

Butler *avec* Althusser. Notes for an Investigation

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Abstract:

In this essay, I try to go through the questions and analysis that Judith Butler puts on Althusser's work—reading fundamentally and almost exclusively the essay on the “Ideological State Apparatus” from 1970, and the relationship she maintains in her reading with the Freud's concept of repression and the Lacanian “symbolic order”. My central hypothesis is that it is the Foucauldian reading of Freud and Lacan, begun early in 1990 with *Gender Trouble*, that guides Butler in his interpretation of the Althusserian concept of interpellation understood almost exclusively from the perspective of the “hailing” example that Althusser provides in his essay from 1970. This leads Butler to a reading that I characterize here as biographical—for its obscene reliance on a particular episode in Althusser's life: the murder of Helène Rytman—and anti-Cartesian, insofar as it attempts reading the ideological readiness of the subject as something beyond the split of the *cogito*, and materially effected by an ontological repetition. The problem with Judith Butler's concept of repression is its unappealable juridical nature—which is paradoxical for an erudite reader of Michel Foucault—insofar as the agent of repression appears as analogous to the State and therefore it results assimilable with rebellions “melancholic” subjectivity. This conflation of the psychological and the social is conducive to some mass psychologism, which forgets Althusser's debt to Lacan when elaborating his theory of ideology. I proceed to investigate the origins of this theory in the text “Three Notes on the Theory of Discourses” (1968) and in the recently published *Que faire* (2018). My tentative conclusion is that there is an idea of supplementary violence (in the Lacanian sense of *plus-de-jouir*) constitutive of the unconscious in Althusserian theory of ideology that cannot be overlooked, and that is linked to his reading of Freud.

Keywords: Ideology, Interpellation, empiric power, misrecognition, readiness, *Spaltung*, violence, Weapons Issue

1. Introduction

Judith Butler's relation with Louis Althusser reflects one of the most important debates in twentieth-century philosophy and critical theory, the problem of the link between the theory of ideology and psychoanalysis. Many efforts in contemporary thought have been oriented to solve this gap. Its importance is related to the necessity of accounting for the subjectivity under capitalism. Theodor Adorno, Jean-Joseph Goux, and Ernesto Laclau recall the special paralysis that psychoanalytic tradition imposes over the traditional when, in some Marxist schemas, class-consciousness is seen as the direct consequence of exploitation. For example, Laclau's "Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory" intended to use Lacanian concepts—especially the protolinguistic idea of "empty signifier"—to construct an effective theory about populism and fascism. Fascism, for Laclau, would be a specific form of satisfying the "fissure" produced by the failure of the working class and the left to take into account the "national-popular interpellations".¹ In a very different approach, Jean-Joseph Goux elaborated a very complex theory about the correspondences between the phallus as a universal signifier of the libido and the money as a universal form of the interchange. "The axis of the Father metaphor—says Goux—the central and centralizer metaphor, allows the fixation of all the other metaphors, the pivot of the whole significant legislation, place of the patron and of the unity."² For Goux, there is a correspondence between the commodity fetishism and the name of the father, or in other terms, between the money and the phallus, that is crucial to explain the psychic attachment to capitalist reproduction. I'm mentioning these examples because the possibility of thinking together Marxism and psychoanalysis is the most vivid effort of a series of intellectuals among which Althusser is probably the most representative figure. The place of Judith Butler in this mainstream debate of the twentieth century is, however, very different. Though neither Marxist neither psychoanalytical, Butler is rather a feminist philosopher inscribed

¹ Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (London: Verso, 1978) 128

² Jean Joseph Goux, *Ensayo sobre los equivalentes generales* (Buenos Aires: Calden, 1973) 27. My translation from the Spanish version.

in the core of a post-structuralist contestation to both theories, that of the unconscious and that of the class struggle. However, the tremendous advantage of Butler's oeuvre is her capacity to engage with both traditions and read through them some solutions to the avatars of the post-structuralist debate around the problem of the subject/subjection and emancipatory strategies in the contemporary world. In other words, Butler could be read as the proper name of one of the most intelligent solutions for the aporias offered by the (im)possible link between psychoanalytic account for the subject and the theory of ideology. In this article, I will grapple with one of the axes of Butler's solution, her very problematic relationship with Louis Althusser and his concept of interpellation.

2. "Heterosexual Matrix" as empiric power

Let me begin with a very nuclear sentence of *Gender Trouble*, the book in which Butler widely confronts the theoretical possibilities of psychoanalysis to understand the concept of gender and its subversive odds: "Only when the mechanism of gender construction implies the *contingency* of that construction does 'constructedness' *per se* prove useful to the political project to enlarge the scope of possible gender configurations."³ In my view, the value of the concept of "contingency" that Butler stresses here denotes the possibility of reading gender through a materialist approach - although with a specific orientation, the empiricist conception of power. Gender, for Butler, is not something fixed in the social whole or in the "ideological atmosphere" in which the individual breathes,⁴ but a contingent construction. Contingent, here, implies some grade of transparency and evokes Deleuze's motto about the nonexistence of ideology as such: "Il n'y a pas d'idéologie, il n'y a que des organisations de pouvoir."⁵ This is why Butler also summons Foucault's *History of Sexuality* in her analysis with some insistence: for Butler, the Foucaultian hypothesis allows us to conceive gender configurations and its heteronormative structure - the so-called "heterosexual matrix" - as a

³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge) 38

⁴ Louis Althusser, *Pour Marx* (Paris: Editions La Découverte) 1996

⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit: 1986), 386.

transparent form of sanction and construction of the sexual law. There is an important movement in *Gender Trouble* repeated in *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997): the superposition between psychoanalytic concepts and Foucaultian (and Deleuzian) ontologies of power. This is what happens with the concept of the symbolic. Since Butler cannot avoid the use of psychoanalytical concepts and its infinite productivity, in some way her gamble is the overlapping of Freudian or Lacanian concepts with Foucault's theory of power. For example, apropos of Lacan's symbolic, that for Butler implies a certain degree of "religious tragedy" (or theological inception) she states that "Lacanian theory [would] be reformulated after the appropriation of Nietzsche's insight in *On the Genealogy of Morals* that God, the inaccessible Symbolic, is *rendered inaccessible* by a power."⁶ In other words, Lacan's symbolic reformulated by Butler is a constructivist sphere whose inaccessibility is only the *effect* of some "theological impulse" in Lacan's approach. Then, the law, the symbolic, is not more than "power in its simulation and self-subjection."⁷

This compulsion to "applicate" a theory by which one takes side beforehand is repeated when, in the middle of the very core of *Gender Trouble*, Butler projects Foucault's "critique of repressive hypothesis" to read the incest taboo: "heterosexuality and transgressive homosexuality [are] indeed *effects*, temporally and ontologically later than the law itself."⁸ But this "law itself" is always the production of power. If there is not "sexuality before the law" is because the law is the effect of power productivity - and heterosexuality and homosexuality are embodied forms, shaped hierarchies of power multiplication and configurations.

