



# The deconstructive effects of combining discourses. A case study: Marxism and psychoanalysis

Adrià Porta Caballé<sup>1</sup> 

© The Author(s) under exclusive licence to Springer Nature Limited 2023

**Abstract** Can deconstruction be accomplished not through the close reading of just one discourse, but through its combination with another? This paper aims at exploring this second way of performing deconstruction through a particular case study: Marxism and psychoanalysis. In the body of the essay, the history of Freudo-Marxism is divided into two parts, depending on which psychoanalyst stands as point of reference: Freud or Lacan. We proceed by studying the four main strategies by virtue of which a genuine combination between Marxism and psychoanalysis has been historically attempted: separation (Reich), domination (Marcuse), contradiction (Althusser) and, finally, deconstruction (Laclau).

**Keywords** Freudo-Marxism · deconstruction · Reich · Marcuse · Althusser · Laclau

I was never a dogmatic Marxist. I always tried to, even in those early days, to mix Marxism with something else  
Ernesto Laclau (Angus, 1998)

## Introduction to the General Argument: Micro- and Macro-deconstruction

Deconstruction, as it is nowadays broadly understood, is a form of *close reading*. In Heidegger's lectures, for instance, he used to take any thinker from the history of metaphysics and, through a meticulous and rigorous thinking of every sentence, bringing to the light the originary etymology of every word, he would unfold what

---

✉ Adrià Porta Caballé  
adriaportac@ub.edu

<sup>1</sup> University of Barcelona, 08001 Barcelona, Spain



was “un-thought” in it—time as presence, the ontological difference or Being qua Being. “What a thinker has thought can be mastered only if we refer everything in his thought that is still unthought back to its originary truth” (Heidegger, 1954/1968, p. 54). Analogously, his disciple Derrida would read any text from what he called the “metaphysics of presence” and he would look for the *différance* implicit in every difference, bringing to the fore a “third kind” in every binary opposition (pharmakon, supplement, hymen, gram, spacing, incision, etc.) (Derrida, 1972/1981, p. 43). As Paul De Man says: “the text deconstructs itself, is self-deconstructive [emphasis added]” (1986, p. 118). *The text, it-self*: is this solipsistic reading the only way of achieving deconstructive effects on text(s)?

In this essay we argue that what has been understood until now as “deconstruction”, in general, actually represents just one amongst at least two ways of achieving deconstructive effects on text(s). We will call the Heideggerian and Derridean types “micro-deconstructions” because, like when we look through a microscope, they examine the tiny interval between cells (i.e. difference qua difference) in a given organism (i.e. a text, author or historical epoch; in just one word: a discourse). However, another strategy seems to be available in order to achieve similar deconstructive effects on text(s), one that we will call “macro-deconstruction”. Here we are not so interested in the tiny spacing between the moments or oppositions in just one discourse in particular, as in mixing at least two different discourses in general, *grosso modo*. If the first form of deconstruction can also be said to be *autonomous* because, as it is clear from De Man’s formula, it aims to show the ultimate (im-)possibility for a text to give the norm (-nomos) to itself (*autos*-); the second case is clearly *hetero-nomous* since the norm of a given discourse is challenged through its combination with another (*heteros*-). What happens then if, instead of looking at *the difference* between speech and writing, for instance, in Rousseau or Saussure—the two main examples in Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* (1967/2016)—we search for the historical examples where apparently *different discourses* have tried to be combined? In this essay we try to explore this second, other way—*macro*-deconstruction—but not from a purely theoretical standpoint, but through a particular case study. And we can see how examples of this kind abound especially in the second half of the twentieth century: linguistics and psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis and feminism, feminism and Marxism, etc. Even if we can see how this unexplored terrain of macro-deconstruction would require a more systematic enterprise comparing all these trends in the future, in this paper we have chosen the particular case study of Marxism and psychoanalysis as the “royal road” that leads to the deconstructive effects that any genuine combination of discourses would imply in general.

## Introduction to the Case Study: The “Profound Solidarity” between Marxism and Psychoanalysis

Žižek opens *How to Read Lacan* alluding to the “profound solidarity” that links Marxism with psychoanalysis (2006, p. 1). From a historical point of view, it is clear that both discourses have intertwined time and again in the last hundred years. Starting with the founder of the Freudo-Marxist tradition, Wilhelm Reich, until the



establishment of the Essex School of discourse analysis by Ernesto Laclau—not to mention examples as diverse as Louis Althusser and the Frankfurt School of Fromm and Marcuse—the attempt to combine Marxism and psychoanalysis is an inescapable recurrence in contemporary philosophy. Our hypothesis is that one can divide the long Freudo-Marxist tradition in two phases by identifying the psychoanalyst standing as the point of reference in each period; namely Freud, in the first part, and Lacan, in the second part. We should remember with Stavrakakis that “both the Freudian Left and the Lacanian Left share a common focus: to create a link between psychoanalysis and politics” (2007, p. 26). In this sense, we will put an end to our exposition when *a new space* for politics is definitively opened by the “profound solidarity” existing between Marxism and psychoanalysis.

But if the historical analysis of the Freudo-Marxist tradition stands as a privileged case study, we should bear in mind that this essay is above all a philosophical argument on deconstruction. A warning has to be made in this respect from the very beginning. This paper is not a contribution to Marxism or psychoanalysis considered separately, but a work of discourse analysis about their *combination*. We are not as much interested in the results that a combination in this particular case implies—although two prominent consequences will emerge in the course of our historical macro-deconstruction: the historicization of the Oedipus complex and the reality principle—as we are in *the general conditions of possibility* for a genuine combination to take place. As a result, we will study the four fundamental strategies that have emerged historically in order to render Marxism compatible with psychoanalysis: separation (Reich), domination (Marcuse), contradiction (Althusser) and, finally, deconstruction (Laclau).

