser as fomenting a "humanist deviation from Marxism"[7].

This is also established in the context opened by the *Khrushchev Report* (1956), exclusively charging Stalin, as well as the creation of the Berlin Wall (1961) and the beginning of the so-called Maoist cultural revolution (1966), without to forget the strengthening of Castroism and Sovietism (or "scientific socialism") in Africa (in Algeria, for example, with Ben Bella and Boumediene) and finally the Eurocommunism of the PCI (the so call *aggiornamento*, in 1972). A whole environment, which Garaudy also relates it in a note to the PCF's PO, in 1965, stating that Althusser and his filiation refuse any

"historical compromise" embodied precisely in the "aggiornamento" of Eurocommunism (also affecting the PCE (Spanish), animated by Semprun and criticized by Garaudy, in his 1965's *Note*).

Lenin was "a proletarian leader", Althusser said (Althusser 1982, 15), confided this way during the meeting with the Executive Committee of the Third International (June 19, 1920), according to Frossard's report:

> There are profound differences between us on the conception of proletarian dictatorship. It is the most advanced fraction of the proletariat that becomes the state itself, against the bourgeoisie and against the least advanced part of the working class, including the reformists whom we treat as bourgeois ». (Verdier 1981, 36-37)

This debate is a permanent one. It is, for example, one of the keys to understand the split of 1920 within the French Section of the Workers International (SFIO), between the Blum-style legitimists and the pro-Bolshevik followers of the acceptance of the "21 conditions" dictated by the so-called "Third International", in the sense that it is not a question of opposing the notion of "dictatorship of the proletariat", as one might think, but of opposing the very idea of *taking power*. Is it a question of perfecting a morphological continuity - as defined by historical materialism, namely that the bourgeois stage should be over-passed, being unable in itself to overcome the objective contradictions of class clashes? Or is it a question of just taking power in order to replace just like that the "bourgeois class" (as Claude Lefort explains so well in *Complications: Communism and the Dilemmas of Democracy*, 1998[8]), by the so-called "proletarian class" (the Lenin "professional revolutionaries", the "metaphysical race" in Nietzschean way)? But for what purpose, if the structural conditions are not reached to do so (as the Bolsheviks have well seen), and force the return to the market via the NEP, a return that Lenin slowly admitted to having to prolong? This is what Leon Blum deduced from it, as Robert Verdier reports in his book on the Congress of Tours[9].

The problem of "replacement" remains relevant today for the *up to date* adepts of the French filiation, who are seeking to constitute a kind of "metaphysical race". The notion of "race" coupled with that of "strength" is fundamental to Nietzsche (on which Foucault relies in the exergue). He writes this way:

> (...) our desire, our very will of knowledge, is a symptom of monstrous decadence... We aspire, on the contrary, to what strong races, strong natures want - understanding is the end of something (…)". (Nietzsche 1977, 167)

The notion of "race" next to that of "strong" must then be read in a political way. Heidegger sees also its metaphysical side:

> Nor is the Will of Power biologically conceived, whereas it is much more ontologically conceived, the Nietzschean notion of race has no biological significance, but metaphysical significance. (Ibidem, 247)

And what is it to become an element of the "strong race", in the metaphysical and political sense, concrete, practically, if not a god human becoming a "professional revolutionary" or the passage from "theory to practice", as for Althusser when he tells, in his *Memoirs*, how he "governed" Ulm?

Hence the fact that it is not surprising to observe an Althusser reconnecting with Lenin (who knows his way around) and thus with the idea of the a priori separation between "revolutionaries" and "reactionaries", which Althusser summarizes in his testamentary book (*The Future Lasts Long*...) when he analyses the function of the "Red Guards":

> The Marxist-Leninist *Cahiers*[10], after a difficult start, were selling very well. I had given them, from the first issue, dedicated to the Cultural Revolution, which had just broken out, an unsigned article (whose authenticity I recognize here, after Rancière,) where I implemented a simple and false theory based on the principle: there are three forms of class struggle, the economic, the political and the ideological. They, therefore, require three separate organizations to conduct it. We know two of them: the union and the Party. The Chinese have just invented the third one: The Red Guards. It was a little simple, but it was pleasing (…).