What is the implication of this tendency to confirm a previous theory of power as the transparent flux or ontological activity that *embodies* the very existence of any analytical concept? Why does Butler equate law and power, power and symbolic, and gender to symbolic contingency? This operation allows Judith Butler to develop an underground empiricist conception of psychoanalytical concepts. I am not setting the accusation that Butler's concepts are fanciful empiricist operations, but that, at least

⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 57

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 78

in *Gender Trouble*, concepts such as symbolic or unconscious seems to vanish under the heavy burden of the ontological-Foucaultian idea of power and its multiplications. This explains also that Butler’s most important book ends up with the idea of the “subversive repetitions”: since the heterosexual matrix works through repetition, by the compulsory repetition of the same operations of power, the *signification* of gender could be the result of an empowered-subject action. “Agency - says Butler - is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition.”⁹ We can still read the consequences of her book as the vindication of the repetitive acts of some *empiric* agents multiplied in the immanent symbolic plane understood as power configuration and nesting of gender-positions.

3. Dealing with interpellation

Althusser’s concept of interpellation has had a complex development. I will introduce the specific origin of that concept in Althusser’s theory later - the most important confrontation of Althusserian thought with Jacques Lacan and his theory of *imago*. I would like to recall the source of that concept for Butler’s approach. For Butler, interpellation has a standard meaning. Is the “hailing” moment in which an individual is called to be transformed into the subject. Butler’s overemphasizing of the example given by Althusser to explain the nature of interpellation has some consequences. The first one is an excessive concentration in the metaphor itself, something that, however, opens up some interesting points of Althusser’s view. Butler’s first mention of interpellation is found at the very beginning of *The Psychic Life of Power*. Butler recalls that for Althusser,

the subordination of the subject takes place through language, as the effect of the authoritative voice that hails the individual [...] The interpellation of the subject through the inaugurative address of the state authority presupposes not only that the inculcation of conscience already has taken place, but that conscience constitutes a specifically psychic

⁹ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 145

and social working of power.¹⁰

Here we have the nucleus of Butler's reading of Althusser: her concern about interpellation is the non-explanation of the "consciousness" that makes possible the very answer provided by the subject at the hailing scene. If the subject could be called by the authority, what forces him to answer the calling? Butler's specific answer to this question relies on a Foucaultian appropriation of Freud's concept of guilt: the individual answers the call becoming then subject because he feels guilt, understood guilt here as the introjection of primary repression.

Butler's engagement with Foucault is not arbitrary. Butler explains her theory of the subject *through* a radical reading of Foucault. The very definition of the subject is evidently more Foucauldian than psychoanalytic: the subject is "power on recoil".¹¹ Power, for Butler, acts in two ways on the subject: as what makes the subject possible, and as what is reiterated in the subject's own action. In such a view, the only concept that remains unexplained - the cement of the whole Foucaultian edifice - is "power." The subject is at the same time the effect of a "prior power" and the "condition of possibility" for a radically conditioned form of agency. The web or matrix of a multiplicity of powers is the conditionality of the subject and at the same time the space in which the agency is possible.¹² Butler writes, "Subject eclipses power with power."¹³ This eclipse is possible for Butler through the contestation to power, contestation which is at the same time other power, and so on. Butler claims to move "toward a psychoanalytic criticism of Foucault,"¹⁴ but this criticism reveals itself fruitless, or at least artificial. What Butler performs is a Foucaultian saturation of psychoanalysis, especially regarding the concept of repression. Butler in fact sustains that the body as surface in which power is exercised and the concept of the psyche as the place from which the subject emerges are strictly analogous.¹⁵ Then, the repression is

¹⁰ Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* (California: Stanford University Press 1997) 5-6

¹¹ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 21

¹² *Ibid.*, 14-16

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 87

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 95. Kirsten Campbell, in a compelling essay about Judith Butler's relation with

in some way equivalent to the series of subjections that are imposed over the body: sanction, punishment, regulatory discourses, power-devices, etc. So, the question about the “failure” of the subject - and of the power, the grade of equivalence is soaring - is the question about “how does the process of subjectivation, the disciplinary production of the subject, break down, if it does, in both Foucaultian and psychoanalytic theory”.¹⁶ Butler’s question had its response previously articulated: failure is possible because power is exercised by repetition, and those repetitions contain the possibility of *subverts* the symbolic order - as we already saw in *Gender Trouble*.

Butler’s engagement with Foucault and psychoanalysis informs her use of Althusser’s concept of interpellation. Immediately after Foucault’s “confrontation” with psychoanalysis, Butler considers Althusser “notion of interpellation”:

Consider the Althusserian notion of interpellation, in which a subject is constituted by being hailed, addressed, named. For the most part, it seems, Althusser believed that this social demand --one might call it a symbolic injunction-- actually produced the kind of subjections it named. He gives the example of the policeman on the street yelling “Hey you there” and concludes that this call importantly constitutes the one it addresses and sites... Yet we might understand it

psychoanalysis, writes: “Butler clearly uses foreclosure in the Lacanian sense of a foundational psychic exclusion that cannot be represented within the subject’s symbolic economy. This deployment of Lacan in the name of Freud allows Butler to evade certain difficulties posed by Lacanian theory to her conception of foreclosure. Unlike Freud’s concept of disavowal, Lacan’s theory of foreclosure concerns a basic fault in the operation of the paternal metaphor and, hence, in the production of the sexed subject. For Lacan, foreclosure denotes the primordial expulsion of the fundamental signifier, the phallic signifier (...) In psychoanalytic theory, foreclosure indicates a fundamental disruption in the formation of the subject, whereas in Butler’s theory, the concept is reread as the mechanism of the production of normative (and) coherent subjects”. In a certain sense, Campbell hits the nail on the head since Butler’s concept of repression is highly transparent and does not involve the complications neither of the economics of Freud’s repression nor of Lacan’s foreclosure.

