François Matheron
”Des problèmes qu’il faudra bien appeler d’un autre nom et peut-être politique”. Althusser et l’insituabilité de la politique

Precisely as he was repoliticizing his philosophy and criticizing his “theorist deviation”, Althusser wrote in 1967 that he did not know, after all, what politics was. In 1978, in Marx in his limits, he wrote that the classic Marxism “has never yet provided the beginning of an analysis answering the question: what can politics be about?”. This article attempts to reconstruct the positivity of such remarks, on the basis of a sketch devoted in 1961 to the “Marxist conception of politics”. In asking the question of what politics would look like in a communist regime, the “mature” Althusser undermines all Marxist conceptions of politics, starting with that of class struggles aiming at seizing State power – and even of class struggle per se. Moreover, he shakes Althusserianism even as it is barely taking shape. In his mention of “a zone which is not located in theoretical concepts, and which will be precisely the zone liberated by the end of classically conceived politics”, Althusser shows that politics can only take place when it is not located in any predetermined space. This non-situationability of politics takes its positive dimension when Althusser studies the “strange shaking of theory” operated in Machiavelli’s work.

Bruno Karsenti
La politique du dehors. Une lecture des cours de Foucault au Collège de France (1977-1979)

The courses by Michel Foucault recently published invite us to approach the question of the State, and more generally that of politics, from the point of view of governing and “governmentality”. Through such concepts surfaces a constant methodological urge to approach things from the outside, to study multiplicities, “connections with the heterogeneous”, historical configurations where disparate elements interact while remaining disparate. The same approach structures the understanding of this form of governmentality known as liberalism. In order to understand its nature, a long detour was needed into the realm of the Christian pastorate, and into the connection of the heterogeneous in politics that was thus brought about in the West.

Maurizio Lazzarato
Biopolitique/Bioéconomie

The genealogy of capitalism sketched by Foucault at the end of the 1970s shakes up
whatever we thought we knew about liberalism. Adam Smith’s observation retains all its relevance: politics (rights) and the economy (interests) are neither to be superposed nor to be reconciled. Liberal governance attempts to face this fact. Its tasks of circumventing, encircling, reaching from the outside are mediated by two modalities of application, which correspond to two techniques of normalization: the first one (discipline), predominant, deals with the bigger items; the second one (security), active in the underground, deals with the details. It corners more closely the multiplicities, life, and conduct. A true politics of multiplicities would suppose an intervention “from the outside of” the agents we take for natural or spontaneous, but which are the objects of a constant care and re-institution: markets, firms, workers.

Laurent Bove
*Politique* : “*j’entends par là une vie humaine* “. *Démocratie et orthodoxie chez Spinoza*

L. Bove’s text (in continuation of M. Vatter’s in *Multitudes* 9 (2002)) addresses the triangle formed by liberalism, orthodoxy, and democracy, but from the point of view of Spinoza’s philosophy, which reflects upon a radicality of orthodoxy and a radicality of democracy outside of the jurisdiction of politics. The Spinozist perspective suggests that if democracy is the true asymmetrical opponent to the politics of the modern State, the latter is built, in its effective truth, in perfect symmetry with a model of orthodoxy. This allows us to consider the worrying possibility for today’s liberalism explicitly to eradicate its democratic opponent. This possibility has been opened by a model of orthodoxy which has already managed to respond to the problem of democratic claims. It so happens that this perfect model of obedience has been described by Spinoza in the Ancient Hebrew theocracy, a model of (ahistorical) orthodoxy of which the Hobbesian monarchic State (nowadays reappearing in the shape of liberal democracies) provides its modern (post-historic) expression. The article explores the theoretical underpinnings of this worrying configuration and its implications. Spinoza’s reflection shows that politics is to be identified with the question of anthropogenesis.

Sandra Laugier
À la recherche d’une voix perdue : réinventer l’individualisme ?

The author wishes to rehabilitate a form of individualism which would be defined by a capacity to speak out, by the possession of a subjective voice, and by what R. W. Emerson called self-reliance. In this approach, radical democracy can be defined in linguistic terms, those of expression and individual action, made possible by consent, as well as by the possibility of dissent and disobedience to the rule. Individuality can then be redefined in terms of difficulty of expression and obscurity to oneself and to others, rather than in terms of evidence and clarity.

Yoshihiko Ichida
Les aventures de la *Verkehrung*. À propos de l’ontologie politique de Jacques Rancière

“Reversal”, in dialectics, takes place between two things located on the same level of substantiality, while “inversion” participates in a paradoxical ontology where the things to be inverted do not pre-exist the inversion itself. Such is the meaning of an ontological
thesis largely shared by today’s Marxism: the primacy of class struggle over classes. While making a clear distinction between the two in *The Capital*, Jacques Rancière insistently asks whether these two operations can be separated without resorting to “kautskism”, which introduces it within the struggle from the exterior of the struggle, thus denying the ontological primacy of struggle. The solution he provides is unheard of: on the one hand, he radicalizes inversion as a politics of subjectification within which there is no longer any “constituted”; on the other hand, he reconfigures the reversal as an activity of the imagination which perpetually differs from itself, as in “labour’s dream” or in “heretical speech”. He thus presents these two operations as mutually conditioning and producing each other.

Didier Debaise  
*Un pragmatisme des puissances*

Pragmatism presents itself as a technical reflection upon experimentation. This technique takes two forms: the evaluation of the propositions, utterances, and ideas through their effects; the construction and invention of new propositions in charge of accounting for experimentation as a continuous movement of changes and transformations. This article attempts to reclaim this technical approach and to build on its basis a reflection on power (and empowerment). Such a reflection must break free from any definition which would link power to conservation, domination, or mastery, and favour an approach attentive to effects and transformations.