## The Freudian Left

The term “Freudian Left” was coined by the Stanford historian Paul Robinson (1969) to designate Freud’s disciples who made a radical reading of his teachings. Here we are impelled to exclude from our analysis Freudians like Géza Róheim or Otto Gross who, despite being intellectually and politically committed to the Left, cannot be identified as Marxist *stricto sensu*. We are thus left with three main attempts to combine Marxism and psychoanalysis: Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse. The problem is that Freud always deliberately avoided drawing explicitly political conclusions from his psychoanalytic findings. As Fromm says, “Freud’s political attitude is difficult to describe because he never gave any systematic account of it” (1978, p. 95). There is only one reference to “socialism” in his whole collected works and it does not go beyond the usual conservative criticism of an allegedly “idealistic conception of human nature” (Freud, 1930/1961, p. 143). In this way, what characterizes fundamentally the Freudian Left can be summarized in the motto “Freud against Freud”. In a letter to Otto Fenichel dated 26 March 1934, Reich wrote:

The basic debate between dialectical-materialist and bourgeois psychoanalysts will primarily have to prove where Freud the scientist came into conflict with



Freud the bourgeois philosopher, where psychoanalytic research corrected the bourgeois concept of culture and where the bourgeois concept of culture hindered and confused scientific research and led it astray. “Freud against Freud” is the central theme of our criticism. (Reich, 1975, p. 61n)

As a consequence, in this first part I analyse the work of two paramount figures of the Freudian Left: Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse (Erich Fromm, like Slavoj Žižek afterwards, despite being very present in this essay, will not have separate sections because their methodological *eclecticism* does not allow them to have a unitary, systematic strategy in order to combine Marxism and psychoanalysis, which is what interests us here and therefore we would deviate too much from the general argument). As we shall see, Reich and Marcuse’s different attempts to bring together Marxism and psychoanalysis stand as two opposite strategies to repress the fundamentally deconstructive character that a genuine combination of discourses would imply.

### Wilhelm Reich: Separation

As Reich himself admits, he was never the initiator but only the representative of “a trend in Europe to unite Marx and Freud [which] began to prevail in 1927” (1975, p. 115). The origin of this trend has to be found in a booklet by Siegfried Bernfeld titled *Psychoanalysis and Socialism* published only a couple of years before in 1925. It is here that the question is posed for the first time: “is psychoanalysis, as a science, compatible with scientific socialism—that is to say, with Marxism—or do there subsist between them irreconcilable contradictions?” (Bernfeld, 1972, p. 65). The answer is as short as it is straightforward. First, Bernfeld shows that psychoanalysis differs from all previous forms of psychology in that it is materialist *per definitionem*. Then he also demonstrates that dialectical principles govern the psychoanalytic method. From these two premises Bernfeld concludes that psychoanalysis is compatible with dialectical materialism. What is most important for our argument is his justification for rendering compatible Marxism and psychoanalysis: “Freud has never taken it upon himself to venture into the field studied by Marxism. ... Marx, on the other hand, never dealt with the problems which Freud tackles” (Bernfeld, 1972, pp. 70–71).

“What Bernfeld began in 1927 and dropped afterwards I continued in 1929,” asserts Reich (1975, p. 104). That is when he publishes *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis* (1929/1972b), a perfect replica of Bernfeld’s booklet. He also begins with the question of *compatibility* between Marxism and psychoanalysis, basing his argument on showing how the psychoanalytic method is both materialist and dialectical. The main reason why Reich’s *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis* represents the foundation of the Freudo-Marxist tradition proper is because the concern over the *relation* between the two discourses is carefully considered. If in Bernfeld we only found a brief note stating that Marx and Freud did not deal with the same kind of problems, in Reich the question about the specific relationship between Marxism and psychoanalysis is tackled directly:



The proper study of psychoanalysis is the psychological life of man in society. The psychological life of the masses is of interest to it only insofar as individual phenomena occur in the mass (e.g., the phenomenon of a leader), or insofar as it can explain phenomena of the “mass soul” such as fear, panic, obedience, etc., from its experience of the individual. It would seem, however, that the phenomenon of class consciousness is not accessible to psychoanalysis, nor can problems which belong to sociology—such as mass movements, politics, strikes—be taken as objects of the psychoanalytic method. And so, it cannot replace a sociological doctrine, nor can a sociological doctrine develop out of it. It can, however, become an auxiliary science to sociology, say in the form of social psychology. For instance, it can explore the irrational motives which have led a certain type of leader to join the socialist or the national-socialist movement; or it can trace the effect of social ideologies on the psychological development of an individual. Thus, the Marxist critics are right when they reproach certain representatives of the psychoanalytic school with attempting to explain what cannot be explained by that method. But they are wrong when they identify the method with those who apply it, and when they blame the method for their mistakes. (Reich, 2012, p. 7)

The last sentence is a direct warning to Voloshinov’s *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique*, probably the most representative example of Marxist hostility towards psychoanalysis, ruthlessly criticized as “a symptom of the disintegration and decline of the bourgeois world” (1927/2012, p. 16). Voloshinov’s work is the complete opposite of what Reich wants to accomplish: a rendering of psychoanalysis that is compatible with Marxism. But at the same time both Voloshinov and Reich are nothing else than the result of an increasing concern over the first *points of contact* between Marxism and psychoanalysis. On the one side of the argument, take as an example Plekhanov’s *The Role of the Individual in History* where it is stated that “the personal element is of no significance whatever in history” (1898/2003, p. 7). On the other side, Freud’s introduction to *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* is a representative case of the opposite phenomenon, of how “the contrast between individual psychology and social or group psychology, which at a first glance may seem to be full of significance, loses a great deal of its sharpness when it is examined more closely” (1921/1955, p. 69).

It is in the middle of this debate between the individual and the social, between psychoanalysis and Marxism, that Reich intervenes to render them compatible. As in Bernfeld, the question of *compatibility* (instead of combination) is a discursive strategy used to keep both discourses *separate* from one another, in order to *repress* the deconstructive character that a genuine combination of discourses would imply. This occurs, of course, in the already mentioned points of contact between the two discourses. One example is Reich’s rejection of the death drive on the basis that it “has no material foundation” (2012, p. 17). Another example is the amendment to Freud’s conception of the reality principle: Reich wants to add that it is socially determined, that it “has had a different content in the past and it will change again to the extent that the social order changes” (2012, p. 18). In this sense, the Oedipus complex also represents a “static exception” (Reich, 2012, p. 46) to the alleged



“dialectical” character of the psychoanalytic method. Reich even goes as far as to say that “the whole theoretical conception of Marx and Engels in their understanding of social processes basically contradicted *Totem and Taboo*” (2012, p. 96). As we will see, the Marxist need to historicize both the reality principle and the Oedipus complex will be a constant in the Freud-Marxist tradition as a whole. What characterizes each author’s philosophy is the specific discursive strategy designed to justify this historicization. In this regard Reich could not have been clearer: Marxism and psychoanalysis require a certain *division of labour*:

Psychoanalysis can reveal the instinctual roots of the individual’s social activity and can clarify, in detail, the psychological effects of production conditions upon the individual; can clarify, that is to say, the way that ideologies are formed “inside the head”. Between the two terminal points—the economic structure of society at the one end, the ideological superstructure at the other: terminal points whose causal connections have been more or less explored by the materialist view of history—the psychoanalyst sees a number of intermediate stages. Psychoanalysis proves that the economic structure of society does not directly transform itself into ideologies “inside the head”. Instead, it shows that the instinct for nourishment (self-preservation instinct), the manifestations of which are dependent upon given economic conditions, affects and changes the workings of the sexual instinct, which is far more plastic (i.e., malleable). In limiting the aims of sexual needs, this constantly creates new productive forces within the social work process by means of the sublimated libido. Directly, the sublimated libido yields working capacity; indirectly, it leads to more highly developed forms of sexual sublimation, e.g., religion, morality in general and sexual morality in particular, etc. This means that psychoanalysis has its proper place within the materialist view of history at a very specific point: at that point where psychological questions arise as a result of the Marxian thesis that material existence transforms itself into “ideas inside the head”. (Reich, 2012, pp. 45–46)

Is not this precisely the place that Žižek will later attribute to psychoanalysis in his theory of ideology (2008a, pp. 95–144)? In this sense not much has changed in the Freud-Marxist tradition: from Reich to Žižek, psychoanalysis still holds the same *place* within the Marxist theory of ideology, namely, the psychological explanation of how economically determined ideologies become “ideas inside the head”. What has changed however from Reich’s original theory is an increasing distance towards his strict delimitation of the *place* to which psychoanalysis is meant to be confined. The problem with Reich’s theory is that it actually relies on a rigid *demarcation* between the social production of ideology and its psychological reproduction “inside the head”:

The social production of ideologies has to be differentiated from the reproduction of these ideologies in the people of a given society. While the investigation of the former is the task of sociology and economics, the exploration of the latter is the task of psychoanalysis. ... It has to determine



the myriad intermediate links in the transforming of the material base into the ideological superstructure. (Reich, 1933/1972a, p. xxiii)

In fact, this *internal frontier* that Reich builds between the production and reproduction of ideology—which hides equivalent bounding lines at many other levels: social/individual, sociology/psychology, Marxism/psychoanalysis and so on—is not as stable as Reich wants us to think. The deconstruction of Reich’s edifice must therefore begin with the demolition of this wall erected between two artificially separated terrains. There can be no genuine *combination* of Marxism and psychoanalysis as long as there are two levels of analysis (the social and the individual) and two corresponding fields of study (sociology and psychology). We are already warned about this criticism in Bertell Ollman’s introduction to the Verso edition of the *Sex-Pol Essays*: “Reich’s error—for all the use he made of Marx’s analysis—lies in conceptualizing his findings [in psychoanalysis] apart from the findings of Marxist sociology, rather than *integrating* [emphasis added] the two within the same social contradictions” (Reich, 2012, p. xxiv). My emphasis here is put on “integration” in order to identify what Reich’s system effectively lacks. In the Freudo-Marxist tradition, this criticism was first verbalized by Fromm:

It seems erroneous that Wilhelm Reich restricts psychoanalysis to the sphere of individual psychology and argues against its applicability to social phenomena. The fact that a phenomenon is studied in sociology certainly does not mean that it cannot be an object of psychoanalysis. What is meant is simply that it is an object of psychoanalysis only and wholly in so far as psychic factors play a role in the phenomenon. The thesis that psychology only deals with the individual while sociology only deals with “society” is false. For just as psychology always deals with a socialized individual, so sociology always deals with a group of individuals whose psychic structure and mechanisms must be taken into account. (Fromm, 1971, pp. 155–156)

After reading this criticism, Reich responded by adding one last chapter to the second edition of *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis*, where he tried to defend his position: “I rejected the possibility of developing a sociological theory out of psychoanalysis because the method of psychology when applied to the facts of the social process must inexorably lead to metaphysical and idealist results” (Reich, 2012, p. 59). But, in fact, from a Marxist point of view, there is nothing more metaphysical or idealist than this fixed demarcation between the individual and the social. Marx criticized the bourgeois thinkers of the Enlightenment precisely because they thought of the individual as an isolated Robinson Crusoe (1939/1993, p. 83). Freudian psychoanalysis did not make the same mistake: “Only rarely and under certain exceptional conditions is psychology in a position to disregard the relations of the individual to others. In the individual’s mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so, from the very first, individual psychology is at the same time social psychology as well” (Freud, 1921/1955, p. 69). Surprisingly enough for Reich, Marx and Freud were closer in this respect than he thought: none of them would have liked to see their respective discourses confined to an artificially created level of analysis. Late





Freudo-Marxist philosophy is conscious that it cannot fall into the same trap twice and so it has to begin with the deconstruction of this *separation* between the individual and the social. Žižek is a perfect example:

[This] shows us how to answer the boring standard criticism of the application of psychoanalysis to social-ideological processes: is it “legitimate” to expand the use of the notions which were originally deployed for the treatment of individuals to collective identities, and to say, for instance, that religion is a “collective compulsive neurosis”? The focus of psychoanalysis is entirely different: the Social, the field of social practices and socially held beliefs, is not simply on a different level from individual experience, but something to which the individual him- or herself has to relate, something which the individual him- or herself has to experience as an order which is minimally “reified”, externalised. The problem, therefore, is not “how to jump from the individual to the social level”; the problem is: how should the decentred socio-symbolic order of institutionalized practices/beliefs be structured, if the subject is to retain his or her “sanity”, his or her “normal” functioning? Which delusions should be deposited there so that individuals can remain sane? (Žižek, 2008b: lxxii)

A similar criticism can be found in the work of another member of the Lacanian Left, Jorge Alemán, who characterizes Reich’s Freudo-Marxism as a kind of *aggiornamento*, a way of smoothing things over on the side of psychoanalysis so that it can be rendered compatible with the discourse of the subject-supposed-to-know: Marxism (Alemán, 2013, p. 17). In any case, what is clear by now is that Reich’s attempt to *delimit* two levels of analysis (the social and the individual) and two fields of study (sociology and psychology) is a discursive strategy aimed at *repressing* the deconstructive effects that a genuine combination of discourses would imply.

