

form then takes on the allure of a scientifically established prophecy, a prophecy that may or may not be realized but which in all rigor is perhaps written as much in the past as in the future. This type of prophecy, frequent in the texts of Marx, founded on a very profound comprehension of the essence of the mode of production, Lipietz and Rouilleault (1972) call "prophetic analysis" or "tendentiality."

The most celebrated prophetic analysis is the *Communist Manifesto* (first chapter) of Marx and Engels, written in 1848. It described in a stupefying fashion the great traits of the contemporary world. It is written entirely in the past tense. "By exploiting the global market, the bourgeoisie gives a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption ... It has removed industry from its national base. The old industries have been destroyed and replaced by new ones which do not use indigenous materials, but materials which come from the most distant regions, and whose products are consumed in all parts of the globe ... In place of ancient isolation a universal interdependence between nations is developed ... In a word the bourgeoisie fashions a world in its own image ... The development of machinery and the division of labor, removes from the worker all the autonomous characters of his work, all its attraction. The producer becomes a mere accessory to the machine," etc.

At the limit we can say that the verification or non-verification of these prophecies has no importance, any more than the law of gravity is disproven by the flight of objects "heavier than air." The non-verification of a prophetic analysis invites us "simply" to search for, in the complex whole in dominance, the causes which have fettered the articulated dynamic in a concrete dichotomy, causes that prediction seeks in the analysis of a conjuncture in order to support its prognostics with a scientifically produced diagnostic.

"Simply": that is already a great deal. The great error of the majority of Marxists is to take tendential analyses literally. They have good reason at certain moments. But not always. Next to the genial prophecies such as we have cited, Marx is responsible for celebrated errors (social bipolarization, the development of India, etc.). More characteristic still is the "catastrophism" of Rosa Luxemburg. It is precisely with the proof of "deviation" between the tendential scenario and reality (for example the emergence of the New Industrial Nations, the absence of a crisis of overproduction in 1945 and 1979) that the work of the regulationist begins. To understand how an explosive tendency has been inhibited is the first step in understanding crisis.

b) The Diagnostic of Conjuncture

To understand the reality of past diachronies (that is, of concrete histories) or to "evaluate" the possibility of future diachronies, suppose,

Althusser tells us (LLC), that we must rid of our minds the "linear time in which events unfold." It is first of all necessary to construct the temporalities of each structure or contradiction as a whole, but above all to examine carefully how each structure is conditioned, overdetermined by others, specified in the whole which is always already given us, and that in a very precise *conjuncture*: that which Lenin calls the "present moment." From this moment, it is possible to see how each dynamic is articulated with the dynamic of other contradictions, and to construct concrete historical time.

If a "general synchrony" existed, that is, if all past and future structures were articulated "as in a plan," it would then be theoretically possible to leave the actual moment, to deduce the following moments and begin again. This is not possible for several reasons. Practical reasons first: analysis can be "infinitely concrete" only by being put into the form of the "general equation" which would require "Balibar's demon" to foresee the transformation of societies just as "Laplace's demon" foresaw the evolution of mechanical systems. Reasons of principle also: contradictions do not "displace themselves"; they can, as Althusser would say, "fuse" into explosive conjunctures on the other side of which the complex whole is restructured in another "illumination," in a radically different structure which redefines all contradictions. The next Revolution or "great crisis" of a model of development would appear as the closure of the field which the Althusserian school opened in the exploration of the future.

Consequently, the prediction must limit its ambitions (but this is already an enormous task) to *the analysis of the conjuncture*, from the point of view of the reciprocal conditioning of the dynamics of diverse contradictions which present themselves. This operation is what Lenin calls "the living soul of Marxism: the concrete analysis of the concrete situation," and what we simply call diagnostic.

The first step of the diagnostic is to grasp the principal contradiction in a conjuncture. The second is to determine the state of the principal contradiction, that is, the modality of its overdetermination by the "conditions" (the other contradictions): by "displacement" (non-antagonistic contradiction, quantitative variations), or by "fusion" (antagonistic contradictions can be resolved only by a qualitative change). Such, at least, is the methodology which is implicitly used by the regulationists in the analysis of the present crisis.¹⁰

The problem of Althusserianism is that the ossification of the category of contradiction within the category of structure no longer allows thinking "fusion," explosion, the qualitative good, except by inserting every structure into a generalized structure comprising the succession of structures as a *variation*. Balibar (LLC) slips toward one such solution: the transition from

one structure to another is there conceived as an effect of the mode to come (e.g. capitalism) on the anterior mode (e.g. feudalism). This is the theoretical myth of "generalized synchrony."

Poulantzas introduces an audacious solution. In the social whole, an instance (the political) is the strategic site where the principal contradiction will be condensed when it is antagonistic. But the "structure of politics" has for him reached such a point of ossification that it is confused with institutions. How, as the political structure becomes "principal," can it reverse the social whole? He is obliged to reintroduce the notion of the "practice" of agent-bearers constituted in "classes," classes defined by the effect, on the practice of agent-bearers, of the whole of the structure. From this is drawn a "field of practice," projected shadow of the field of structures (with all possible displacements: it is not a Hegelian expressivity). This field is that of *class struggle* because all classes are there defined in relations of opposition (here at least contradiction reigns). It is determined by the field of structures (classes are not subjects, even so!), in the form of limits to the variations of class struggle, but it has its own effectivity on the field of structures *at the level of the political instance*. "The effectivity of structure on the field of practice is thus itself limited by the intervention, in the structure, of political practice" (1968, I, p. 97).