The note published by Roger Garaudy (*supra*) in June 1965 on Althusser thus sheds light on the latter's strict affiliation with Lenin (*Thesis 7*) in the name of a "scientific" approach distinct from that advocated by the first, accused - according to him - of "humanist deviation from Marxism". In this note, Garaudy observes that Althusser's relationship with "science" is very rigid and simplistic, referring to various discussions with Italians and Chinese. In fact, the "science" of which Althusser speaks is only framed by the Leninist-Marxist standard, as Garaudy indicates in his note.

It turns out that in the 1960s and 1970s, to *get out of phenomenology* (as Foucault points out[11]) was somehow *strategic*, especially in the midst of the Maoist cultural revolution which, to resume, claimed to be not only Lenin who died too soon, but also the purest and hard Leninist traces (following Marx and Engels) in the entire history of Western thought; a "break" between "idealists and materialists" (whereas they are only "moments" of the conceptual movement, as Hegel has repeatedly indicated). Why indeed Althusser relies this way on Lenin if not to find a theoretical model capable of self-generation, emancipating himself from the relationship both with reality and with the inter-subjectivity of scientists. Thus, Althusser relies in his lecture both on Lenin's *Materialism and Empirical Criticism*, as has been said on Dietzgen also, who keeps to distance "the philosophers" treated as "graduate minions".

However (let's start with Derrida), it is precisely this "margin" (as in the title of Derrida's book) that holds the lines, in the sense that it allows the latter to rely on Althusser (an Althusser who considers Derrida a "giant" (Foucault 1994: 170, 174). This one indeed followed not only Althusser's return to Lenin, which *practised* philosophy politically (Althusser 1982: 18, 19) but tried, with *Tel Quel*'s team (Hourmant 1996: 112-128) (including the Maoists Philippe Sollers, Julia Kristeva, Alain Badiou, etc.) to go even *further* than Lenin. This is what he states in *Positions* (Derrida 1972: 86-89). Derrida considers that absolute negativity must go so far as to deny this need for accountability. He even sees this lack of negativity in Lenin (*Ibided*, 86). Derrida, therefore, claims not only to follow

Lenin's "strategy" but to amplify it, by "reworking" the "rules". In what sense? That of the targeted negation for itself, which would extend to the whole of reality and to the very depths of the intimacy of language, even in its intimate and secret traces:

> So the destruction of the discourse is not a simple neutralization of erasure. It multiplies words, precipitates them against each other, engulfs them also in an endless and bottomless substitution whose only rule is the sovereign affirmation of the meaningless game. Not the reserve or the withdrawal, the infinite murmur of a white word erasing the traces of the classical discourse but a kind of potlatch of signs, burning, consuming, wasting words in the gay affirmation of death: a sacrifice and a challenge.
> *Note 1*: Play is nothing but an open and unreserved challenge to what opposes play" (Note on the margins of this unpublished Theory of Religion that Bataille planned to call "Dying with laughter and laughing with death. (Derrida 1967, 403)

This "position" is strategic. Because, at the same time, it is destroyed, it makes possible to be replaced by one which destroys it (as Lenin has shown); for instance, in the same movement, Derrida "deconstructs" but escapes the ruins of this absolute negativity, and becomes, at the same time, the positive reference framework for any sketch of negativity while saying the opposite, of course. It's not too far of Lenin's way:

> The unity (coincidence, identity, equivalence) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle between mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, as is the development and movement." (Lenin 1973, 344).