### Herbert Marcuse: Domination

In the introduction to *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (2008a), Žižek fervently defends post-Marxism on the basis of its anti-essentialist break. What is interesting for us here is that amongst the typical examples of essentialism (Marxist, feminist, ecological, and so on), Žižek adds “also psychoanalytic fundamentalism as articulated in Marcuse’s *Eros and Civilization* (the key to liberation lies in changing the repressive libidinal structure)” (2008a, p. xxvii). As much exaggerated as this formulation may sound when referring to one of the most prominent figures of the Frankfurt School, it is nonetheless theoretically accurate. As we shall see, Marcuse’s work is the reverse of Reich’s: if the latter attempted to separate two discourses, Marcuse tried to *dominate* one by the other, and in particular Marxism by psychoanalysis.

*Eros and Civilisation* has nonetheless the outstanding merit of representing the most complete exposition of the Marxist need to historicize the reality principle in psychoanalysis. Marcuse’s distinction between performance and reality principles is central to the argument for a non-repressive society and non-alienated social





organization (1998, p. 129). But this is only relatively original: we already advanced before that this is a constant in the Freudo-Marxist tradition. We also added that what characterizes each author's philosophy is precisely the specific discursive strategy used to justify the Marxist historicization of the reality principle. And in the case of *Eros and Civilization* we are clearly facing a strategy of discursive domination: Marcuse reduces the organizing principle of another discourse (Marxism) to an ontologically prior *ground* (the struggle between Eros and Thanatos). This strategy is displayed in an unusually explicit way in the "Philosophical Interlude" (chapter 5):

Freud's theory reveals the biological de-individualization beneath the sociological one. By virtue of this generic conception, Freud's psychology of the individual is *per se* psychology of the genus. And this generic psychology unfolds the vicissitudes of the instincts as historical vicissitude: the recurrent dynamic of the struggle between Eros and the death instinct is released and organized by the historical conditions under which mankind develops. (Marcuse, 1998, pp. 106–107)

Marcuse's psychoanalytic *foundationalism* is crystal clear in his statement that the biological lies "beneath" the sociological. The economy which, we should not forget determines-in-the-last-instance in classical Marxism, here merely "organizes" the metapsychological struggle between Eros and Thanatos. It is true that Marcuse's attempt to bring together Marxism and psychoanalysis shows an alternative to Reich's separation of discourses: "The traditional borderlines between psychology on the one side and political and social philosophy on the other have been made obsolete by the modern era" (Marcuse, 1998, p. xxi). But this alternative to Reich's separation of discourses, nothing less than the opening statement of the preface in *Eros and Civilization*, is only the other side of the coin. Because we also find in Marcuse the same *repression* of the potential deconstructive effects that a genuine discursive combination would imply, it is only that the strategy here is to *subsume* Marxism under psychoanalysis. This relation of discursive domination does not leave any space for Marxism to express itself fully (i.e. for the economy to determine-in-the-last-instance) and therefore is no solution to the problem. At this point, we can go back to Žižek's quote regarding *Eros and Civilization*, which we left unfinished at the beginning of this section and which will pave the way towards the second part of our analysis, this time on the Lacanian Left:

Psychoanalytic "essentialism" is paradoxical in so far as it is precisely psychoanalysis—at least in its Lacanian reading—which presents the real break with essentialist logic. That is to say, Lacanian psychoanalysis goes a decisive step further than the usual "post-Marxist" anti-essentialism affirming the irreducible plurality of particular struggles—in other words, demonstrating how their articulation into a series of equivalences depends always on the radical contingency of the social-historical process: it enables us to grasp this plurality itself as a multitude of responses to the same impossible-real kernel. (Žižek, 2008a, p. xxvii)



## The Lacanian Left

The double failure of the Freudian Left to propose a genuine combination of the discourses of Marxism and psychoanalysis reaches an impasse towards the middle of the twentieth century. Reich *separated* the two discourses and Marcuse *dominated* one by the other, in both cases the deconstructive effects that a genuine combination of discourses would imply have actually been *repressed*. The reason for this double failure has to be found in the *foundationalist* character of the two discourses that Reich and Marcuse were unable to deconstruct and which left any attempt at a genuine combination in a deadlock. Žižek explains why Marxist and psychoanalytic foundationalisms are two sides of the same coin: “In both cases—‘class reductionism’ and ‘pan-sexualism’—the process of ideologization takes the same form in which the non-symbolizable ‘hard kernel’ is made into the last Signified, the reference point that guarantees the signification of all phenomena in question” (Žižek, 2011/2014, p. 201).

As long as there is an “ultimate Ground” or a “last Signified”—depending on whether we say it ontologically through Heidegger, or psychoanalytically through Lacan—all phenomena can be effectively reduced to a single foundation (economy or psychology) making impossible any relationship with another foundationalist discourse. But we should bear in mind that this is not a problem of the discourses themselves, but only of their origins: “Neither Marx nor Freud are really able to think antagonism: ultimately, they both reduce it to a feature of (social or psychic) reality, unable to articulate it as constitutive of reality itself, as the impossibility around which reality is constructed—the only thought able to do this comes later, originating in the differential logic of ‘structuralism’” (Žižek, 2012, p. 250). In the Freudo-Marxist tradition the intrusion of “the only thought able to” break with foundationalism is represented by the figure of Lacan (psychoanalysis) and Althusser (Marxism). It is crucial that this break occurred simultaneously on both sides, making finally possible an understanding.

This will be the task of the Lacanian Left. It is striking how much it resembles the Freudian Left in the sense that “like Freud, [Lacan] was very sceptical of revolutionary politics” (Stavrakakis, 2007, pp. 1–2). Leaving aside some biographical anecdotes linking his figure to the events of May 68 and the famous reference to Marx’s discovery of the symptom (Žižek, 2008a, p. 3), Lacan explicitly characterized the aspiration to revolution as the discourse of the Master (Lacan, 1990, p. 126). Lacan’s statement was immortalized by Françoise Wolff when, filming a lecture at the Université catholique de Louvain on 13 October 1973, a student interrupted Lacan and seized the opportunity to transmit his (situationist) revolutionary message.