What a strange construction! It is in this way that the "shadows" projected on Plato's Cave by the Heaven of Structures had the capacity to be autonomized in order to change the constellation of structures! It is certainly somewhat in this manner that the regulationists conceive putting in place new models of development. But from the beginning, they have admitted that social groups, however constituted by and in ancient relations, can be subjects of contradictory ambitions, and thus capable of conflicts and compromise.

c) Can We Make a "Prediction in the Future Anterior"?

Scoffing at Hegelian dialectic, where what is obsolete is also saved, and where the past thus finds its key to the evening of "absolute knowledge," Althusser refuses "history in the past anterior," where each era "had already prepared and announced" the future period. Nevertheless, we know how to make a genealogy of the elements of a mode. But it is necessary not to forget that the theory of origins is a "prehistory," a "retrospective." This means that we know the structural elements of a mode and we will search for them in the products of the dissolution of the previous mode. But for any structure, the new mode is not produced by the anterior mode: its constitution is a "discovery," and, from the phase of reproduction, it radically "forgets" the occasional origins of its elements. The "retrospective" (genealogy element by element) thus has nothing to do with a "tendential prediction applied in the past."

Will it not be possible then to "apply the methods of retrospection to the future"? That is: knowing the theoretical presuppositions of the future mode, to search for the historical conditions in the present? A reading of the present to illuminate the future? A prediction of the future anterior ("the present will have prepared the future")? This would be a powerful guide in the analysis of the conjuncture. Such an element obeys less and less the dynamic of the structure from which it issues; it begins to follow another dynamic, that of a structure which will remain dominant tomorrow. This is what Lenin meant when, in response to the "Friends of the People" on the development of capitalism in Russia, he referred to rural artisan production as that which "still" produced under command and which "already" produced for the market. But he had the conceptual knowledge of what had to develop: capitalism. This is where the problem lies.

After they had made a precise enough "conceptual" idea of the dominant capitalist mode of development after the Second World War, a model called "Fordism" in homage to Gramsci, the regulationists undertook the genealogy of its different elements: Taylorism, collective conventions, welfare state, money credit, etc. Robert Boyer¹¹ in particular will show at what point the origin of these elements was heterogeneous, hazardous, and not in the least having in mind the instigation of "Fordism." But as a result, numerous social forces gained an idea of the contradictions which the crisis of 1930 revealed, and advanced propositions of which some had a nearly Fordist allure (as much for fascists as for social democrats and communists). The projects they advanced often indicated a rupture with the representations which were formed in the preceding period (Lipietz, 1985).

Since the regulations tried to perform again the same operation on the contemporary crisis, they had to combine two steps anew:

—An "Althusserian" analysis of the present moment, but taking seriously into consideration the contradictory character of the real, and the different possible solutions for stabilizing it;

—A location of the social forces capable of bringing a specific solution to the located contradictions.

Examples of the above can be found in Leborgne and Lipietz (1987), Mahon (1987), Noel (1988). Still, it is necessary to take seriously the notions of "contradiction" and "subject." And then to go beyond the limits of Althusserianism.

II. The Trouble With Althusserianism

Rejection of Contradiction and the Subject: these two censures seem to be the ransom in classical Althusserianism for the emergence of the concept of Reproduction. This connection is particularly clear in the contribution

of Balibar to *Reading Capital*. His analysis of capitalist economic reproduction furnishes a "prototype" which involves a whole vision of history and humans.

1. *Fecundity and Failings of the Category of Reproduction*

In reading into capitalist production the reproduction of social relations, Balibar brings to light a very fertile idea in Marx. In the capitalist process of the production of things, seen from the point of view of the whole, from the point of view of results, what fundamentally occurs is the reproduction of *places* in the synchronic structure of the mode, a place from which the structure determines the *functions* in the reproduction of the mode. For example, at the end of the cycle, Sector I has reproduced all the constant capital and Sector II all the variable capital, but above all the capitalist class is reproduced with the ownership of the means of production, and the proletariat is reproduced always also dispossessed. The reproduction of people and things thus determines them to produce and to be products.

Where we cannot agree is where reproduction becomes the foundation of production (determines men to produce), when the production of things becomes "appearance" and reproduction "reality," "the effectivity" (II, pp. 174-5). We disagree that Marx institutes a *rupture* between "production as an act, objectification of a subject," and the "concept of a production without a subject, which determines as a result certain classes as their own functions" (p. 171).

In a celebrated text (*On Contradiction*, 1937), which served as a point of departure for *For Marx*, Mao Tse-tung opposes "the two fundamental concepts of development." The first sees the causes of development of things "from the outside, in the action of exterior forces." The second thinks that "the development of objects is sustained by their internal contradictions." Does this exclude the external causes? "Not at all. The external causes constitute the conditions of change, the internal causes are its base, and the external causes operate by the intermediary of the internal causes." What is this for Balibar, who sees in the "matrix of the CMP" (the homology of the relations of ownership and possession) a non-contradictory structure? He is obliged to think change by the effectivity of a relation (ownership) *over* another (possession), of an instance (political) *over* another (economic), of a new mode (the CMP) *over* the ancient (the feudal mode of production) ... and of structures *over* their supports.