What is preserved or denied as positive is therefore not a given determination, set aside, suspended or elevated in a synthesis, as in Hegel or Marx, but only the need to bind oneself to the opposite, it is the moment of "unity" in order to struggle then with it, to exclude it absolutely; it is precisely this struggle for life in a pure state (criticized by Horkheimer as a bourgeois moment, techniques of science, positivism reducing reason to instrumental logic (Horkheimer 1974), which is also defended by Nietzsche. What is

then preserved is only the "moment of the connection": it serves only to trigger the movement in view of self-movement, since Lenin says it is the "negativity which is the internal pulsation of self-movement and life" (Lenin 1973, 135). And this is done in a concrete way. In Lenin, every concrete being is placed as a potential void if its mass contains a direction or density that does not correspond to the desired measure. This is indeed absolute subjectivism ("above the Begriff is the Idea"[12]), which tactically avoids "pure negation" because Lenin wants something real, sovereign power (but not as Derrida wants just spiritual power). Lenin wants to be the living principle that decides the appropriate reality. Without the sacred garment, however, which Stalin hastened to put on. Derrida will thus undermine this claim to extend negativity by extending her domain towards language (take a look on John R.Searle/Derrida controversy about Austin's legacy[13] and the letter against Derrida's Honorary Degree in *The Times* (London) (Saturday, May 9, 1992[14]), towards also reason and social order in *itself*, and not this or that kind of rationality and social order.

Lenin, then. But not Stalin. While the last continues this first (Ellenstein 1984: 162, 171, 189), as Bataille pointed out (Bataille 1949: 183, 186, 198-199, 222):

> The resolute disregard for individual interest, thought, convenience and personal rights was from the very beginning the result of the Bolshevik revolution. In this respect, Stalin's politics accuse the features of Lenin's but do not innovate it. The "Bolshevik firmness" is opposed to "rotten liberalism". (...) In truth, marvellous mental chaos results from the action of Bolshevism in the world, and from the passivity, the moral non-existence, that it has encountered. But history may be the only one likely to put an end to it, by some military decision. We can only propose to look for the nature of this action, which disturbs the established order before our eyes, much more deeply than Hitler could have done. (...) If we are exhausted, only terror and exaltation allow us to escape the slackness. Without a violent stimulus, Russia could not get back on track. (...) It is cruel to desire the extension of a regime based on a secret police, the gagging of thought and many concentration camps. But there would be no Soviet camps in the world if a huge movement of human masses had not responded to an urgent need.

The same framework can be seen in Maurice Blanchot:

> I would like to quote this text by Alexander Blok, the great poet of the Twelve, whom the October Revolution, however, frightened: "The Bolsheviks do not prevent us from writing verses, but they prevent us from feeling like a master; the one who carries within himself the pole of his inspiration, his creation and holds the rhythm is a master. (Blanchot 1971, 113-114)

And Blanchot, on whom Derrida (in *Parages*, *Spectres de Marx*) relies first and foremost, also writes this about "negation":

> He who stays with negation cannot use it. Who belongs to him, in this belonging can no longer leave him, because he belongs to the neutrality of absence where he is already no longer himself. This situation is, perhaps, despair, not what Kierkegaard calls "disease to death", but this disease where dying does not lead to death, where one no longer hopes in death, where death is no longer to come but is that who no longer comes" (Blanchot 1955, 125).

It is also in this sense that Gilles Deleuze uses the term "differential". In its meaning, order, unity, self, or integrative support, exists only as "variation" (Deleuze 1968, 224) (roaming, random) of the permanent drift, the only accepted constant, the only "Idea" (in the sense of Lenin, *supra*) whose contortions then create "varieties" (of human being, for instance, such as various "queer" with "care values" in Foucault's system, which is very near from Deleuze matrix, as Foucault often said). And these only exist for themselves in so far as they express the un(limited) in(defined)finite aspect of the mother matrix, that of permanent drift without ending, even the Dead, since we must (*sollen*) be already dead (according to Blanchot). This is also observed by Lyotard:

> Where do you make your criticism from? Don't you see that criticizing is still knowing, knowing better? That the critical relationship is still inscribed in the sphere of knowledge, of "awareness" and therefore of empowerment? We must drift out of criticism. Much more: the drift is by itself the end of criticism. (Lyotard 1972, 15)