¹⁶ Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 75

in Lacanian terms as the call of symbolic constitution.¹⁷

As we will see, Butler's use of interpellation has a precise function in her theoretical construction, namely, introducing the problem of *misrecognition* or failure of the interpellation as the failure of the Lacanian symbolic. But how does it fail? Why needs to fail interpellation if the subject keeps his little packet of agency with him? If the power "in recoil" can subvert itself by the agency of subversive repetitions, why does Butler need this resort to *mis-interpellation*?

Again, we are confronting a sort of tautological conception about Lacan's symbolic order. Butler reduces Lacanian symbolic to the complex sum of power operations and configurations. It is always the possibility of the subject agency what Butler is stressing: "consider the force of this dynamic of interpellation and misrecognition when the name is not a proper name but a social category, and hence a signifier capable of being interpreted in a number of divergent and conflictual ways."¹⁸ To be hailed as a woman or homosexual could be an affirmation or an insult, the emerging of the very *misrecognition*—but a misrecognition with an agency, a desire for misrecognition, a will of misrecognition and therefore a subjectivation decided by the "power on recoil" that we are as subjects. The possibility of an "injurious interpellation" depends on this capacity of the subject to use the signs of interpellation "counter to those for which it was designed."¹⁹ Then we realized that the reoccupation and resignification of interpellation is the space left to the subject, the "power on recoil" to resignify its name, its interpellation. "I can recast the power that constitutes me" signals Butler, indicating that there is not *misrecognition* as such, *failure* as such, but only the will to fail, the will to be misrecognized. And, at this point at least, Butler's *misrecognition* is the opposite of the Althusserian concept of ideology in which *misrecognition* occurs with no subject.

4. Beyond readiness

¹⁷ Ibid., 95

¹⁸ Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 96

¹⁹ Ibid., 104

This compulsive overlapping of Foucault with psychoanalysis seems to be arrested, at some point, to interrogate the “readiness to be compelled by the authoritative interpellation, a readiness which suggests that one is, as it were, already in relation to the voice before the response.”²⁰ Butler is, as far I know, the first one in interrogating the problematic role of this readiness, since before her, not Žižek in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*²¹ neither Rancière in *Althusser’s Lesson*²² focused on that difficult point of Althusser’s concept of interpellation - the sort of readiness that makes possible interpellation. The concept of interpellation, inside Althusserian scholars such as Etienne Balibar²³ or Warren Montag,²⁴ was always relatively understood as a retroactive concept: interpellation *produces* the subject and at the same time *produces* the ideology of the subject. Only Michel Pêcheux,²⁵ in an effort considered usually as fruitless, tried to connect interpellation with the psychoanalytic concept of the subject. “Readiness” refers in Butler to the question about how is possible the interception of the subject by the message of the Other that interpellates - this the policeman or any authority. This readiness refers for Butler to the “prehistory of the subject” and “is a sign of certain desire to be beheld by and perhaps also to behold the face of authority, a visual rendering of an auditory scene.”²⁶ I agree at this point with Butler’s account, since I read interpellation according to Althusser concept of centered subject: the “readiness” of the subject is for Althusser this centered character and its existence in the ideology. However, if - as Butler points out - interpellation occurs precisely because ideology works as repetition, this repetition is not the repetition of the sanctions, norms or juridical prescriptions imposed

²⁰ Ibid., 111

²¹ Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1990)

²² Jacques Rancière, *Althusser’s Lesson* (New York: Continuum, 2011), text from 1974.

²³ Etienne Balibar, *Ecrits pour Althusser* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1991)

²⁴ Warren Montag, *Althusser and his Contemporaries* (Duke University press, 2008)

²⁵ Michel Pêcheux, *Les vérités de La Palice* (Paris: Maspero, 1975). For a complete review and work on Pêcheux and his analysis of discourse, see Pedro Karczmarczyk, “Discurso y verdad: Michel Pêcheux, hacia una teoría de las garantías ideológicas” in *Décalages, Vol 1 Issue 3* (2013)

²⁶ Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 112

to human beings by the law. What interpellation repeats is something related to the nature of the ideological, a concept that Butler does not cease to avoid in her account of Althusser theory. The nature of the interpellative repetition is very different from the very repetition of the sign that creates meaning - the discursive order of the symbolic-power attachments for Butler. Interpellation repeats something that Žižek has found absent in Butler's theoretical development, the negative kernel or nucleus that lacks any simplicity or transparency.²⁷ As we will see, this nucleus is for Althusser a violence that *split* or divide the subject.

Judith Butler made a great effort to explain the structure of the subject that receives the interpellation. The master supposition of Butler's argument is that "if the subject can only assure his/her existence in terms of the law, and the law requires subjection for subjectivation, then, perversely, one may (always already) yield to the law in order to continue to assure one's own existence."²⁸ Is not, then, the Hobbesian "fear" or Machiavellian *amore o timore* what produces the subject attachment and readiness to the law, but the *desire* to continue "one's own existence". The Spinozistic reminiscences of this approach are obvious - and are probably referred to the crucial role of Spinoza's *conatus* in Althusser's philosophy itself. But instead developing the argument in that direction, searching in Althusser's engagement with Spinoza's philosophy, Butler scrabbles in the dirtiest surge of Althusserian sea, the assassination of H  l  ne Rytman, his wife:

Althusser takes up guilt explicitly in the narrative, however reliable, of his murder of H  l  ne, his wife, in which he narrates, in a telling reversal of the police scene in "Ideology [and Ideological State Apparatuses]" how he rushed into the street in order to deliver himself up to the law.²⁹

Certainly, we are not dealing with a simple problem. If this is or not "ethical" is not part of my interest at this moment, but at least we should