What Balibar does not see is that the base of the effectivity of the external cause is internal to each structure under consideration. He specifically forgets three things:

—First, that the relation of "possession" is contradictory. It would be more

correct to speak of the "implication/control contradiction." In depriving the direct producer of intellectual mastery of the operations (for example in Taylorism), the capitalist sacrifices the efficiency of which the producer who is "implicated" in his work is capable (which Swedish and Japanese employers know very well), but inversely the producer "implicated" increases his capacity to control (which Taylor understood too well). The "dispossession" of the direct producer thus is not the univocal dynamic of the capitalist organization of labor; Taylorism is not the unsurpassable horizon of professional relations (Leborgne, Lipietz, 1987).

—Next, Balibar forgets the existence of market relations. The capitalist producer is also a vendor who must find clients, for example with the wage-workers.

—It follows that thus overdetermined, the relation of exploitation is highly unstable: too much surplus-value is extorted, and there are no longer enough clients.

One more word: each of the elementary structures of capitalism is itself a contradiction. And at bottom, it is this way because contradiction unites and opposes human bearers of projects which are only compatible within narrow limits. The contradiction is "original" (not only in its effects) because at the origin a social structure does not unite places but opposes "objective subjects," beings as capable of routine activity as of deviance.

2. *The Problematic of the "Objective Subject"*

Another reading of *Capital* is in effect possible. "Our point of departure," said Marx, "is labor in a form belonging exclusively to man What first distinguishes the worst architect from the most expert bee is that he has constructed the chamber in his head before building it in the hive. The result toward which the worker moves ideally pre-exists in the imagination of the worker.... He realizes there his own goal of which he is conscious, which determines his mode of action as law, and to which he must subordinate his will. And this subordination is not momentary It is even more exacting as the work is less attractive" (Book I, Chapter VII, P 1).

It is this thesis of Marx, a thesis of philosophical anthropology, unchanged from the manuscripts of 1844 to the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, that replaces the other theses which found the category of man as "objective subject" and as social being, historical and "predictive," which Labriola (1899) and Košik (1968) develop, for example.¹²

In this problematic, man (philosophically) appears with a double aspect:

—*Subjective being*: he introduces a "mediation" between his needs and their satisfaction, he forges for himself an "artificial milieu," and to produce objects he is produced and reproduced himself as a social being. "His"

nature is thus the product of "his" activity, the "objective world of men and their products"—an originally contradictory world.

—*Objective being*: he obeys the laws of nature such as they are (including "his" nature); he evolves in this objective and contradictory world which determines the mode of satisfaction of his needs.

From the second aspect it is possible to produce the "social sciences," and this is why economics takes the dominant role in them. From the first aspect man could be known as a *historical* being, liable to a past, a future, a project, a prediction.

The problematic of the objective subject, according to which, as Labriola (p. 237) said, "man is developed or produces himself, not as an entity, generically provided with certain attributes, who repeats himself or develops himself according to a rational rhythm, but is produced and developed at once as cause and effect, as author and consequence of determined conditions," thus opens onto two dialectically connected points of view:

—That of the "objectifying practice": the movement by which humans are produced and engendered their future routines.

—That of the "objectified practice," the state of social man produced in this way, of his material production as well as his routine practices in social relations, which are now presented as "conditions."

Košik compares this doubling to Spinoza's categories of "natura naturans" and "natura naturata." And rightly so: the question is neither of two different moments (humans will sometimes be followers of routine, and sometimes innovators), nor of a division of humanity into two groups ("leaders" and sheep), but into *two aspects*, always coexisting in variable proportions, in all human practice. Such is the opposition currently used (from Poulantzas to Giddens) between structure and practice. Because in the same way that practice is determined by conditions, the "trajectories" of these practices are mechanically obtained by a "duality" apart from the knowledge of structures, and reciprocally social structures are only the pattern for these objectified practices (Lipietz, 1988b).

Knowledge of social reality as "conditions" is thus a moment (but only a moment) of the knowledge of the "social being" of man. Again it is necessary, as Košik reminds us, not to forget that "conditions are not being" and that these conditions are "products": "social being is not contained, but simply fixed, in economic categories and their articulation. For the analysis to grasp social being in the system of economic categories, it must dissolve its fixity and conceive of it as the expression of the objective activity of men" (1968, p. 135).

It is thus necessary not to confuse the methodology of the *analysis of the conditions* of objectified practice with the metaphysical ontology that

confuses the existence of man with conditions. In my sense, the Althusserian school is *par excellence* the school of the methodology of conditions; in this regard, a renaissance of historical materialism can be legitimately attributed to it. Unfortunately, it slipped from methodology to ontology. It has thus remained capable of analyzing past conditions (the retrospective branch of being) but finds itself powerless to apprehend the new, humanity in the process of making the world. Having dissolved the vulgar "pseudo-concrete," it fetishizes, in an academic mode, the "conditions" that it has analyzed so well, by denying that the "conditions" should themselves be the product of subjects. It has taken "conditions" for "being."