The reader seeking a lengthier and more complete discussion of the Lacanian Left should take a look at Stavrakakis’s book (2007) and Valdés’s (2022). Our task is different in nature, and so we have had to exclude here Castoriadis and Žižek as separate examples for the same reasons we did not consider before Gross and Fromm, respectively. We are thereby left with two crucial moments in the history of the Lacanian Left that draw a tendency coming from the initial contradictions and



deconstructive effects of Marxist and psychoanalytic essentialisms (Althusser) up to their culmination and successful resolution in the establishment of a new, shared terrain—post-Marxism—which finally makes a genuine discursive combination possible (Laclau).

### **Louis Althusser: Contradiction**

A quick glance at Althusser's varied bibliography would make anyone intuit that the most important work for our purposes is the volume dedicated to psychoanalysis in general and to "Freud et Lacan" in particular (1993). However, the truth is that it looks more like an accurate review of psychoanalysis than an actual work of Freudo-Marxism. Maybe the most interesting piece for us is surprisingly Althusser's letter to the translator (dated 21 February 1969): "There is a danger that this text will be misunderstood, unless it is taken for what it then objectively was: a philosophical intervention urging members of the PCF [Parti communiste français] to recognize the scientificity of psychoanalysis, of Freud's work, and the importance of Lacan's interpretation of it" (Althusser, 2008, p. 141). What is the reason for this politico-philosophical intervention? And why is it so "urgent"?

Nowhere in "Freud et Lacan" can we find a satisfying solution to this problem. Leaving aside the usual Freudo-Marxist historicization of the reality principle (Althusser, 2008, p. 142) the relationship between Marxism and psychoanalysis is not tackled properly. The reason being, this time, that it had already been done elsewhere, albeit less explicitly. We are referring specifically to the jottings "Contradiction and Overdetermination" in *For Marx* (1965/1996), but we could apply it to all mentions of "determination-in-the-last-instance" present in Althusser's work, from "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (2008, p. 9) to the whole of *Reading Capital* (Althusser et al., 1996/2015). The piece "Contradiction and Overdetermination" is arguably the most important inflexion point in the Freudo-Marxist tradition and the history of combining Marxism and psychoanalysis in general. Ironically its philosophical significance has to be found in the very *contradictions* raised by the text itself, which open a space for genuine combination of discourses (even if it does not suture them; for this we will have to wait for Laclau).

Let us go back to our question about why Althusser "urges" his Communist comrades to study psychoanalysis. It can be explained by his use of a concept foreign to Marxist discourse, namely, *overdetermination*. Althusser acknowledges that he "did not invent this concept, it is borrowed from two existing disciplines; specifically, from linguistics and psychoanalysis" (1965/1996, p. 206n). He admits being "not very taken by this term overdetermination, but I shall use it in the absence of anything better, both as an index and as a *problem*" (Althusser, 1965/1996, p. 101). The characterisation of this borrowing as a problem already points out in the direction of a *contradiction* between the previous conceptual scheme he had been using (structuralist Marxism) and the new term he is introducing. The problem is that Althusser is aware to some extent that his use of the term overdetermination will have to be rendered compatible with a central moment in



Marxist discourse which is, strictly speaking, incompatible with it, namely: determination-in-the-last-instance by the economy.

The urgent need for an alien term to Marxism like overdetermination is a direct result of Althusser's reading of Mao's *On Practice and Contradiction*, where the latter established two important distinctions: universality versus particularity, and the principal contradiction versus the principal aspect of contradiction (2007, pp. 72–93). In his introduction to the text Žižek summarizes Mao's thesis as follows: "Any direct focusing on class struggle obviating the particular conditions goes against class struggle itself" (Žižek, 2007, p. 6). No wonder that the concept of overdetermination was not the only one Althusser borrowed from psychoanalysis. Freud's terms in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, displacement and condensation, are, as Althusser points out (1965/1996, p. 211), also operating in Mao's formula. But we are moving now further away from Marxist foundationalism; and what is interesting for us here is precisely the fact that the more we move away from Marxist foundationalism, the more a genuine combination with psychoanalysis becomes possible. The conclusion to "On the Materialist Dialectic" gives us probably the most explicit example of these two discourses finally working together.

Displacement and condensation, with their basis on overdetermination, explain by their dominance the phases (non-antagonistic, antagonistic and explosive) which constitute the existence of the complex process, that is, "of the development of things". (Althusser, 1965/1996, p. 217)

The result of this meticulous knitting of Marxist and psychoanalytic terms is a conclusion of the highest interest because it seems to point in the direction of a structural understanding "of the development of things" instead of the usual (psychological or economic) reductionism of all phenomena to a presumed ground (whether it is libido or class struggle). But, as Laclau and Mouffe regret, "this did not occur" because of Althusser's *contradictory* attempt to preserve at the same time the determination-in-the-last-instance by the economy.

### **Ernesto Laclau: Deconstructive Effects**

The previous section is deliberately left open at the most decisive moment of the discussion of the problematic between overdetermination and determination-in-the-last-instance to emphasize the sense of contradiction that Althusser more or less consciously reached. The fact that the opening of this section continues with that discussion also has the deliberate intention to strengthen Laclau's own confession that "a good deal of [his] later works can be seen as a radicalisation of many themes already hinted in *For Marx*" (1990, p. 178). We are referring to the juncture when, at the peak of Laclau and Mouffe's argument in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (2014), they single out the Althusserian contradiction as the moment when the deconstruction of Marxism begins. It is striking how the deconstruction of such a monumental discourse can occur by simply borrowing a concept (overdetermination) from another discourse. But it confirms our hypothesis that even the most apparently irrelevant case of discursive combination may have huge deconstructive effects. It is hence worth quoting Laclau and Mouffe's argument *in extenso*:



Given the indiscriminate and imprecise use made of this key Althusserian concept [overdetermination], it is necessary to specify its original meaning and the theoretical effects it was called upon to produce in Marxist discourse. The concept comes from psychoanalysis, and its extension had more than a superficially metaphoric character. ... For Freud, overdetermination is no ordinary process of merger—compatible with any form of multi-causality; on the contrary, it is a very precise type of fusion entailing a symbolic dimension and a plurality of meanings. The concept of overdetermination is constituted in the field of the symbolic and has no meaning whatsoever outside it. Consequently, the most profound potential of meaning of Althusser's statement that everything existing in the social is overdetermined, is the assertion that the social constitutes itself as a symbolic order. ... This analysis seemed to open up the possibility of elaborating a new concept of articulation, which would start from the overdetermined character of social relations. But this did not occur. The concept of overdetermination tended to disappear from Althusserian discourse, and a growing closure led to the installation of a new variant of essentialism. This process, already started in "On the Materialist Dialectic", was to culminate in *Reading Capital*. If the concept of overdetermination was unable to produce the totality of its *deconstructive effects* within Marxist discourse, this was because, from the very beginning, an attempt was made to render it compatible with another central moment in Althusserian discourse that is, strictly speaking, incompatible with the first: namely, determination in the last instance by the economy. ... This is the point where the disarticulation of Althusser's discourse begins. (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014, pp. 83–85)

We should ask ourselves again now why the apparently irrelevant borrowing of a concept may lead to such huge deconstructive effects that even "disarticulate" a whole discourse. The reason being that a concept is never isolated from the discourse that has given meaning to it and from a series of differential relations that are imposed over the concept, even when it is applied elsewhere. This is very clear in the specific case of overdetermination: as Laclau and Mouffe rightly point out, it is not solely the term itself that is at stake in the borrowing, but most importantly its "constitution in the field of the symbolic". To put it more bluntly, the contradiction Althusser is grappling with is a hermeneutical one: either the October Revolution, for instance, can be explained by an indefinite multiplicity of meanings (famine, war, the Bolsheviks' strategy, etc.), in which case it would be truly *overdetermined*, or in-the-last-instance this plurality can be reduced to just *one* determination (the contradiction between the relations and the forces of production), but both cases cannot be at the same time. It is very characteristic of Althusser's philosophy to put emphasis on "rigour", but it is ironically the rigorous definition of the term overdetermination—used in the strictest sense given by psychoanalytic discourse—which "disarticulates" Marxism. This is what we mean by *genuine* combination: the idea is that if the elements of two given discourses are rigorously put to work together, it inevitably implies *deconstructive effects* on both sides.



Let us recall that this is precisely what the Freudian Left *repressed*. While both Reich and Marcuse could not obviate some evident contradictions between Marxism and psychoanalysis in their points of contact—e.g. the conflict between historical materialism and Freud’s ahistorical reality principle—the deconstructive character that these inevitably implied on both discourses was actually repressed. The resolution of these contradictions was thereby seen as a simple punctual intervention—in our example, the historicization of the reality principle—instead of a profound revision of both sides. The Althusserian moment reaches a point of no return in the Freudo-Marxist tradition because the contradiction reached now is not peripheral but touches the very *foundation* of one of the two discourses: determination-in-the-last-instance by the economy. It is only at this instant that we can clearly see that what is being deconstructed in Marxism and psychoanalysis by the practice of a genuine combination is nothing other than their *foundationalism*, and foundationalism, let us remember, is the belief that there must be a metaphysical ground which can serve as explanation of Being in general and to which the totality of beings in particular can be reduced (and which, therefore, excludes by necessity the possibility of another ground that can serve as a different explanation).

But Laclau does not only diagnose the problem, but he also proposes a solution. In his essay “Psychoanalysis and Marxism” he argues that “no simple model of supplement is of the slightest use” (Laclau, 1990, p. 93). Laclau could perfectly be referring to Reich’s work when he says that “for example, it is impossible to affirm—though it has often been done—that psychoanalysis simply adds a theory of subjectivity to the field of historical materialism” (1990, p. 93). Once we have thereby discarded a discursive strategy of separation or supplement (Reich) and domination or foundationalism (Marcuse), the question remains: where will the deconstructive effects on both sides of a genuine combination of discourses lead us to? Laclau is crystal clear in this respect: “to the construction of a new field within which the comparison would make sense” (Laclau, 1990, p. 93). What is this new field and how will it be called? *Post-Marxism* (which can also be read *post-Marxism*) emerges then as a particular mixture of discontinuity and tradition which will be defined by Laclau and Mouffe in terms not very different than the ones we have encountered in our combination with psychoanalysis: “to reread Marxist theory in the light of contemporary problems necessarily involves deconstructing the central categories of that theory” (2014, p. ix). This new field is needed, on the one hand, so that Marxism and psychoanalysis can meet at a crossroads exempt from the dominating effects of any (psychological or economic) foundationalism. On the other hand, a new field is needed in order to create a common and shared space where the combination of both discourses could take place: “This indicates the direction and the way in which a possible confluence of Marxism and psychoanalysis is conceivable, neither as the addition of a supplement to the latter nor as the introduction of a new causal element—the unconscious instead of the economy—but as the coincidence of the two” (Laclau, 1990, p. 96). As we saw, “the addition of a supplement” was the tactic chosen by Reich, and “the introduction of a new causal element” was the strategy followed by Marcuse. By contrast, the *new field* required in order to make a confluence possible will have to



be *post-foundational*. As this represents the last and definitive conclusion to our whole essay (the positive reverse of the equally necessary “deconstructive effects”), a heightened conceptual clarity is needed here. According to Oliver Marchart, post-foundationalism can be defined as:

A constant interrogation of metaphysical figures of foundation—such as totality, universality, essence, and ground. Post-foundationalism must not be confused with *anti*-foundationalism or a vulgar and today somewhat out-dated “anything goes” postmodernism, since a post-foundational approach does not attempt to erase completely such figures of the ground, but to weaken their ontological status. The ontological weakening of ground does not lead to the assumption of the total absence of all grounds, but rather to the assumption of the impossibility of a *final* ground, which is something completely different as it implies an increased awareness of, on the one hand, contingency and, on the other, the political as the moment of partial and always, in the last instance, unsuccessful grounding. (Marchart, 2007, p. 2)