²⁷ Slavoj Žižek, *the Ticklish Subject* (New York: Verso, 1999), 264-265

²⁸ Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 112

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 113

interrogate its pertinency, as correctly suggested Pierre Macherey in his revision of Butler's engagement with Althusserian theory of ideology.³⁰ Macherey recalls precisely that is improbable that the subject of the theory of ideology worked by Althusser in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" be the same subject that Althusser describes in his autobiography, "the author of the laborious and on the whole indecent confession."³¹ Is from this last subject, Althusser the confessor of the murderous act, that Butler extracts her most important conclusion regarding interpellation: "submission to the rules of the dominant ideology might then be understood as a submission to the necessity to prove innocence in the face of accusation" and "to become a subject is thus to have been presumed guilty."³² Readiness is guilt, submission to the necessity to prove innocence, being guilty.³³

Anyway, it is at this point that psychoanalysis begins to be a real matter in Butler's argument. In the last chapter of *The Psychic Life of Power*, Butler tries to connect this readiness with the idea of a melancholic subject. Butler defines melancholia as a:

Process by which an originally external object is lost, and the refusal to break the attachment to such an object or ideal leads to the withdrawal of the object into de ego, the replacement of the object by the ego, and the setting up of an inner world in which a critical agency is split off from the

³⁰ Pierre Macherey, "Judith Butler and the Althusserian Theory of Subjection" in *Décalages, Volume 1, Issue 2* (2012)

³¹ *Ibid.*, 18

³² Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 118

³³ One of the most striking extrapolations of Judith Butler's theory of melancholy guilt, and its relation to some repression of a primary homosexual object, is her analysis of Los Angeles riots in 1992. There Butler writes that "is within the white male's racist fear of the black male body a clear anxiety over the possibility of sexual exchange; hence, the repeated references to Rodney King's "ass" by the surrounding policemen, and the homophobic circumscription of that locus of sodomy as a kind of threat" (2003, Loc. 423). This naïf conception of the repressed object actually runs the risk of turning the policemen into victims of original violence transmitted as guilt in the subject. Of course, these are the consequences of a bad psychoanalysis.

ego and proceeds to take the ego as its object.³⁴

Butler understands melancholia as a “process of internalization” and loss that produces rage, a violent reaction of the ego against itself. The problem of this splitting is obviously at the center of psychoanalytic discussion, and it is the basis of discussions concerning Freud’s conception about the subject through the *Ichspaltung*, especially in his unfinished text *Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence*, wrote in 1938. There, Freud sustains the argument that the ego is not only a process of synthesis and identification but also the product of a splitting moment.³⁵ Butler’s assumption is that through its identification with the lost object, the subject is “altered by identification”, splitting the ego into the critical agency and the ego as an object of “criticism and judgment”.³⁶ Melancholia, for Butler, contains the aggression of the subject against itself and establishes the “tenuous basis of the ego” that is divided, split between masochistic instincts of self-destruction and judgment. However, the possibility of reading the masochism and its relationship with any “subversive” function of power - something we could expect at this point of Butler’s theory, is again dismissed. Psychoanalysis in Butler approach works as a *transitional* object: between gender and subversive repetitions the proto-Foucaultian symbolic, between ideology and injurious interpellations the pseudo-*misrecognition*, etc. Butler ends by saying that melancholia is “a rebellion that has been put down, crushed.”³⁷ Even more, melancholia is “the power of the state to preempt an insurrectionary rage,”³⁸ and the possibility, as always, of a re-signification of the psychic attachments. But how? The return to Althusser is at this point very ambiguous. In her consistent introduction to “The Psychic Life of Power”, Butler finds that in Althusser persists some model of sovereignty based on the state apparatus as a universal notion of power—something Foucault called “juridic-

³⁴ Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 119

³⁵ Sigmund Freud, “Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence” in *On Metapsychology—The Theory of Psychoanalysis* (London: Penguin, 1985), 457-464

³⁶ Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 180

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 190

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 191

discursive model,”³⁹ “Althusser’s view, as useful as it is, remains implicitly constrained by a notion of a centralized state apparatus (...) modeled on divine authority.”⁴⁰ However, at the very end of the book, she retakes the same notion of centralized-state apparatus to describe the function of melancholia as *containment*. Melancholia produces some “internal space” in the threshold of the state, introjecting into the subject the containment function. The whole point of Butler’s conception about repression could be *its* dependence on certain concept of *state repression* as analogous to *psychic* repression.

Some psychoanalytical reviews of Butler’s work have stressed that there is a concept of repression highly pre-Freudian and pre-Lacanian in “The Psychic Life of Power” since repression and foreclosure are read as power subjections, containment, or even juridical prescriptions.⁴¹ Even more, there is no space for phantasmatic imagination: things are transparent and, despite some complexity, finally simple. We just need to resist power with power, repetition by repetition, and so on. The very possibility of the *ideology* as imaginary relation with something like our own desire is in this sense obliterated.

5. Interpellation beyond Butler

I’m purportedly using this idea of the “beyond” since Mladen Dolar wrote one of the most influential essays about Althusser in the 1990s, precisely entitled “Beyond Interpellation.”⁴² Paradoxically, Butler defends Althusser against Dolar, and in *The Ticklish Subject* Zizek criticizes Butler with the same argument that Dolar criticized Althusser: there is no space for the negativity, for the phantasm, for the remainder or, in more direct Lacanian terms, the objet *petit a*, in a scheme dominated by the Spinozistic/positivistic conception of ideology - in Althusser’s case - or

³⁹ See specially Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality I* (New York: Random House, 1978), 15-36

⁴⁰ Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 6

⁴¹ See for example Kirsten Campbell, “The Plague of the Subject: Psychoanalysis and Judith Butler’s *Psychic Life of Power*” in *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies* 6, (2001), 35-48

⁴² Mladen Dolar, “Beyond Interpellation” in *Qui Parle*, Vol 6, 2 (1993), 75-96

Foucaultian concept of power. Butler's transformation of psychoanalytical concepts is, for Žižek, a complete failure. In this section, I will explain Mladen Dolar's critique of Althusser's concept of interpellation and Butler's defense of Althusser. I read this confrontation between Dolar and Butler as a misunderstanding about the role of the Lacanian background in Althusser's theory of ideology. Mladen Dolar's criticism of Althusser entails the same concern that Žižek's regarding Butler in *The Psychic Life of Power*.⁴³ Dolar, as Žižek did previously in his famous book *The Sublime Object of Ideology* published in 1990, insists on a concept of ideology that deals with the lack - so, with a *plus of jouissance*, as Lacan puts it. However, as I will show, this supplementary and phantasmatic dimension of ideology and interpellation is not completely absent in Althusser's approach.⁴⁴