The *drift* is carried out by acting on it, by putting it in condition, such as the wave which needs an obstacle to refract because it is unable

to do so internally since there is no impetus or external-internal differentiation in Deleuze. There is no orientation, no hierarchy, no priority, no better or worse, there is only one thing, only one, the drift, knowing that there are no more shores, except that of dissolving - the supreme "Idea". For example, it is a question of posing at the beginning of any emotional series that exists an idea acting as a "pure element of potentiality" (Deleuze 1968, 227) without past or future, such as a matrix with frames without inside or outside, except the instant, and which possess the "first coefficient or first derivative", which will then determine "the other derivatives and consequently all the terms of the series resulting from the same operations" (*Ibidem*). This means, moreover, that it is not pleasure but the random triggering of desire in what it brings as a plane, form, click of clicks in (de)finite and repeated allowing the unlimited drift of the dissolved self in the generalized hallucination or the "I cracked" and the "dissolved self" (Deleuze 1968: 223, 332).

This is why Deleuze prefers Artaud to Carroll. What matters is, above all, the drift alone, and not what can trigger it as a primary element, as Lyotard said anyway (*supra*).

Thus, in a Sado-Maso experience (also highly prized by Foucault) at the borders of a strong opiate intake, apparently necessary to anaesthetize oneself, especially when it comes to seams and burns:

> What is this masochist doing? He seems to imitate the horse, Equus Eroticus, but that's not it. The horse, and the master trainer, the mistress, are no more images of mother or father. It is a completely different question, an animal becoming essential to masochism, a question of forces. The masochist presents it this way: training axiom - destroy instinctive forces to replace them with transmitted forces (...). The renunciation of external pleasure, or its delay, its infinite distance, on the contrary, testifies to a conquered state where desire no longer lacks anything, fills itself with itself and builds its field of immanence. Pleasure is the affection of a person or a subject, it is the only way for a person to "find his way around" in the process of desire that overflows him; pleasures, even the most artificial, are reterritorializations. But precisely, is it necessary to meet again? (Deleuze & Guattari 1980: 191-194)

This is typically the very economy of what can be called "neo-Leninism". Because we do not see in this name that this process

would not enter into general equivalence with the rest, with what is transmitted at the same time by the blow: a way of being in the world, of being submissive, ordered, to go and haunt the *Château of masters* in "negation" (especially if they boast of being from the 1807's vintage version of Blanchot), selling themselves as voluntary victims who believe they also command the process. Since they are already consenting, to what? To integrate the becoming "red guard" (as Blacks Blocs) in the Althusser way. How? By wishing to "libidinally" address boots and then gradually "destroy instinctive forces to replace them with transmitted forces" which, in the long run, make increasingly illusory to find one's way around when it comes to politically fight these boots that we so psychophysiologically desire (as Blacks Blocs). Thus, for Foucault, Deleuze's book *The Anti-Oedipus* is "the book" *par excellence* of the destruction of the self, reduced to a conjunctural and conjectural cluster of polarization of intensities. It is considered as a book of ethics, the "only book of ethics written for a long time" - Foucault wrote. Do thus see that the Bolsheviks correspond perfectly to it, putting in shape this "new barbarity" of which Blanchot speaks, adds Bataille, their "marvellous mental chaos" (Bataille 1949, 186) and their "resolute disregard for self-interest, though, convenience and personal rights" (Ibidem, 183)?

In the end, it is a question of destroying oneself in order to prevent the body from using its power to organize itself in the world.

