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# “The Soul is the Prison of the Body”: Althusser and Foucault, 1970–1975

It is impossible to *know* anything about men except on the absolute precondition that the philosophical (theoretical) myth of man is reduced to ashes. So any thought that appeals to Marx for any kind of restoration of a theoretical anthropology or humanism is no more than ashes, *theoretically*. But in practice it could pile up a monument of pre-Marxist ideology that would weigh down on real history and threaten to lead it into blind alleys.

—Louis Althusser, “Marxism and Humanism”

Three centuries ago certain fools were astonished because Spinoza wished to see the liberation of man, even though he did not believe in his liberty or even in his particular existence. Today new fools, or even the same ones reincarnated, are astonished because the Foucault who had spoken of the death of man took part in political struggle.

—Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*

Not so many years ago it was possible (or perhaps inevitable) to read Althusser’s “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”<sup>1</sup> and Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*<sup>2</sup> not only as counterposed texts, but as expressions of opposing systems of thought that might be compared and contrasted, their resemblances and differences noted, but which would remain as ineluctably separate as the men who wrote them. And despite the well-known disposition of both Althusser and Foucault to question, if not reject, the very notion of authorship as exemplary of the myth of the originary subject, it remains very difficult to separate these texts from the subsequent lives and works of their authors. For, while Althusser’s text proclaimed its Marxism on every page,

1. Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” in *Lenin and Philosophy*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971). Hereafter referred to as “Ideology” in citations in the text.

2. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1977).

*Discipline and Punish* (in which Marx is cited approvingly on a number of occasions) was nevertheless most often read as a proleptic and hence still obscure manifestation of what would soon become Foucault's open hostility to Marxism (or at least certain kinds of Marxism)<sup>3</sup>, and thus as a critique and rejection of the central theses of even Althusser's highly unorthodox remarks on ideology.

Everyone, more or less, has read these texts. The debates that followed their appearance (which admittedly most often took the form of praise or blame) have long since given way to summaries and elucidations that present, in a simplified form, the "essential arguments" of these justly renowned works. And this is precisely the problem: to borrow a phrase from Swift, the original texts often seem buried under mountains of commentary. They appear beyond recovery in the sense that, although the originals are often read, they are always already mediated through other works which, although external to them, appear to have decided their meaning once and for all.

There can be no question, however, of simply putting the seemingly countless commentaries aside to recover the real texts. For it was Althusser himself who wrote that "there is no such thing as an innocent reading."<sup>4</sup> Let us then begin by noting the readings that are imposed upon us, the themes and problems that, as if by a kind of projective identification, appear to arise spontaneously from our encounter with these texts even as they are determined by the way these texts have already been read. To begin to free ourselves from these readings, we must, of course, read the readers and summarize the summarizers, and not simply the best of them, but also those most representative of their genre, namely the mediocre and even the plainly bad. What is remarkable about them is that in their very imprecision and repetitiveness they allow us to speak of these two texts together. For despite the obvious differences between "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" and *Discipline and Punish*, differences in vocabulary and reference points (implicit as well as explicit), the two works have continued

3. It is striking to read today Francois Ewald's very influential review of *Discipline and Punish*, "Anatomie et corps politique," which appeared at the end of 1975 in *Critique* (side by side with the first version of Deleuze's "A New Cartographer" from his book *Foucault* [trans. Soéan Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988)]). Ewald projects onto Foucault's text a systematic opposition to Marx and to any conceivable form of Marxism that is utterly absent from the letter of the work, even though Foucault himself later appeared to endorse such a reading.