⁴³ Žižek's criticism of Judith Butler begins with the typical psychoanalytical rejection of Deleuze and Foucault vindications of transgression. "[The] anti-Oedipal radicalization of psychoanalysis is the very model of the trap to be avoided at any cost: the model of false subversive radicalization fits the existing power constellation perfectly". This critique is actually related to something we recalled above: that in Foucault's power schema, at least in the interpretation of Judith Butler, is very easy to affirm the pure and simple *potentia* of the subject without interrogating its always-already engagement with the Other, the symbolic order that is not the mere product of power multiplication, but actually something "eternalized." I underscore the fact that this eternity of the unconscious as *language* is precisely what Althusser understood as ideology in his correspondence with Lacan: ideology is this "heavy air layer without weight" that humans live as eternal (2010: 250). Failure of interpellation, or injurious interpellation, in Žižek's sense, does not stop the reconstitution of the symbolic order, the big Other that calls and constitutes the subject --and reversely the symbolic itself. This is why he accuses Butler to "ends up in a position of allowing precisely fo marginal reconfigurations of the predominant discourse." Žižek recalls that for Lacan the big Other "are the symbolic norms and their codified transgressions" (*The Ticklish Subject*, 251-260).

⁴⁴ Lacan's claim "It speaks in the Other" enables a conception about the subject according to which we are constituted by the division (*Spaltung*, recalls Lacan) and the split that imposes us a language that doesn't belong to us. Lacan actually was very warned about the nature of the transgression departing from this encounter with the Other that marks the subject: transgressive acts are forms of institution of the ethical subject, the maximal form of the image of the ego. In his famous article "Kant avec Sade" Lacan shows how Kant and Sade share the same tendency to eliminate any *pathological* desire from the imperative --the Kantian one made to form the ethical subject and the Sadean imperative made to obtain a maximum of *jouissance*. This elimination of pathological remainders of the *jouissance* actions is actually related to some ethical nature of transgression. Is it not actually the contemporary will to eliminate the link between love and sexual pleasure (or "relation" if there is one) a

Mladen Dolar's criticism of Althusser sustains that by affirming the positive materiality of ideology. For Dolar, Althusser avoids confronting the "void", the "gap" that makes any subject possible instituting the ideology as a form of dealing with the lack. We must recognize the enormous elegance of Dolar's text: in "Beyond Interpellation", what is at stake is not the simple denegation of Althusser's theory of ideology, but its reintroduction in the psychoanalytical discussion about the constitution of the subject. Dolar starts reading Althusser's motto ("ideology interpellates individuals into subjects") as a *clean-cut*, as a rupture analogous to the cut established by Althusser "between the real object and the object of knowledge or between ideology and science." For Althusser, according to Dolar, "one becomes subject by suddenly recognizing that one has always already been a subject: becoming a subject always takes effect retroactively - it is based on a necessary illusion, an extrapolation, an illegitimate extension of a later state into the former stage" (1993: 76). Therefore, it is in the moment of this clean-cut that Mladen Dolar is going to search the weak points of Althusser's theory about interpellation. The problem of Althusser's concept of interpellation does not reside in this clean-cut: "I think we should hold the idea of sudden emergence and abrupt passage as a deeply materialist notion."⁴⁵ Dolar points out that for Althusser the clean-cut of interpellation produces a transparent subject

clear example of the dissociation of sex, or genital interchange and pathological remnants of sexual encounters? Experiences like polyamory relations, or Foucault's vindications for a "non-anatomical eroticism" unlinked from disciplinary sex, do not relapse in an ethical conception of the subject? Why Foucault ends up his philosophical work with an ethical reflection about the subject and *parrhesia* --the courage of the truth, etc.? Sadean pursuit precisely relies on this search for a non-anatomical and non-pathological relation with the object: "the little missing object" as said Lacan in "Seminar X", that is behind any anatomical relation --and this is why Sadistic transgression and masochism belongs entirely to the economy of repression. See specially Jacques Lacan, *Anxiety, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Edited by Jacques Alain Miller* (Polity, 2016). Freud's essay "A Child is Being Beaten" (1919) witnesses how repression not only has a negative function: its negativity is highly productive since only through repression sadism gets into masochism. This is exactly what happens to the subject with repression itself, which is transformed in a source of libidinal attachment, in a complex moment of vicious eroticism --and not something we should liberate or make fail in order to *enjoy*. Enjoyment without libidinal attachment with the repressive economy is absurd. See "A Child is Being Beaten" in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love* (New York: Collier Books, 1974) 107-133.

⁴⁵ Mladen Dolar, "Beyond Interpellation," 77

and supposes a certain degree of direct articulation between the ideology and the subject. While in Judith Butler's argument about interpellation she emphasizes the question of the failure, of the possibility of denying or not responding the hailing, Dolar stresses the problem of the remainder. If there is a failure in the subject at the moment of interpellation, it has nothing to do with the will of the subject to make subversive contestations, but quite the contrary: the subject cannot prevent the emergence of a "remainder," of a non-symbolizable rest.

For Althusser - explains Dolar - the subject is what makes ideology work; for psychoanalysis, the subject emerges where ideology fails. The illusion of autonomy may well necessary, but so is its failure; the cover-up never holds fast. The entire psychoanalytical apparatus starts from this point: different subjective structures that psychoanalysis has discovered and described...are just so many ways to deal with that remainder.⁴⁶

Dolar also criticizes the entire structuralist tradition (in which he includes Derrida and Foucault) because in such conception there is an *anteriorist* conception about the structure. The "structuralist model" conceives the subject as something effectuated by the structure (like Judith Butler's "power on recoil") while in Lacan's view "subjectivity is grasped" as the very *cogito* that creates the structure through a failure, a gap produced by its interception by the signifier.