We saw, however, that Poulantzas reintroduced, in the shadow of the field of structures, a "field of practice" determined by the effect of the field of structures on the "agent-bearers." Let us note first of all the advantages of this conceptualization. It excludes the empiricism which would read off from the relations of production the existence of a "class in itself" (the proletariat), which would become (the concept was developing in the real and was self-conscious) a "class for itself" susceptible to political autonomy. It instituted a field of analysis where contradiction reigned. It reintroduced, in making the class the effect of the totality of instances, an entity which, without being a "pars totalis" of the "expressive totality," at least has the characteristic of being "present" (that is to say, contemporaneous) in all instances (economic, ideological, political).

These advantages, we have said, are met with a singular oddity. What are these structures? What do they structure? Are they empty forms, a "container" which informs the contents? And practice? Is it not structured? If the structures are not those of the practice—and Poulantzas takes great care to affirm the relative autonomy of the two fields, the first only imposes "limits" on the other—then must structures be represented as a "too-large garment" in which practice "swims"?

Effectively, it seems that the "stake" should be the effect sought by Poulantzas in the distinction of fields. It is a question of being given with the practices that which is forbidden to lone structures: to think their overturning. The "practices" appear as an "escape hatch" for structuralism. But Poulantzas takes great care to restrain them: they are determined (limited) by the field of structures, and can only have "effectivity" on the field of structures at the level of the political instance. Poulantzas timidly reconnects with the Third Thesis on Feuerbach: "the materialist doctrine which would have man be the product of circumstance and education ... forgets that it is precisely the men who transform circumstance and that the educator himself needs to be educated....The coexistence of the change in circumstances and human activity or self-change, can only be considered

and comprehended to the same degree as is revolutionary practice." In an ossified form, he thus retrieves the two fundamental ideas of the problematic of the objective subject: it is a human practice that makes history, but not all practices are transforming.

But it is still necessary to think practice authentically, as Košik reminds us: "Even a totality thought as articulation of contradictions remains abstract, if one does not show that man, as a real subject of history, created the base and superstructure, and in the process of production and reproduction, elaborates social reality as a totality of social relations, institutions and ideas, and, in this fashioning of social objective reality, was himself created at the same time as a historical and social being" Lacking which, he pursues, "One falls into the snare of fetishism, of which the fruit is the false totality. Social reality then is conceived as the sum of autonomous structures which influence one another. The subject has disappeared, or better, the actual subject is replaced by a mythical subject, reified and fetishized, of knowledge: by the autonomous movement of the structure" (p. 42). One thus finds oneself facing the following dilemma: "At one of the poles relations (conditions) are petrified, and at the other, the spirit, the psyche. Either the conditions are passive, such that the spirit, the psyche, sets them in motion and gives them a meaning; or else the conditions are active and themselves become subjects, whereas the psychic element or the consciousness has as a function only to know in an exact, or mystified, manner their natural or scientific laws" (p. 92). This takes yet another form: "The alternative, either *mechanical causality*, where one factor is cause and the other effect, or *pluralist* interaction, simple reciprocal connection excluding all actual causality ...; this alternative is already the consequence of a determined vision of reality which, apart from social realities, has elaborated isolated abstractions of which it makes ontological essences (factors) Metaphysics bases all its premises on this problematic" (p. 79).

Here we are precisely at the heart of the contradiction between Balibar and Poulantzas, on the common terrain inaugurated by Althusser. Balibar chose the complete autonomy of the movement of the "structure of structures," of generalized synchrony, with its consequence, rallying around *mechanical causality* ("one structure over the other"). Poulantzas, who cannot resort to this, introduces political struggle as the "motor of history," political struggle determined by the totality of the structure, thus by a *plurality* of relatively autonomous instances. But are these instances so different from the "factors" against which Labriola and Košik polemicize?

In fact, this dilemma ("symptomatic form of ideological questions," said Althusser) already finds its source in the famous critique of the "simple reversal of the Hegelian dialectic." In positing reality as a network of "decentered circles," of autonomous contradictions, *For Marx* shattered

Hegelian and Stalinist mythology, but, failing to put in place an "organizing subject," Althusser rejoined the worldview of the 18th century: the kaleidoscope of Diderot. For if the circles are decentered, for the contradictions to condense, it is necessary either for them to be set into place by pure chance and to be content with a mere "history of combinations," or to imagine a structure of all structures similar to the dream of "the single equation" of modern physics, or to reintroduce structure by means of a subject endowed with the contemporaneity of all instances. At the heart of classical Althusserianism, the first solution seems to be that of Althusser, the second the temptation of Balibar, the third describes well enough the attempt of Poulantzas, with his class-effects of the ensemble of structures, and their practices which are condensed in the single political instance.

III. The Regulationist "Surpassing"

When in the first half of the 1970s economists of Marxist inspiration had to think the crisis, there remained at first, for many of them, to "surpass" the Althusserian heritage. Approaches in terms of "regulation" have corresponded, for many among us, to this need. The results have since mostly been published, and it is not a question of explicating them here. I nevertheless wish to try to "realign" a bit better these results with their heritage. To do this, I will resituate the emergence of the regulationist approaches in the intellectual context of the 1970s, and then I will respond to the notion of "reproduction" as I have extracted it from Balibar, precisely from economic production.