This is the artist's last work: Brutus, who can become Orpheus if he knows how to handle the dagger of negation reduced to itself:

> He who recognizes for his essential task the effective action within history, cannot prefer artistic action. Art acts badly and acts little. It is clear that if Marx had followed his childhood dreams and written the most beautiful novels in the world, he would have enchanted the world, but would not have shaken it. We must, therefore, write *Le Capital* and not *War and Peace*. We must not paint Caesar's murder, we must be Brutus. These connections, these comparisons will seem absurd to the viewers. But, as soon as art is measured against action, immediate and urgent action can only prove it wrong, and art can only prove itself wrong. (Blanchot 1955, 284)

This is therefore where the Blanchotien-Battaillian (and therefore Foucaldo-Deleuziano-Lyotardo-Derridian) "communism" is located. Thus, a Brutus - the Blanchotian artist - is in the search of an "end" that would have "the heaviness of a new beginning" (*L'espace littéraire*, 330) like a knife wound which, unceasingly falls down and repeats itself. Since that which kills something unreal, unimportant, simple, anonymous real material of inspiration in order to exhale, to suck in endlessly, like a voracious spectrum whose image perceived in the eyes of the Eurydice is the only possible sceptre:

> The basis of failure is the restarting of the experiment, not the fact that it is not successful. Everything always starts all over again - yes, once again, again, again, again. (Blanchot 1955: 331-332)

Or, how to scatter its melodies and other members in order, Blanchot said, to "repudiate also the principle of which the god is only the support and try to leave the circle where, since always, under his guard as under the guard of humanism, we remain locked in the fascination of unity" (Blanchot 1971, 85).

It would also seem that, when Bataille uses the notions of "acephalus" *i.e.* "not knowing" (as Nietzsche said, *supra*) and when Blanchot talks about Eurydice and Brutus, it seems that Bataille and Blanchot were trying to make France, after Russia, the permanent acephalon.

More generally, what appears in the French *intelligentsia* under fascist and Leninist influence is a kind of psychological and aesthetic preparation (well seen by Walter Benjamin (Hollier 1979, 586) when he observes Bataille and his group) to flight forward within the destruction of internal and external reason by justifying it by the anti-capitalist struggle. For Bataille et Blanchot, it is, therefore, necessary to have the strength to say no to the man of work, to his reason and needs, and, at the same time, yes, to force whatever comes forth.

Look now at Foucault. Let us start, for example, from Foucault's fascination for Pierre Rivière's speech, who explains, calmly,

without a wrinkle or a word underlined, not what he has done but what he has already written in the heart of reality, the a posteriori speech only reflecting on it to erase it:

> We have here, however, a phenomenon of which I do not see any equivalents in the history of both crime and discourse: that is, a crime accompanied by such a strong and strange discourse that the crime ends up no longer existing, escaping, by the very fact of this discourse which is held on it by the person who committed it. (Foucault 1994, T. III, 98)

To imitate this, Foucault uses Borges' work, whose presence occupies the book *Les mots et les choses* (1966) from the first line of the *Pre/face* (before/face):

> This book was born in a text by Borges. (...). This text quotes "a certain Chinese encyclopedia" where it is written that "animals are divided into: a) belonging to the Emperor, b) embalmed, c) tamed, d) suckling pigs, e) sirens, f) fabulous, g) dogs in freedom, h) included in this classification, i) which agitate like madmen, j) countless, k) drawn with a very fine brush of camel hair, l) and cætera, m) which break the crust, n) which from afar seem to be flies.
>
> In the wonder of this taxonomy, what we reach with a leap, what, thanks to the apologist, is indicated to us as the exotic charm of another thought, is the limit of ours: the naked impossibility of thinking that. (...) This text by Borges made me laugh for a long time, not without certain unease and difficult to overcome. (Foucault 1966, 7)

Let us also observe that this text, which so amazes Foucault and which "made him laugh for a long time" is nevertheless, in the beginning, that of a Borges who, it seems, works as a literary writer and not as a sociologist or historian of the human sciences. In other words, this writer, Borges, seeks to bring together, even to the absurd (in the pataphysical sense of an Ionesco), the distance between words and things in various syntactic spins. This implies that "the naked impossibility of thinking" is not a naked impossibility if one thinks of its possibility in the context of poetics. What is surprising, however, is Foucault's astonishment.

As if he was wondering, at heart, whether it would be possible or not to think of this "naked impossibility" in a dressed, disguised way.