4. Althusser, *Reading "Capital,"* trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1970), 14.

to provoke remarkably similar criticisms (which, perhaps because of their frequency, no longer appear to be criticisms at all and are taken as “objective” or even sympathetic observations). Thus, to take the two commentaries that have arguably most shaped the reception of these texts, and which exhibit the full range of criticisms (in variety as well as quality), E. P. Thompson’s critique of Althusser in *The Poverty of Theory* and Habermas’s critique of Foucault in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (and elsewhere) address quite similar themes. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” and *Discipline and Punish* were both seen as “limit texts” that took to their logical conclusion certain disturbing and unthinkable notions that had only appeared in mediated form in the earlier work of Althusser and Foucault. Both texts were charged with offering a subtle and perversely persuasive (or even seductive—given that their appeal was said to be literary rather than genuinely philosophical or theoretical) functionalism, a structuralism that denied all that was distinctively human, whether historically invariant needs and natures, the daily “experience” that was said to form the basis of human thought and feeling, or even the irreducible freedom that provided the sole ground of our morality. Such structuralist-functionalism could only result in the evacuation of all historical agency, portraying a world without the possibility of resistance or even change. Althusser and Foucault, despite their differences, produced an analysis of domination that could itself only be a ruse of domination, insofar as the effect of their work was to paralyze individual initiative and to overwhelm critical thought with the idea that ideology or power were inescapable. The program of theoretical anti-humanism announced in the pages of Althusser’s *For Marx* (1965) and Foucault’s *The Order of Things* (1966) was equated with a political or, increasingly, moral indifference to concrete human beings that achieved its fullest expression in the works of the 1970s.

It would of course be possible to respond that these charges are off the mark, inaccurate, or unfair, and to attempt to supply true interpretations in place of the false.<sup>5</sup> And yet, the detractors of Althusser and

5. Although it might be more valuable to trace the political and theoretical trajectory of anti-Althusserianism and anti-Foucauldianism (and, more generally, of what Pierre Macherey has called anti-antihumanism). Within Marxism (that is, taking the work of those who openly identify themselves as Marxists), the case of Althusser is particularly interesting. For apart from cultural studies (in the broad sense), much of Anglo-American Marxism has simply forgotten Althusser (Foucault was always regarded as an enemy). From E. P. Thompson’s tirade against Althusser (*The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978]) to Perry Anderson’s

Foucault have stumbled on a truth that the partisans of these philosophers have often denied: that the two works are not opposed and external to each other, the one an alternative to the other. Rather than feeling compelled to choose between “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” and *Discipline and Punish*, and thus between Althusser and Foucault, to the extent that we take the commentaries in all their unevenness to be objectively determined effects of the works in question, we may read the apparent dilemma, Althusser or Foucault, in the manner of Spinoza, as Althusser *sive* Foucault, Althusser, that is, Foucault. Perhaps it is now (that is, from a certain historical distance) possible to regard Althusser and Foucault (understood as proper names that denote bodies of work) as reciprocal immanent causes, dynamic and inseparable, no longer as creators of systems that must be accepted or rejected *in toto*, but rather as philosophers who sought to problema-

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*In the Tracks of Historical Materialism* (London: Verso Press, 1983)—which was less emotional but no less dismissive—until the mid-eighties when he was quietly buried (appearing in Jon Elster’s *Making Sense of Marx* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985] only in adjectival form as the poisonous “Althusserian” atmosphere at the Ecole Normale Supérieure that Elster found it convenient to avoid), Althusser’s theoretical antihumanism was apparently deemed unworthy of refutation. Despite the immense outcry *no one responded to the arguments of “Marxism and Humanism” or “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” point for point*. It was enough, apparently, to say that, because we cannot imagine revolt against domination without the classical concept of the individual as subject, as a center of initiatives, as radical origin of thought, speech, and action, it therefore must exist. Once Althusser’s questioning of the category of the subject was forgotten, there was a massive return to essentialism, with Thompson’s attempt to save the phenomenon of human experience from dwindling into rational choice individualism. It is quite ironic that the dominant form of Anglophone academic Marxism, far from being the self-contained theoretical realm that Anderson thought it ought to be (in order thus to be preserved from the contagion of an irrevocably foreign poststructuralism), now derives its epistemology from Karl Popper’s *The Poverty of Historicism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), its theory of class struggle from Mancur Olson’s *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), and its political positions from John Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971). While Althusser was once roundly denounced for speaking of the heterogeneity of Marx’s texts, it is now a received truth in these quarters that there is little that makes sense in Marx except the moral doctrines that he himself disavowed. It is also highly ironic that Habermas’s rationalism and humanism, which, according to Anderson, were the antidote to Althusser’s theoretical anarchy and nihilism, were very publicly placed in support of the imperialist forces in the Gulf War (nor was Habermas alone in this among the anti-antihumanists). Habermas has continued to defend this “police action” by appealing to the doctrine of human rights (Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987]). Althusser’s critique of the spontaneous philosophy of economic and political liberalism would appear more urgent than ever.