1. *Confronting the Heritage*

From the preceding long critical analysis, we can summarize what helped us and what hindered us in four "main theses."

a) Social reality is a fabric, an articulation of relatively autonomous and specific relations, overdetermining one another (even if some are more fundamental than others): an "always already given, overdetermined whole, in dominance."

b) Each of these social relations is reproduced as a result of the action of its "bearers" ("structure exists as a result"), in placing the bearers into the contradictions of reproducing it, independent of their subjectivity.

To these fundamental methodological theses, the school of Althusser associates, in a more or less contingent or haphazard way, two important theses for economists:

c) Productive forces themselves are the materialization of social relations of production (a theme developed by Balibar and Bettelheim).

d) The contradictory character of the relations of exchange is superficial and secondary (a theme affirmed forcefully by Althusser and developed by Balibar, but rejected by Bettelheim).

We will not discuss any further the fertility of Thesis (a). Neither will we discuss further the fecundity of Thesis (c), which is subjacent to all our work on Taylorist organization of labor, its crisis and its overcoming.

Thesis (b), on the other hand, and Thesis (d), which is basically its corollary and its illustration, constitute the "bad side" of Althusserianism, by which it participates in the structuralist hegemony of its epoch which, from Lévi-Strauss to Lacan, everywhere pummels the "subject." Individualism, the subjectivism of the "captain of industry," for example, finds its first illustration (and perhaps its economic determinant) in the existence of market relations, and in the autonomy of "private labors executed independently of one another" and which search after the fact for their social validation in Chapter One of *Capital*. Throwing onto this first chapter the mantle of Noah, Althusser erased in a single stroke the subject, contradiction, and market relations. Developing this idea, Balibar came to deny the existence of structural contradiction at the origin of crises: a structure has as its mission to persevere in its being.

From here to think that "all is done for this," it was only a short step to functionalism. This is what Terray (1977) explained quite well: "we have frequently seen the reintroduction, in favor of considerations on reproduction, of the whole out-of-date arsenal of functionalist interpretations: reproduction is conceived as a final cause from which the ensemble of structures and analyzed institutions proceeds.... To avoid this error, it is necessary to recall first of all that reproduction can only be a goal: only a subject can propose a goal. Society is not a subject. It is necessary to recall above all that what is reproduced is precisely and before everything else a contradiction Consequently, to be placed at the point of view of reproduction is definitively to understand how the same cycle of production and distribution constantly replaces in presence the two terms of the contradiction which is the fundamental relation of production: dominant and dominated, exploiter and exploited; how the first attempts to embellish the crises to which this contradiction leads so that it could be surmounted or resolved, how the second is attached to the contrary, more or less concisely, to abolish or invade it. Reproduction in its totality is at once the stake of their confrontation and its result."

Retrospectively, we consider the long period of Fordist expansion without a crisis "in circulation" to be the most significant part of the functionalist illusion. "Circulationism" was thus one insult in the debates between Marxists (in particular in the critique of Rosa Luxemburg, but also in the analysis of "center-periphery" relations). It began to be applied to production, to labor-capital relations.

The seminal thesis of Michel Aglietta (1974) sacrificed at this altar: it was necessary to work through hundreds of pages dedicated to the analysis of the labor/capital relations, but fortunately diffracted in a relation of labor organization and a relation of distribution of the value added (possession and proprietorship) before the existence of autonomous capitals would appear. But this "diffraction" sufficed to bring about the *contradiction* in the reproduction of this complex relation, hence the possibility of crisis, and hence the problem of *regulation*. It was time: the crisis of Fordism was about to erupt.

Let us admit: the introduction of the term "regulation" does not at all suffice to dissipate the functionalist ambiguities connoted by the term "reproduction." In some of our formulations, "regulation" is designated simply "what is needed for reproduction to work *however*." Evidently, to explain the crisis we sought to explain what, first of all, was not in crisis, Fordism. The "mode of regulation" was hence freed for public diffusion in the form of its *result*, rather than starting with a discussion previous to the "however," to the contradiction and the tendency to crisis (which it has to inhibit as an unstable result): one can rigorously speak of "functionalism after the fact."

2. From Reproduction to Regulation

We insist on this point: it is apropos of problems of capitalist accumulation that the passage of the notion of reproduction makes way for that of regulation. Let us return in effect for an instant to the emblematic example of the reproduction of places (capitalist/proletarian) in Balibar's reading of *Capital*. He has clearly underscored the fact that the circulation of merchandise between capitalists and proletarians would result in a reproduction of the structure of the wage relation. The conditions of the relation (and of the circulation it induces) appear in effect identical in result:

	A	→	$P \left\{ \begin{matrix} c \\ v \end{matrix} \dots M \right.$	→	A'	$\left. \begin{matrix} A \\ pl \end{matrix} \right\}$
Capitalist	Money-capital		Conditions of production		Money	Money-capital
Proletarian	Labour-power		Money V		Subsistence goods	Labour-power
	F	→	V		→	M F