Toni Negri  
*Réponse à Pierre Macherey*

This article allows Toni Negri to respond to three objections proposed by Pierre Macherey to the notion of “multitude”, as it is sketched in Negri and Hardt’s second book. The author first stresses that the emphasis put on immaterial labour in no way denies the inertia, or even the exacerbation, of the relations of exploitation accurately denounced by critical thought for more than a century. He then invites us to consider communication, not as empty circulation, but as the effective ground where the materialist constitution of productive singularities takes place. Finally, he acknowledges that the transformation of the multitude from flesh to body offers no magical solution to political dilemmas, but stands rather as an open question, providing only a guiding principle in the search ahead of us: the multitude does not have the ambition of seizing power, but of managing the common.

Jean-Yves Mondon  
*La parole du créole qui ne se dit pas “créole” en créole*

In this article, I attempt to draw as many possible conclusions from this fact: in the Mascareignes Islands, the use of the word “Creole” is regulated by criteria that limit its application to subgroups of the Creole world. The use of this word is not “cognitive”, it does not refer to the inhabitant of the islands, the “native”: it marks that from which one must separate oneself within the Creole language itself, possibly through the evocation of back-languages, of customs, beliefs, and attitudes inherited from somewhere else. A crucial defining feature of Creole life thus appears to consist in a distance between forms of experience that coexist but that strive to be as separated and watertight as possible.
Sensitivities are deeply trained in measuring this distance, which leads (certain forms of) hybridization to be conceived as subtractions to the norms inherited from colonial times. Distance and hybridization are the main terms through which I have attempted to describe the Creole world in the Mascareignes; but I tried to do so “from a distance”, in the spirit with which Derek Walcott described fragments of epics in the Caribbean.

Raphaël Confiant
La créolité contre l’enfermement identitaire

For two decades, the movement of Creolity has pushed itself into the Franco-European, American, and finally world debate, when it comes to discussing literature or music. In this article, Raphaël Confiant explores the historical implications of this new reflection which attempts to redefine cultural identities in a world characterized by nationalist backlashes on one hand, and by globalization under US control, on the other.

Alexandre Alaric
Le migrant nu. “ Le déporté sur des frontières “

This article is a contribution to the theoretical and philosophical reception of Édouard Glissant’s work. It focuses on the “coming to the world”, on the access to Speech of a “We” and of the writing subject, as well as on a reflection on the trace which results from the double experience of historical colonization (and slave-trade) and linguistic creolization. Fundamental notions of Relation, world-chaos and Whole-World appear as the matrix of a poetical anthropology and of a philosophical poetics, as they pave the way for a reflection on world migrations and the multitude.

Yves Citton
Créolectures et politiques membraniques

Common sense often tends to identify Creolization with hybridization, as if tearing down boundaries and mixing up the heterogeneous were the defining features of Creolity. Drawing from recent theories of reading, this article attempts to locate the power of the Creole in the work of selection performed by boundaries conceived as membranes. A politics of filters and thrusts is thus sketched, along a series going from lectio to election, selection, and intellection.

Madison Smartt Bell
Kreyol pale, Kreyol konprann

This paper discusses some aspects of Creolization in ethnic, racial, and linguistic contexts, as they evolve from certain events of the Haitian Revolution.

François Cusset
Cybernétique et ” théorie française ” : faux alliés, vrais ennemis

Responding to recent publications by Céline Lafontaine, François Cusset unties the illusions of the supposed knot between the US ideology of cybernetics and the “French Theory” represented by thinkers like Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, or Deleuze. Those who denounce a historical complicity between these two “anti-Humanist” movements in the
name of a few superficial analogies miss the profoundly critical nature of French Theory towards capitalism. It is rather on the side of those technophobic Humanists so eager to denounce the Pensée 68 that one finds today the most active accomplices of the liberalisation of French society.

Giselle Donnard
“La Russie a peut-être plus besoin de la guerre en Tchétchénie que de la Tchétchénie elle-même”. À propos du livre Tchétchénie : une affaire intérieure ?

This book by Anne Le Huérou, Aude Merlin, Amandine Regamey, and Silvia Serrano re-inscribes the Chechen conflict within the continuity of Russian colonization (and its ethnic prejudices), within that of a Sovietization out of which the nationalist movement originally grew, within the immanent needs of the Putinian regime and within the complexity of the interactions between Islam, resistance, solidarity, identity and the fear of extermination. It focuses in particular on the role of women, including of the “kamikaze” women who tragically illustrate the change in nature of the resistance. The book is published at a moment when it is urgent for Europe not to repeat in Chechnya the consequent reflexes it adopted during the wars in the ex-Yugoslavia.

Hans Belting
Peter Weibel. Les “Télé-actions”

Between 1969 and the 1970s, Peter Weibel produced a series of performances and video-installations which attempted to infuse life into TV images. He did so by interfering with pre-existing programs, by inventing new arrangements of projection, by transforming the relation between actors and viewers, or by generating thought out of images.

Boris Groys
Images de pensée

Peter Weibel pursues the paradoxical course of the twentieth-century avant-garde. Are the institutions of art all dead? He proposes that artists become institutions. Did the gaze find its emancipation? He attempts to control it. Are traditional techniques outdated? He calls digital art to the rescue, as the only means to expressing thought processes.

Published 21 October 2005

Original in French
First published in
Downloaded from eurozine.com (https://www.eurozine.com/abstracts-multitudes-22-2005/)
© Multitudes Eurozine