Indeed, if there is "the naked impossibility of thinking", in the scientific framework where the book *Les mots et les choses* is located, it is possible to dress this nudity, there, with a *trompe l'oeil* scientific - here History - precisely to make the absurd real and the real absurd. Under these conditions, the result achieved allows the construction of a custom-made covering that gives the appearance of rigorous research but which has been made only to shape things (in Foucault's words) and not in the real history of the sciences that he addresses in his book.

The habit, therefore, not only acts as a monk but, above all, becomes the only form of reality. Like these ghost ships which, seen from the distance, seem to be inhabited, there is even a man at the helm (inside, in fact), only one skeleton (that of a Borges-style classification) who remains the last work on the canvas of meaning. Thus, in *Les mots et les choses* Foucault seems like taking the word Borges: building a classification that, for example, artificially opposes the categories of representation and meaning or who so meticulously perceives, in the presence of an "organization" (Foucault 1966, 243) of science, a place in which "death prowls around" (*Ibidem*, p. 395). In short, Foucault transvestite in Borges will have to create a story, a fiction, in order to put it as a framework for "atopy", "aphasia" (*Ibidem*, 10). What does this mean? Foucault, although he like Pierre Rivière (*supra*), writes beforehand what he will accomplish (like Lenin).

Indeed, the Foucauldian discourse seizes (as a Nietzschean member of the "metaphysical race") upon the "fundamental codes of a culture" (Foucault 1966, 11) in order not to explain but to emerge as this culture itself (*Ibidem*, 396-397):

> Thus, the last man is both older and younger than the death of God; since he has killed God, it is he himself who must answer for his own finiteness; but since it is in the death of God that he speaks, thinks and exists, his murder

> himself is doomed to die; new, the same gods are already swelling the future Ocean; man will disappear. More than the death of God, -or rather in the wake of that death and according to a deep correlation with it, what Nietzsche's thought announces is the end of his murderer; it is the bursting of man's face in laughter, and the return of masks; it is the dispersion of the deep flow of time by which he felt carried and of which he suspected the pressure in the very being of things; it is the identity of the Return of the Same and the absolute dispersion of man.

Foucault thus floats like these "new gods" who "already inflate the future Ocean" by accomplishing this so-called "absolute dispersion of man" previously thought of by Althusser (who also quotes Foucault on this point in his testament book, *L'avenir dure longtemps*.

Let us also look at this other extract[15], which will allow us to see how Foucault produces some too obvious traces of his *History of Madness*:

> I was told that madness did not exist, whereas the problem was absolutely the opposite: it was a question of how madness, under the different definitions that could be given to it at one time, could be integrated into an institutional field that constituted it as a mental illness with a certain place alongside other diseases.

Thus, the question was how madness "could be integrated into an institutional field that constituted it as a mental illness". It was, therefore, according to Foucault, "an institutional field" that "constituted" it as "mental illness".

In other words, without this "institutional field", madness would not be constituted as a mental illness. What would madness have been constituted as? Has "madness" thus constituted itself? Could madness think of itself? Foucault said: "I was told that madness did not exist, whereas the problem was absolutely the opposite". If the problem is the other way around, could it mean that what exists as madness is not madness? If the problem is "absolutely opposed" to the fact that madness does not exist, therefore something exists, whose word is not madness in the sense of "mental illness". Or does

Foucault presuppose that what is called "madness" is not, in fact, as such, so beyond the "constitutional field" that constituted it?

This is what he will say next since he will advance, and rather in retrospect, that for him it is rather a status, but he has not studied its medical aspect. Nevertheless, he pronounces himself on it both implicitly and quite explicitly by presupposing that the institution, the word, constitutes the thing, madness, as a mental illness whereas it is, for Foucault, quite another thing.

In short, under the pretext, in fact, that certain medical practices may have hastily categorized certain people as "crazy" when they were rather weakened, out of phase, etc., it does not follow that we must deny the morphological problems of personality dislocation beyond the word that claims to subsume the thing.