## Conclusion: Combination of Discourses

Having arrived at the end of our analysis of the Freudo-Marxist tradition as a particular case study, we are in a position to reconstruct the general argument, trying to extrapolate its *moments* to the broader philosophical question about the combination of discourses. We begin with two different or heteronomous discourses, in this case, Marxism and psychoanalysis (but they could also be any others: linguistics and psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis and feminism, feminism and Marxism, and so on). Even though particular insights from both discourses can be incorporated in an *eclectic* manner, in the last instance they seem to be *incompatible* with each other because of their *foundationalism*, i.e. each one of them postulates a different *ultimate ground* to the whole of reality: class struggle, in Marxism, and libido, in psychoanalysis. *Incompatibility* appears to be the result of their *foundationalism*, which imposes the law of the excluded middle: *either* class determines-in-the-last-instance *or* the family does, for example. However, the whole movement towards a genuine *combination* can be said to take off when a certain *compatibility* between both discourses is also recognized; as we saw in the case of Bernfeld, such a compatibility is first justified by establishing *superior points of comparison*: both Marxism and psychoanalysis appear to be “dialectical” (i.e. dynamic) and “materialist” (they postulate material causes like production or sexuality, instead of “idealist” ones). But, as Derrida, asserts, “in a classical philosophical opposition we are not dealing with the peaceful coexistence of a *vis-à-vis*, but rather with a violent hierarchy. One of the two terms governs the other (axiologically, logically, etc.), or has the upper hand” (1972/1981, p. 41). More precisely in our case, each one of the two discourses *wants to* “govern” or *wants to* “have the upper hand” in order to pacify the conflicting claims to the “ultimate ground”, and this is why the next moment is one of mutual attempts to *dominate* each other. Here we can see that, although Marcuse is chronologically posterior to





Reich, the moment of domination is logically anterior. We saw how Marcuse tried to *subsume* class struggle under the biological struggle between Eros and Thanatos in a paramount case of psychoanalytic essentialism, but we could also see the opposite movement taking place from the side of Marxism—i.e. psychoanalysis as simple epiphenomenon to class struggle which merely adds or supplements a “theory of subjectivity and ideology”. This is why the next logical move is one of *separation* in order to *repress* the potential deconstructive effects that a battle between conflicting foundationalisms would imply. Indeed, Reich proposed a certain *division of labour*: “the social” is the task of Marxism, “the individual” is the task of psychoanalysis. Now, this separation already has double and contradictory effects: on the one hand, it represents a first step towards deconstruction, because each ground ceases to be “ultimate” in all cases and it is weakened, relativized or, even better, *contextualized to a certain realm* (Marxism *only applies* to sociological cases; and Freud, *only applies* to psychological ones); on the other hand, this strategy collapses the moment we recognize—with Fromm or Žižek—that an *absolute demarcation* between artificially drawn realms is impossible because there are too many *points of contact* (the historicization of the Oedipus complex and the reality principle, for example). This is the reason why Althusser represents a radicalisation of this ultimate *contradiction*, since he imports psychoanalytic terms without being able to “free” them from the determination-in-the-last-instance by the economy. Finally, Laclau takes the bull by the horns and the *deconstructive effects* that a genuine combination of discourses implies is admitted. The problem is found in holding mutually exclusive foundationalisms, and as a corollary the solution is sought in the creation of a new field (post-Marxism or “the political”) where both discourses can meet at a crossroads. This implies that this new field has to be *post-foundational*, i.e. not without any foundation, but letting each discourse partially and precariously ground in every instance. In the end of this particular macro-deconstruction, we have reversed the fundamental axiom of the beginning, and a combination of discourses in general appears to be marked by the following series of “moments” (in the absence of a better word): foundationalism, compatibility (with its points of comparison), domination, separation (with its points of contact), contradiction, deconstructive effects, post-foundationalism and creation of a new field.

We cannot end this paper without making two reflections that necessarily follow from this conclusion. First, we repeat again that although the Freud-Marxist tradition stands as a privileged case study and even as the “royal road” to see the deconstructive effects that a genuine combination of discourses would imply, it only represents an example within a general trend. One should expect to find similar or even exactly the same “moments” that we have found here in the “profound solidarity” that links linguistics with psychoanalysis, for instance. Jakobson and Lacan’s mutual recognition that “condensation and displacement” in Freud’s *Traumdeutung* correspond to “metaphor and metonymy” in structural linguistics (Lacan, 1966/2006, pp. 412–441), can be argued to have the same deconstructive effects on both disciplines that Althusser’s import of “overdetermination” had to classical Marxism. Similarly, when Butler attempted to “subject [post-structuralism] to a specifically feminist reformulation” (2006, p. ix) she ended up breaking



with the essentialist category of “woman” as the supposed subject of feminism. In this paper we have discovered that the post-foundationalist horizon which opened up in the last half of a century may not only be the result of the *micro*-deconstruction of particular texts, but also the necessary consequence of the *macro*-deconstruction implicit in combining different discourses in general. In this sense, if the findings of this particular macro-deconstruction between Marxism and psychoanalysis are correct, a more systematic enterprise is imposed in the future comparing the latter with other combination of discourses.

Last, but not least, it is only at the end of this essay that we can recognize the meaning and weight of Derrida’s dictum “deconstruction is justice” (1992, p. 15), and so that this particular macro-deconstruction has not just been a purely theoretical enterprise, but with the main objective in mind to establish a different (ethical) relation with an-Other discourse. On the one hand, in *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, Critchley (2014) explicitly exposed long ago the profound reasons behind a Levinasian turn in Derrida’s works. On the other hand, with regards to our topic, Pavón-Cuéllar’s panoramic *Marxism and Psychoanalysis* demonstrated that *critique*, that is, “a break with psychology, as an epistemological-theoretical act, presupposes practical action” (2017, p. 176). Analogously, but coming from a different methodology and standpoint, here the new space created by post-Marxism leads to a new ethical practice with regards to an-Other discourse. I would like to finish by suggesting that the deconstructive effects that a genuine combination between two discourses implies may be similar, analogous or parallel to the ones we would find in a *dialogue* between two different persons (or groups). If this were to be true, the “conversation that never happened” between Gadamer and Derrida (Bernstein, 2008) could take place on the unexplored *new field* of macro-deconstruction. *Mutatis mutandis*, what we have called here in a post-structuralist manner “combination of discourses” could be turned into the hermeneutical “fusion of horizons”, and the correlative “deconstructive effects” on foundationalism would follow Gadamer’s dictum that in hermeneutic philosophy “there is no higher principle than holding oneself open in a conversation” (Gadamer, 1977, p. 189). This is merely a final suggestion which would need a whole other paper to be justified, but at least its implication would be clear: combining discourses is ultimately an *ethical* (and *political*) practice.