Figure 1: Reproduction of the Wage Relation

This chart may be read in two ways. Should one be interested in the reproduction of positions (vertical, synchronic, paradigmatic, harmonic readings):

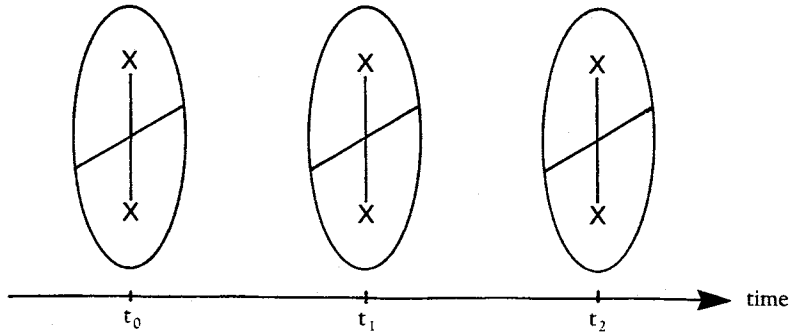


Figure 2: The Structure in Time

Should one be interested in the trajectory of agents (horizontal, diachronic, syntagmatic, counterpointed readings):

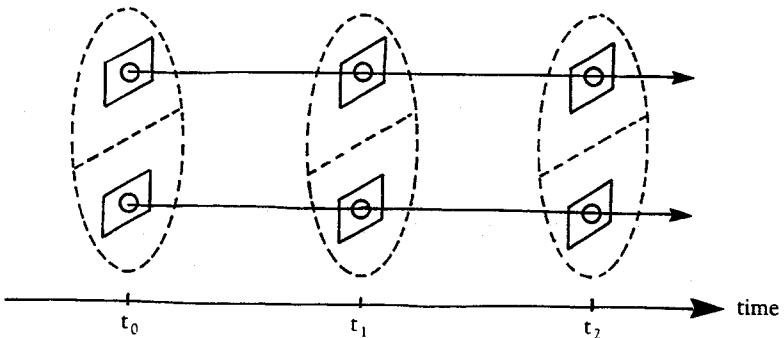


Figure 3: Trajectories

From these figures, the Althusserians have essentially retained the "vertical" dimension (the system of places). It is in effect sufficient to consider the first chart "head on" (that is, with time moving towards us) and not longitudinally (with time from left to right) to obtain the famous "figure eight" of reproduction:

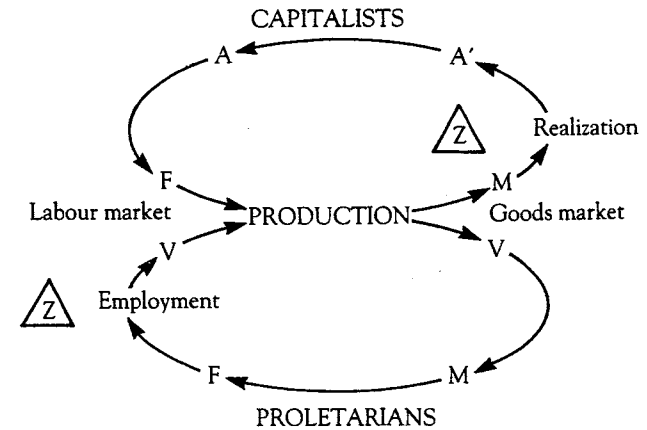


Figure 4: The "Figure Eight"

Seen from this angle, reproduction appears in effect "non-contradictory." All the work of "regulationists" can thus be understood as a triple effort:

- to show that capitalist reproduction "doesn't run by itself";
- to show why, for vast periods of time, it is pursued "however";
- to show why, at the end of a certain time, a great crisis erupts.

These things are known today. First, the simple reality of the market relation, the uncertainty of the capitalist producer concerning the social validity of the merchandise offered, introduces a radical dissymmetry between merchandise and money: money is a general "unconditional" equivalent of merchandise; the realization of merchandise in money is on the contrary a "perilous leap," indicated in Figure 4 by the sign Z, "dangerous turn." The flow of merchandise going out at the northeast end of the schema must be correctly proportioned (in volume and value) to the demand which is expressed in the southeast loop, but also in the non-represented loops, in particular the "accumulation-investment" loop (purchase of productive goods by capitalists). The uncertainty in this subject constitutes the "formal possibility" of crises. Its necessity is introduced by accumulation itself, which tends to inflate the flow coming

out of the northeast, all in containing the growth of the southeast loop. This contradiction is at the heart of the wage relation. It can be summarized in one phrase: either the price of exploitation is too high and the crisis of overproduction threatens, or else it is too low and the crisis of underinvestment threatens. This price is itself a function on one hand of the relations of distribution (norms of consumption), and on the other hand of the transformations in production (norms of production), and in particular of gains in productivity and changes in the organic composition of capitals.