Unless an a priori arbitrary posit that this dislocation is as valid as a deepening of its unity and, even better, is preferable because it can thus perceive multiplicity as "acephalic" (Bataille) and thus avoid bourgeois accumulation, a premise of the liberal order is a question of drying up at its source. Now, this domination is what Foucault wants to fight against, at least if we want to eradicate the "General who is in us", according to Deleuze's words in *L'anti-Oedipe II* (Deleuze & Guattari 1980, 36).

At least that is what Foucault believes, whereas the consequences are frightening, including for others, since in the horizon of this "end of man" it is not certain that the "alternatives" envisaged by him will best suit this "end":

> It is often said that the definitions of the Islamic government are imprecise. On the contrary, they seemed very familiarly clear to me, but I must say, rather uncomfortable. These are the basic formulas of democracy, bourgeois or revolutionary, I said; we have not stopped repeating them since the 18th century, and you know what they have led to. But I was immediately answered: The Koran had stated them long before your philosophers and if the Christian and industrial West have lost their meaning, Islam will be able to preserve their value and effectiveness[16].

Thus, what would not be very "reassuring" does not come from the much more totalitarian than communitarian essence of this so-called

"Islamic government" which claims, through "Islam", to find "meaning", but from the fact that "the definitions of the Islamic government" are "the basic formulas of democracy, bourgeois or revolutionary (...) we have not stopped repeating them since the 18th century, and you know what they have led to".

What does this mean? Where did they "lead"? Undoubtedly towards the most "confinement", "order", in the official version of the Foucauldian word. While in Iran everyone is immersed in the joy of rediscovering the "meaning".

Thus, this "destruction" resulting from Leninism and (vulgar) Nietzscheism and produced by the French filiation is, in fact, a kind of new totalitarianism, *i.e.* it is theoretically rectified in the sense that it is no longer a question of killing a race or a class but everything that in the human race would be similar to self-development, the supposed source of evil, and whose ("theoretical") killing would be a proof of the work to be done to rise to the rank of the superhuman killer of God.

In this case, it is a question of an unlimited absolutism which nevertheless wants to be authentic, originating in its theoretical revolt, whereas in practice it is a question of the renewed yoke of this new "metaphysical race" resulting from the "professional revolutionaries" (appointed by the State as "organic intellectuals" such as Althusser at Ulm street in Paris, inside the famous Latin Quarter etc. etc.) for whom it is no longer a question of biology but of applying the "class struggle in theory". The important thing is to know for which "class" this "struggle" is being carried out.

All depends on which step we have come. Like Blanchot said, Brutus killing Caesar, Orpheus killing Eurydice; is it better to write *War and Peace*, as Tolstoï? And this until a repetition without difference: Republic, language, thought, sex, everything must wander, error, (t)error. That of an empty, emptied, lifeless, bloodless, and high-speed "diff*errance*" (or permanent voluntary random) while remaining in a tremendous way, waiting maybe the new God (the very death of Man and his Freedom Right) in secret excitement. The postmodern deconstructivist way of life seems

opening up, more and more, mind and arms, at the pre-democratic, tyranny regime, while hypocritically denouncing it on the media network mainstream.

Leninism, in fact, never ends to "move away" from us only if we refuse this; who "we"?