We know since Lacan that subject-constitution always entails this dimension of loss. This is exactly the meaning of Lacan's use of Freudian *Spaltung* to describe such an encounter between the individual and the signifier defile. "The capture of man in the field of the unconscious - explains Lacan - has a fundamental primitive character, but this field implies a *Spaltung* that is maintained throughout the unfolding of its development."⁴⁷ Is Dolar saying that Althusser does not account for that

⁴⁶ Ibid., 78

⁴⁷ Jacques Lacan, *El Seminario de Jacques Lacan, Libro VII, La ética del psicoanálisis* (Buenos Aires: Paidós 1990), 258

split? In “Beyond Interpellation” he tries to explain the relationship between the splitting of the ego and interpellation by Lacan’s “drastic example - that of being presented with a choice of “Your money or your life” (*La bourse ou la vie*).”⁴⁸ In that case, stresses Dolar, we must pay a high price for our entry into the symbolic. Whatever the path we choose, money or life, there is a dimension of irremediable loss. Instead, “In Althusser’s model, there is no place for loss, for the price paid for becoming a subject. Interpellation transform loss into a gain (...) and just makes the void which is created invisible”.⁴⁹ Althusser - according Dolar - follows here his master, Spinoza, for whom the difference that articulates the subject is the distance between the Real and the Imaginary, eluding the crucial plane of the Symbolic. The Spinozistic conception of Althusser is then incompatible with psychoanalytical stress on the void, on the “Real that provides *jouissance*” and the bit of surplus - the little packet of *jouissance* - that constitutes the “motor of any ideological edifice.”⁵⁰

Judith Butler strongly criticizes this corrective of Althusser’s theory of ideology through Lacan in “The Psychic Life of Power”, where she stresses that Dolar’s opposition between the materiality of the ideology and interpellation by the Other relies upon a Cartesian and idealistic conception about the subject. For Butler, Dolar is an example of “theological resistance to materialism.” Althusser’s materiality of ideology refers, for Butler, to the repetition of the rituals that configures the subject: “the rituals of ideology are material to the extent that they acquire a *productive* capacity, and, in Althusser’s text, what rituals produce are subjects.”⁵¹ Symbolic is then produced by this repetition, material repetition, power repetition, etc. For Butler, Dolar’s corrective of Althusserian theory of interpellation does not account for the possibility of a *repetitive* failure, a material failure produced by the “inability” of the state to “determine the constitutive held of the human.”⁵² Rather than the remaining internal exteriority of the subject, but the materiality of the

⁴⁸ Mladen Dolar, “Beyond Interpellation”, 82

⁴⁹ Ibid., 89

⁵⁰ Ibid., 92

⁵¹ Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 125

⁵² Ibid., 129

power, is what is a stake in Butler's approach to Dolar criticism.

However, as I will show, Althusser does not take any fixed position. To use a Žižek's formula: in front of the question "Materiality or Remainder" posed by the Butler-Dolar debate Althusser would answer *Yes, please*. And this is precisely because he does not reject the necessity of considering the *Spaltung*, the split of the subject and the consequent void opened by the splitting itself. In my view, the problem does not consist in denying Dolar's anxiety concerning Althusser's materialism. It is not a matter of eluding the problem through Foucault's theory of power, but rather explaining what Althusser means by this "Real", by this "*objet a petit a*" that concerns Mladen Dolar.

6. Ideology and unconscious

Judith Butler's review of Althusser's theory of ideology has been criticized for reducing the complete Althusser's essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" to the moment of the hailing, decontextualizing interpellation from the content of the text—that includes family, army, and schools as part of the interpellative structure of capitalistic reproduction. The Althusserian feminist Hasana Sharp, for example, writes: "Butler's notion of symptomatic reading refuses any rigorous consideration of Althusser's most important contribution...: the materiality of ideology and its existence in practices and institutions."⁵³ In my opinion, this critique is highly problematic and insufficient. Butler's account for Althusser actually not only takes into account the problem of materiality but is all about *affirming that materiality* as something ontologically primigenius respect to any symbolic order. Foucaultian conception of power and multiplication of subjections is quite taken into account by Butler, and the possibility of a more decentralized or de-multiplied conception about ideological apparatuses is not far from Butler's intentions, committed with the materiality of the ideology as many Althusserians. Even more, the concept of materiality of the ideology is very compatible with Judith Butler's recent stress on the problem of

⁵³ Hasana Sharp, "Is it Simple to be a Feminist in Philosophy? Althusser and Feminist Theoretical Practice" in *Rethinking Marxism* 12:12 (2000), 30

“couninterpellatingter-interpellation” and “misrecognition” in Althusser.

In her recent essay “Theatrical Machines” Butler states that “coercion is not only the explicit use of police force to compel obedience but the matrix of subject-formation that produces a “good” citizen bound by the law from the start.”⁵⁴ The “calling” is not anymore here the simple *voice* of the cop hailing the pedestrian, but actually “the entire order of legal violence”.⁵⁵ Butler assumes the very Marxist background of Benjamin’s essay “Critique of Violence” from 1921 and the concept of “ideological reproduction” is endorsed to the idea of the break of the “ideological machine for critical purposes.”⁵⁶ Warren Montag read, in fact, with unsurpassed accuracy the possibilities of conjunction between Althusser and Foucault that would also work as possibilities of conjunction between Judith Butler and the “materiality” of the ideology.⁵⁷ The materiality of ideology is, at the end, not only compatible, but also *coincidental* with power-relations as they are defined in Butler’s theoretical universe.

The problem itself is the infinite game of complications implied in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” essay. The positional texts about Althusser always or almost always depart from this “Ideology” essay referring to it as the “last word” of Althusser’s work. The systematic publication of the posthumous writings of Althusser, nevertheless, opens new ways of understanding interpellation, ideology and its relationship with psychoanalysis. In what follows, I will review two crucial texts to understand the problem of ideology in Althusser, leaving aside the supposed indispensability of Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses essay.