A mode of transformation conjoined to and compatible with norms of production and consumption is called a *regime of accumulation*. This regime can be described as the given repetition of the production of sections or productive branches and of the corresponding demand: what is called schema of reproduction or macroeconomic structure. We have shown that the "Fordist" regime could be described as a parallelism of the increase of productivity, the norm of consumption of wage-workers, and of the composition of capital. Said another way, it follows a schema of intensive reproduction with increase of wage-worker consumption such that a parallel increase occurs in the volume of the net product of Sections I and II, related in number to productive wage-workers. This regime of accumulation thus is a kind of "chain"¹¹ of possible capitalist reproduction:

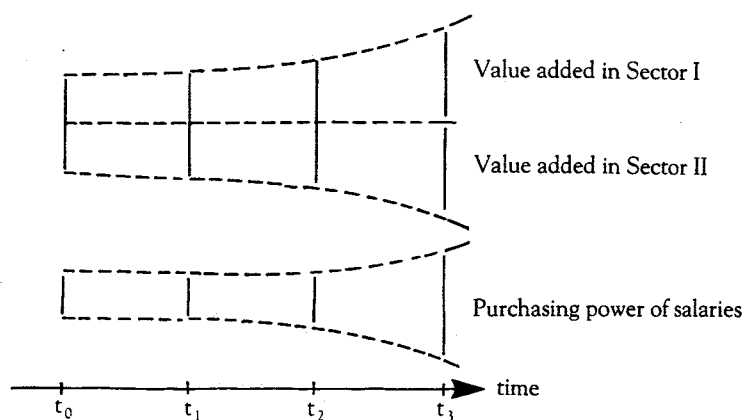


Figure 5: Regime of Accumulation as a Chain

But let us return to Figure 1. The question is whether to take seriously the longitudinal dimension of this chart. The agents (capitalists and proletarians) can be considered the proprietors of "value in process," that is, of the "flow" of values of respective generic forms:

...→A→P...M→A'→P...

and ...→F→S→M...F→S...

This concept of "values in process" metamorphosing from form to form is introduced in the third chapter of *Capital* and gradually developed throughout Book II. These millions of individual "flows" constitute the thread of economic reality. In "everyday life" (*Alltagsleben*) they are even the *only* positive reality. At the heart of this tide, the values in process change their forms, as is seen developing in time in Figure 4, the "figure eight." In reality, the two spirals of this figure are composed of myriads of individual spirals: the tide. "Ex post," when the regime of accumulation is stabilized, this tide, in its structure, must fit exactly the proportions repetitively described by the schema of reproduction.

But "ex ante," the tide is guided by millions of individuals, each responsible for "his" value in process, and most particularly the well-named "captains of industry." To guide themselves, they make use of "maps," *Representations (Darstellungen)* of their insertion in the tide, and their errors are sanctioned by slumps or unemployment. Can we then compare individuals to automatons receiving informational "input" of which the "output" is behavior conforming to reproduction? By no means.

The possibility of a satisfactory reproduction is only designated by Marx in the celebrated "schemas of reproduction" and in his reflection on the "price of production" (Lipietz, 1983). But this possibility does not imply any guarantee of a happy ending. It suffices that the assumed laws of formation of wages and nominal profit are not adapted to the evolution of norms of production, for imbalances appear. The tide of values in process thus seems to "overflow" the increase in value of the schema of reproduction, or on the contrary to prove inferior to the potential increase. In the economic fabric, wrinkles or holes appear: inflation or overproduction. This then poses the problem of the adaptation of the tide to the regime, or, to keep the Smithian metaphor of weaving, the woof to the warp. This adaptation is the effect of *regulation* in action, which plays, in the metaphor of weaving, the role of warps, or the "invisible hand" of Adam Smith.

The whole effort of economic works in terms of regulation, and in particular of the CEPREMAP report (1977) and its derivatives, has consisted of showing that this "invisible hand" was not the transhistorical mechanism of concurrence pure and simple. The mode of regulation includes, among others, direct and indirect forms of determination of wages, of inter-enterprise concurrence and of increase and self-guidance of values in process. As the regime of accumulation is itself transformed, great crises can arise from the inadequacy of the mode of regulation. These great crises (like the current crisis, or that of the 1930s) are to be distinguished from cyclical "small crises," which are the same form of the action of regulation in the

modes called "competitive." As for the "intentionality" of putting in place an adapted mode of regulation, as in the "monopolist regulation" for the Fordist regime, we have been able to show that historically the question has most often been one of "discoveries," which in the thread of time have been able to be *consciously* consolidated, by Keynesian theoreticians of Fordist regulation, by reformist unions, and by governments seeking to preserve social consensus.

Inversely, to understand how the great crisis of Fordism (for example) appears, how the "fabric" is torn, implies a double labor. On one hand, at a profound level, the progressive deformation of the macro-economic structure: decline of gains in productivity, sluggishness of the organic composition, increased internationalization. On the other hand, at an "esoteric" level, we seek to show how socioeconomic actions, in their struggles to "modify the given," at the very interior of the logic of the model of development, but also in their efforts to transform it in the name of a "nature" incompatible with this model, have "accumulated divergences." The unions have sought to render wage increases more and more automatic, to consolidate the assets of the welfare state: offensives internal to the model. But workers have resisted more and more alienating forms of Fordist organization of work. To oppose these tendencies, entrepreneurs have sought to enlarge the scale of production, to accelerate automation (a strategy internal to Fordist logic); but also to transfer production to countries with modes of regulation more favorable to profit, to distort social legislation by the "dualization" of the labor market: a form of avoiding by flight the institutionalized Fordist compromises. "Regulation" has given way to crisis.