NOTES

1. "Communication Presented to the French Society of Philosophy on 24-2-1968 and Reproduced with the Approval of its President, Mr Jean Wahl", Small Maspero Collection (PCM), 1975 (2nd edition: 15,000 to 25,000 copies).
2. *Ibidem* (PCM 1975, 75-77, *Theses 1* to *7*). For example, *Thesis 7*, where Althusser not only explicitly refers to *Materialism and Empirical Criticism* but considers Lenin's work (1908, with the subtitle "Critical note on a reactionary philosophy." Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1948) as containing "all" the theses counted on this subject (*Idem*, 76): "7 - The Marxist-Leninist revolution in philosophy consists in refusing the idealistic conception of philosophy (philosophy as "interpretation of the world") which, as it always does, denies that philosophy expresses a class position, and in adopting in philosophy the position of proletarian class, which is materialist, thus establishing a new practice of philosophy, materialist and revolutionary, causing the effects of class division in theory. All these theses are contained, either explicitly or implicitly in *Materialism and Empirical Criticism*. I have done nothing but begin to explain them". *See* also Louis Althusser, Etienne Balibar in *Lire le Capital*, editions FM, Small Collection Maspero, 1968, Book II, p. 80: "in the expression 'historical materialism', 'materialism' means nothing other than science, and the expression is strictly synonymous with 'science of history"'.
3. "Interview with Jean-Louis Houdebine and Guy Scarpetta", published in *Promesse*, no. 30-31 (automne et hiver), 1971 (reprinted in 1972 as a collection – Paris: Midnight Editions), in particular pp. 86-88 (*see* also below for an analysis of this explicit affiliation to Althusser and Lenin).
4. "If, like Foucault, we only tolerate as a model the one provided (...) by the processes that lead to domination (...), then there is no chance that we can explain how continuous local struggles must be able to consolidate into institutional power. This is a problem from which Axel Honneth has energetically identified the ins and outs" (Habermas 1985, 340).
5. "Foucault's argument, finally, contains certain elements that, coming from the opposite side, carry a raw behaviorism. Yet it is precisely they who will abound in the direction of a fundamentally mechanistic conception (…) The behaviour of human beings and, in particular, the physical manifestations of

their lives are reduced to being only the matter to which the strategies of power at work are supposed to give form" (Honneth 2016, 231) (*see* also p. 236.

6. "If, however, Foucault had followed more consistently the path of his initial model of action, considering the existing forms of social domination as products of social confrontations (...), he could not have avoided giving social actors needs and convictions, these reasons therefore which, in general, are the only ones capable of triggering political resistance and thus social struggles" (Honneth 2016, 231-232). *See* also p. 238. Note also that Nicos Poulantzas defined "the State" as "the material condensation of a balance of power between classes and fractions of classes", particularly in his latest book, *The State, Power and Socialism* (Paris: Les Prairies Ordinaires, 2013, p. 141). *See* an interesting review in this regard: https://www.contretemps.eu/bonnes-feuilles-letat-pouvoir-socialisme-nicos-poulantzas.
7. *On Althusser. Additional Note of 01-06-1965 to the PCF Political Bureau on Certain Althusser theses*, p.1. http://fr.calameo.com/read/001043762fd95f666d9a6.
8. https://cup.columbia.edu/book/complications/9780231133005.
9. "(…) the distinction between a political revolution, whose sole purpose is the conquest of power, and a socialist revolution whose purpose is the radical transformation of society - methods of conquering power, universal suffrage and parliamentarism, dictatorship of the proletariat" (Verdier 1981, 23). Verdier's *Note 1*: "this notion appears in the 1919 programme (...) relations between reforms and revolution".
10. http://adlc.hypotheses.org/archives-du-seminaire-marx/cahiers-marxistes-leninistes/cahiers-marxistes-leninistes-n1.
11. "I know very well why I read Nietzsche: I read Nietzsche because of Bataille and I read Bataille because of Blanchot. So, it is not at all true that Nietzsche appeared in 1972; it appeared in 1972 in the speeches of people who were Marxists in the 1960s and who left Marxism through Nietzsche; but the first people who turned to Nietzsche did not seek to leave Marxism: they were not Marxists. They were looking for a way out of phenomenology" (Foucault 1994, 436-437).
12. "The Begriff is not yet the highest notion; even higher is the Idea = the unity of the Begriff and the real (...)" (Lénine 1973, 159).
13. https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/rida-searle-deconstruction-and-ordinary-language.
14. https://digressionsnimpressions.typepad.com/digressionsimpressions/2016/03/the-letter-against-derridas-honorary-degree.html.
15. "L'éthique du souci de soi comme pratique de la liberté", entretien avec H. Becker, R. Fornet-Betancourt, A. Gomez-Müller in Foucault 1994, T. IV, 726.

16. "À quoi rêvent les Iraniens?" Paris, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 1978, No. 727, repris in Foucault 1994, T. III, 692.

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