In “Three Notes on the Theory of Discourses”, the most important

⁵⁴ Judith Butler, “Theatrical Machines” in *Differences, a Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, Vol 26 N. 5 (2015), 34

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 35

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 37

⁵⁷ Pascale Guillot’s “Althusser and Psychoanalysis shows that “Althusser’s commitment to psychoanalysis is only momentary, in the 1960s, and stops there where the Althusserian subject “is incompatible with the subject of Lacan’s unconscious. The Althusserian critique of the Cartesian subject is shown in the antipodes from the original perspective of Lacan. This strengthens the verification, in Althusser, of the ambiguity of the project of the constitution of a theory of the non-egological or psychological subject”. See Pascale Guillot, *Althusser et la psychoanalyse* (Paris: PUF, 2010)

problem for the Argelian philosopher was the uneasy link between ideology and unconscious. It is in this text, also, that Althusser brings up the concept of interpellation:

It is ideology which performs the function of *designating* the subject (in general) that is to occupy this function: to that end, it must *interpellate it* as subject, providing it with the reasons-of-a-subject for assuming the function. Ideology interpellates the individuals by constituting them as subjects (ideological subjects and therefore subjects of its discourse) and providing them with the reasons-of-a-subject (interpellated as subject) for assuming the functions defined by the structure as functions-of-a-*Träger*.⁵⁸

The first thing we realize here is that interpellation is far from being just the act of a simple hailing by an authoritative representative of the state. Even more, ideology is the very *substance* that allows the individuals to live as *Träger* supports the social structure that reproduces the conditions of reproduction - of exploitation. In this scheme, a Butlerian unsuccessful interpellation is easily visible: it is enough not to assume the subject reasons provided by the ideology, or to assume them problematically to “trouble” the interpellation and ideological subjection. But immediately Althusser complicates the scene of interpellation saying that “the *subject-function* which is the characteristic effect of ideological discourse in turn requires, produces or induces a characteristic effect, the unconscious effect or the effect of the *subject-of-unconscious*.”⁵⁹ In this sense, any “trouble” coming from the subjectivity of the subject as such is re-troubled by the unconscious as the structuring *kernel* of the psyche. Even if Althusser does not accept any “genetical” explanation of the category of the unconscious, his interpretation is that the unconscious is produced in the “differential articulation” with the ideology. Here, Althusser seems to repeat the Lacanian schema according to which the subject, in the same

⁵⁸ Louis Althusser, “Three Notes on the Theory of Discourse” in *The Humanist Controversy and Other Essays* (New York: Verso, 2003), 52.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 53

moment in which is intercepted by the language of the Other, *constitutes* its unconsciousness. Lacan explains this process by recourse to an experiment by Melanie Klein in which the subject is created by the imposition of the Oedipus: his entry into the signifier is possible only through symbolization, and it is *this* entry into the signifier that *creates* the unconscious as language.

Then why do we need a concept such as ideology if the Lacanian symbolic, signifier or big Other perfectly covers the problem of interpellation? Here we have at least two problems which Althusser deals with: first, the kind of articulation between ideology and the unconscious, and second, the problem of whether ideology means something more than the Lacanian symbolic order. The first question is hardly answered by Althusser explaining that the articulation between the unconscious and ideology does not include the whole ideological sphere. Is a restricted part of the ideology what constitutes the unconscious: “the articulation between the unconscious with the ideological...is never general, but always selective-constitutive, subject to constraints and defined by the type of unconscious involved.”⁶⁰ The second question refers to the “materiality” of the ideology since Lacan’s concept of symbolic does not necessarily cover institutions and forms of violence embodied in the social. Here we find the most problematic point of Althusser’s reading, and it is the strong presence that the concept of discourse has in the “Three Notes.” When Althusser refers, indeed, to the articulation between the unconscious and ideology, he refers to the articulation of two different discourses: “The big Other - writes Althusser, openly using Lacanian terminology - which speaks in the discourse of the unconscious, would then be, not the *subject* of the discourse of the ideological but the *discourse* of the ideological itself, established as the *subject* of the discourse of the unconscious.”⁶¹ The production of the unconscious by ideological discourse is, in this way, the production of a subject-of-the-unconscious. Althusser, however, doubts the concept of “materiality” to describe ideological discourse saying that “the category of material is patently insufficient. It has the major disadvantage of occulting that the discourse of the unconscious is

⁶⁰ Ibid., 59

⁶¹ Ibid., 60

produced in and through ideological discourse”.⁶² The important point here is to concentrate on the suggestion that this Althusserian scheme implies. This is the idea, fundamental in my opinion, that the unconscious as discourse (as “language” in Lacan’s terms) is constituted by the effects of the ideological *in* the subject - ideological that exceeds the mere “materiality”. This effects, as I will show, are commanded by a supplementary violence in the breast of the very ideology and actualized through the interpellation.⁶³

Althusser recognizes the violent division that imposes on the subject this encounter with ideology. He confronts the question about the split of the ego or the *Ichspaltung* in terms that derive from Lacan but establishing a difference on the status of the lack, on the dimension of loss that Dolar’s essay emphasized. In the “Three Notes” Althusser argues:

seems to me unwarranted to talk about the ‘subject of the unconscious’ in connection with the Ich-Spaltung. There is not divided or *split* subject, but something else entirely: alongside the *Ich* there is a *Spaltung*, that is, literally, an *abyss*, precipitation, an absence, a lack. This abyss is not a subject but that which opens up *alongside a subject*, alongside the *Ich* which is well and truly a subject (...) Lacan would appear to *establish the abyss or lack as a subject* by way of the concept of division of the subject. There is no ‘subject of the unconscious’, although the unconscious can exist only thanks to this abyssal relation with a lost.⁶⁴

So, the problem is that the very *abyss* constituted by the “differential articulation” of ideology and unconscious, is another thing than an “internal” void in the Cartesian *cogito*. At this point, Butler’s position about

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ But still, Althusser does not allow to leave anything outside the field of the constitution of the subject by the clash-overlapping between ideology and unconscious. Even more, Althusser insists on the seemingly bizarre thesis that libido is an effect of discourse: we know nothing of a libido prior to discourse, prior to its constitution as an object of the unconscious as language, and therefore our access to it is conceptual. “The libido does not remain outside, external, different, transcendent” (2003: 73) says Althusser. This is at the same time recognition and denial of Lacan.