**Acknowledgment** I would like to acknowledge Professor Peter Dews’s generous advice at the University of Essex.

**Author statement** No third party material is present.

## References

- Alemán, J. (2013). *Conjeturas sobre una izquierda lacaniana* [Thoughts about a Lacanian left]. Grama Ediciones.
- Althusser, L. (1993). *Écrits sur la psychoanalyse Freud et Lacan*. Stock/IMEC.
- Althusser, L. (1996). *For Marx* (B. Brewster, Trans.). Verso. (Original work published 1965).
- Althusser, L. (2008). *On ideology* (B. Brewster, Trans.). Verso.



- Althusser, L., Balibar, É., Establet, R., Rancière, J., & Macherey, P. (2015). *Reading Capital: The complete edition* (B. Brewster & D. Fernbach, Trans.). Verso. (Original work published 1996).
- Angus, I. (1998). Hegemony and socialism: An interview with Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau. *Conflicting Publics*. Simon Fraser University. <https://pages.mtu.edu/~rlstrick/rsvtxt/laclaub.htm>
- Bernfeld, S. (1972). Psychoanalysis and socialism. In W. Reich, *Dialectical materialism and psychoanalysis*. Socialist Reproduction. (Original work published 1925).
- Bernstein, R. (2008). The conversation that never happened (Gadamer/Derrida). *The Review of Metaphysics*, 61(3), 577–603.
- Butler, J. (2006). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of the identity*. Routledge.
- Critchley, S. (2014). *The ethics of deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* (3rd ed.). Edinburgh University Press.
- De Man, P. (1986). *The resistance to theory*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Derrida, J. (1981). *Positions* (A. Bass, Trans.). University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1972).
- Derrida, J. (1992). Force of law: The “mystical foundation of authority”. In: D. Cornell, M. Rosenfeld, & D. G. Carlson (Eds.), *Deconstruction and the possibility of justice* (pp. 3–67). Routledge.
- Derrida, J. (2016). *Of grammatology* (G. C. Spivak, Trans.) (40th anniversary ed.). John Hopkins University Press. (Original work published 1967).
- Freud, S. (1955). Group psychology and the analysis of the ego. In J. Strachey (Ed.), *Standard edition* (Vol. 18, pp. 69–144). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1921).
- Freud, S. (1961). Civilization and its discontents. In J. Strachey (Ed.), *Standard edition* (Vol. 21, pp. 64–148). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1930).
- Fromm, E. (1971). *The crisis of psychoanalysis: Essays on Freud, Marx and social psychology*. Jonathan Cape, London.
- Fromm, E. (1978). *Sigmund Freud's mission: An analysis of his personality and influence*. Peter Smith.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1977). *Philosophical hermeneutics* (D. E. Linge, Trans. & Ed.). University of California Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1968). *What is called thinking?* (F. D. Wieck & J. G. Gray, Trans.). Harper & Row Publishers. (Original work published 1954).
- Lacan, J. (1990). *Television: A challenge to the psychoanalytic establishment* (J. Copjec, Ed.). W. W. Norton & Company.
- Lacan, J. (2006). *Écrits: The first complete edition in English* (B. Fink, Trans.). W. W. Norton & Company. (Original work published 1966).
- Laclau, E. (1990). *New reflections on the revolution of our time*. Verso.
- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (2014). *Hegemony and socialist strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics*. Verso.
- Mao, T.-T. (2007). *On practice and contradiction*. Verso.
- Marchart, O (2007). *Post-foundational political thought. Political difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Marcuse, H. (1998). *Eros and civilization. A philosophical inquiry into Freud*. Routledge.
- Marx, K. (1993). *Grundrisse: Foundations of the critique of political economy (rough draft)* (M. Nicolaus, Trans.). Penguin Books. (Original work published 1939).
- Pavón-Cuellar, D (2017). *Marxism and psychoanalysis: In or against psychology?* Routledge.
- Plekhanov, G. (2003). *The role of the individual in history*. University Press of the Pacific. (Original work published 1898).
- Reich, W. (1972a). *Character analysis* (V. R. Carfagno, Trans.). Farrar, Strauss and Giroux. (Original work published 1933).
- Reich, W. (1972b). *Dialectical materialism and psychoanalysis*. Socialist Reproduction. (Original work published 1929).
- Reich, W. (1975). *Reich speaks of Freud: Wilhelm Reich discusses his work and his relationship with Sigmund Freud* (M. Higgins & C. M. Raphael, Eds.). Penguin.
- Reich, W. (2012). *Sex-Pol: Essays 1929–1934* (A. Bostock, Trans.). Verso.
- Robinson, P. (1969). *The Freudian left: Wilhelm Reich, Geza Roheim, Herbert Marcuse*. Harper & Row Publishers.
- Stavrakakis, Y. (2007). *The Lacanian left: Psychoanalysis, theory, politics*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Valdés, A. (2022). *Toward a feminist Lacanian left: Psychoanalytic theory and intersectional politics*. Routledge.



- Voloshinov, V. (2012). *Freudianism: A Marxist critique* (I. R. Titunik, Trans.). Verso. (Original work published 1927).
- Žižek, S. (2006). *How to read Lacan*. Granta Books.
- Žižek, S. (2007). Introduction. In: T.-T. Mao, *On practice and contradiction* (pp. 1–27). Verso.
- Žižek, S. (2008a). *The sublime object of ideology* (2nd ed.). Verso.
- Žižek, S. (2008b). *For what they know not what they do: Enjoyment as a political factor*. Verso.
- Žižek, S. (2012). *Less than nothing: Hegel and the shadow of dialectical materialism*. Verso.
- Žižek, S. (2014). *The most sublime hysteric: Hegel with Lacan* (T. Scott-Railton, Trans.). Polity Press. (Original work published 2011).

**Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Springer Nature or its licensor (e.g. a society or other partner) holds exclusive rights to this article under a publishing agreement with the author(s) or other rightsholder(s); author self-archiving of the accepted manuscript version of this article is solely governed by the terms of such publishing agreement and applicable law.

**Adrià Porta Caballé** is a predoctoral researcher in philosophy at the University of Barcelona, Spain, where he is also a member of the research project “Post-foundational Contemporary Thought” (PID2020-117069GB-I00).