The result of these divergent strategies is known. The essential thing is to understand that it is not a question of a regrettable weakening of consensus that a bit of good will would be able to smooth out. Contradiction is internal to the regime itself.

Conclusion

In France today, Althusser is, as Hegel once was, treated like a "dead dog." He and his school bear certain responsibilities, deriving from the structuralist deformation imposed on the reading of Marx. Forgetting the subject, forgetting contradiction, hypostasis of reproduction: all this prevents thinking the crisis, thinking the positive value of individualism. Althusserianism was thus condemned by the 1970s. Unfortunately, those who today "forget" Althusser in fact "forget" Marx, the existence of structures of exploitation, the weight of social relations.

I have attempted to show that in "classical Althusserianism" there was much to save: the irreducible multiplicity of the relations which weave social reality, overdetermination of these relations, and, for the little which

can be taken into consideration about their contradictory character, the multiplicity of possible conjunctures.

I have recalled that the regulationists began in the school of Althusserianism in the comprehension of notions such as productive forces, social formations, state/economic relations.

I undertook to show that the notion of "regulation" literally constituted a "surpassing" (*Aufhebung*) of "reproduction": the unity of opposition and identity at the heart of a contradictory structure, the moment dialectically opposed to that of "the crisis of the structure." I did it, like Balibar, through the example of economic reproduction of capitalism. I was equally able to evoke the regulationist surpassing of the reflections of Poulantzas, which is beginning today (Jenson, 1988; Lipietz, 1988b).

But I wish to conclude by recalling what remains for me the fundamental lesson of Althusser: simply the methodological theses 0, 1 and 2. The real exists independently of our thoughts. The concepts through which we pretend to know it exist only in our minds. Their adequation to other practices at the heart of the real is only a matter of pertinence. Or again, as Umberto Eco, author of *The Absent Structure*, made the hero of *The Name of the Rose* say: "The concepts which we fabricate are only ladders, threads by which to grasp something. After which, they can be thrown into the fire."

Shall we one day throw into the fire Mode of Production, Reproduction, Fordism, and Peripheral Fordism? Certainly. But they can be useful in the meantime.

Translated by Erika Thomas

Notes

1. The works of reference of this "school" are: Aglietta (1976), Boyer (1987), Boyer and Mistral (1978), C.E.P.R.E.M.A.P. (1977), Coriat (1979), Lipietz (1979, 1983, 1985a), which all make critical reference, implicitly or explicitly (mine in particular) to Althusserian contributions. An International Congress on Regulation Theory, uniting economists, geographers and social and political scientists of all continents, was held in June 1988 in Barcelona. In my contribution (1988a) I remarked that Anglo-Saxon geographers making reference to the "theory of structuration" of Antony Giddens (1984) themselves also practiced a form of critical Althusserianism.

2. For this I based myself on works (Lipietz and Rouilleault, 1972; Lipietz 1973) representing my own "rupture with the Father."

3. According to the Althusserian distinction, dialectical materialism is the spontaneous philosophy of scientists, practitioners of the science of history, i.e., Historical Materialism.

4. *Pour Marx* (Althusser, 1965), pp. 187 ff. For the remainder of this article the book will be designated PM.

5. *Lire le Capital* (Althusser et al., 1965), tome I, pp. 67 ff. For the remainder of this article the book will be designated LLC.

6. Innumerable references in PM and LLC: this is the "theoretical anti-humanism" common to all structuralism.

7. Rancière translates with this single term "*Darstellung*" and "*Vorstellung*" in Marx, without inquiring whether they mean exactly the same thing.

8. See especially Balibar (LLC, pp. 214 ff.) and Bettelheim (1970).

9. See, for example, Boyer (1986), Lipietz (1985b).

10. Thus, Glyn et al. (1986) and Lipietz (1985a) have analyzed the current crisis as a "crisis of the Fordist model" (notably in the "relation of possession"), overdetermined by the contradiction between the more and more internationalized character of production and the national character of the mode of regulation.

11. See his numerous historical articles, in particular his contribution to the CEPREMAP (1977) report.

12. The concept of the "objective subject" is developed by Košik (1968). There is a long Marxist tradition that derives (via Gramsci and Labriola) from the Marx of the *18th Brumaire* ("Men make history, but on the basis of given conditions") and above all the *Third Thesis on Feuerbach*. These two theses of Marx are the point of departure reclaimed by the "theory of structuration" of Giddens (1984) and of the "genetic structure" of Bourdieu (1987) as well as my own theory of regulation (1988).

Let us remark, for the benefit of Anglo-Saxon feminists, that the generic term "homme" (of masculine gender) has been monopolized by males in France (the Latin root "vir" existing only in the adjective "virile"), while in English "men" have inversely imposed the genericness of their name to the entirety of "human beings." It is not as easy to distort social relations of gender in the French language as it is in English. As all efforts being made here are bound to fail, I keep the masculine to refer to the philosophical concept of "man" (and the feminine for that of "nature": all is evidently not neutral).

13. On the "warp/woof duality," see Lipietz (1983, 1986b).

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