⁶⁴ Louis Althusser, “Three Notes on the Theory of Discourses”, 78

Cartesian insemination in Lacan is coincident with Althusser, but with the difference that for the later still persists a lack, an *abyss* “alongside” the subject. When Butler confronts the problem of repression, she argues that repression works as the *state*, producing sanctions and symbolic repetitions in the law.⁶⁵ In such a case, we do not confront any lack or abyss: is just the transparent, direct power exercised over the individual. Instead, for Althusser, ideology functions “atemporally, like the unconscious.”⁶⁶ From the non-temporality of the ideological structure, the analogical functioning between unconscious and ideology, and the differential articulation between both, Althusser allows us to question a simple concept of power in which it is synonymous with force. Unconscious conditions power but is, precisely, differential to power and ideology. While articulating both unconscious and ideology, Althusser also allows us to prove a rigorous distinction, and to question the ontology of power behind Butler’s repetition and her reduction of symbolic power articulation.

If we look closely at this theoretical episode of Althusser, we see at least three questions: first that ideology produces the unconscious with an effect of eternity that is proper to the structure of the unconscious since Freud, second that unconscious structure enables the subjects to exercise their reproductive function in capitalism and third, that the differential articulation between the ideology and the unconscious produces an abyss, a void, a rupture not in the subject but alongside it. But, why alongside? What is the theoretical value of this “alongside” for Althusser? In my opinion, what this means is that the true *split* that survives with the subject is precisely the aggressive content of the state that ensures the ordering of *jouissance*, and not something locatable at the interior of the *cogito*. Althusser was in search of this *split* and its violence, and I think that later he identified it with the army. In other words, symbolic structure is not (only) imposed by repetition or power-attachments, but by a psychic redouble of violence. The unconscious is not (only) the place of an originary repression after transformed in rage against the ego. The split of the ego

⁶⁵ The subject still has, in that scheme, the agency to revert power by power, to overthrow the symbolic by a subversive re-configuration of the injurious interpellations. In *Bodies that Matter* are the communities of object life those that complicate the scheme of power, that is, of the symbolic.

⁶⁶ Louis Althusser, *Writings on Psychoanalysis* (New York: Columbia University Press), 62

is not the merging of the rage, but the redouble of the sadistic nucleus of interpellation: interpellation always *demand*s a supplement.

7. Weapons issue

Ideology seems to be an extremely complex concept when we realize that for Althusser it was always an unresolved question: the “interpellation” of the individual as subjects occurs, for Althusser, under the specific model of an institution of civilian soldiers that are interpellated by a big Other full of violence:

This is why we may say that ideological discourse recruits by itself producing the subject that it recruits. It solves the problem evoked in the old complaint of military men - what pity that soldiers are recruited only among civilians - because the only soldiers it ever recruits are already in the army. For ideological discourse, there are no civilians, only soldiers.⁶⁷

In the last instance, this metaphor has important theoretical consequences. In this case - very different anyway from that of the policeman hailing - we are trapped always-already in the structure of the interpellation. Interpellation only confirms our existence as soldier-signifiers. At the same time, this metaphor traces a specific difference with that of the policeman interpellation over the pedestrian: while in that scheme there is a clean-cut between pedestrian and policemen, in this case, we are all confused in the army-structure of the big Other. In some way, this scheme of extreme circularity belongs to a series of concepts that Jacques Derrida uses more accurately in his deconstruction of sovereignty: the idea of the “double bind”, the “supplementary violence” and the circularity or ipseity of the ego. The ego is constituted by this supplementary violence of the interpellation, and that *supplément* produces actually the unconscious effect. This way of investigation is, however, still opened.

I want to finish this paper with an image that Althusser used in

⁶⁷ Louis Althusser, “Three Notes...”, 55

1978, in *Que Faire?*, belonging to an intense debate sustained with Eurocommunism theories about power - paradoxically committed with some Foucaultian re-reading of the Marxist theory of the state in the case of Nicos Poulantzas. In that book, Althusser signals that Machiavelli is the author of a “theory of the force as own to produce ideological effects which, not only effects of consensus but effects of transformation of the ideology in all the citizens of the people gathered in the army”.⁶⁸ What really interests to a theory of ideology is the fact that force, violence, can be productive of the ideological as such.”⁶⁹ Althusser has here slightly deviated the meaning of the *Spaltung* of which he speaks in the “Three Notes,” to emphasize that violence is the very fuel of ideology, with its effects of “psychic violence”. Althusser repeats here the metaphor of the army used in 1966, no longer as a metaphor, but as the key point for a theory of ideologies that reads the *Spaltung* of the subject “alongside” with him, and not inside him: the violent *Spaltung* is produced by this “psychic violence” of the production, by the “plating” of the ideological interpellation”. The psychic violence of ideology has always consisted in that little *surplus* of violence that the interpellation needs to work.⁷⁰ That is its sadistic character. For Althusser, finally, the key to the emancipation was not in the failure of the interpellation, nor in its interruption by a messianic force, but in the production of new interpellations, or to put it in Lacan’s terms: in the refounding of the big Other, in a new re-ordering of the *jouissance*. A new kernel for an “authentic materialist ideology” as he puts in his interview with Fernanda Navarro.⁷¹ And that is the most

⁶⁸ Louis Althusser, *Que faire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2018), 109

⁶⁹ Ibid., 110

⁷⁰ In his famous “Peau noire, masques blancs” Fanon states that, in the case of blacks, it is not enough with the traditional Christian *imitatio* that would allow blacks to resemble whites. In other words, the subaltern position of the Black man is irremediably reproductive, it works with a plus of *jouissance*, a plus of enjoyment: “et voici that l'on me réclamait un supplément”, “I was called for more”. Black, in other words, cannot give only the resemblance to whiteness (gestures, the customs of whites), must produce an extra effort to hide what is visually undeniable. This supplementarity, Althusser would say, is proper to any interpellative phenomenon in capitalism.

⁷¹ See Louis Althusser, “Philosophy and Marxism” in *Philosophy of the Encounter* (London: Verso, 2006), 288: “In the present ideological conjuncture, our main task is to constitute the

impossible difficulty of Althusser's interpellation, which makes it intractable without psychoanalysis. Finally, we can conjecture and say that, in the end, the specific materiality of the interpellation, including the subject "readiness" smartly interrogated by Judith Butler, is the pure violent core that circulates as the true heart of the reproduction of capital - and the unconscious.

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kernel of an authentic materialist ideology and of a philosophy that is correct [*juste*] in order to facilitate the emergence of a progressive ideology".

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