tize certain concepts and notions that many in their time and ours felt could not be questioned. Further, these commentaries, both positive and negative, are useful to us in another way. For it is not only what the critiques of Althusser and Foucault actually say that allows us to link these texts quite closely; it is also what they do not say, the theoretical concerns common to both Althusser and Foucault that are overlooked by their commentators with the regularity of a symptom, the silences and oversights that the commentaries share and that were imposed upon them by the historical conjuncture in which they were written.

It is useful to begin by noting the nature of the theoretical activity of Althusser and Foucault as they themselves defined it: they were neither sociologists nor historians; their objective was not to create theories of society and even less to provide analyses of specific historical moments. They were philosophers, although, again, not in the traditional ("Continental") manner. They did not seek to produce new systems of thought in the sense that we speak of Cartesianism, Kantianism, or Hegelianism. On the contrary, a careful survey of their work shows that their primary concern was to discover how certain concepts functioned in specific historical conjunctures, not from a position outside this history, but rather from within it, in order to allow something new to be thought, to make it possible, as Foucault said, "to learn to what extent the effort to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently."<sup>6</sup> Such a "philosophical exercise" (*ibid.*) is at once very limited and extraordinarily ambitious and far-reaching. It is nevertheless absolutely necessary.

Althusser was especially interested in what philosophy "thought silently," or, to use his language, in the "obviousnesses" of philosophy, in philosophy. To insist on this is to appear to move far from the political realm (which Althusser argued was at stake in philosophy) and to a purely theoretical realm of necessarily little interest to the world. We seem to have converted Althusser, not only a Marxist but a Communist, into a pure academician, applying philosophy to itself, tinkering with self-evident concepts in order to produce clever paradoxes *pour épater les bourgeois*. To this charge Althusser responded that "philosophy intervenes in reality only by producing results *within itself*."<sup>7</sup>

6. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1986), 9.

7. Althusser, *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists and Other Essays*, ed. Gregory Elliott, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 1990), 107.

How does philosophy work upon itself? By questioning the tenacious (and properly philosophical) concepts whose obviousness renders them all but unquestionable, like "the 'obviousness' that you and I are subjects. . . . It is indeed a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so, since these are 'obviousnesses') obviousnesses as obviousnesses, which we cannot *fail to recognize* and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying out (aloud or in the 'still, small voice of conscience'): 'That's obvious! That's right! That's true!'" ("Ideology," 172).

Foucault described his own activity in very similar terms: "To give some assistance in wearing away certain self-evidences and common-places about madness, normality, illness, crime and punishment; to bring it about, together with many others, that certain phrases can no longer be spoken so lightly, certain acts no longer, or at least no longer so unhesitatingly, performed; to contribute to changing certain things in people's ways of perceiving and doing things; to participate in this difficult displacement of forms of sensibility and thresholds of tolerance—I hardly feel capable of attempting much more than that. If only what I have tried to say might somehow, to some degree, not remain altogether foreign to some such real effects. . . . And yet I realize how much all this can remain precarious, how easily it can all lapse back into somnolence."<sup>8</sup>

All this sounds so modest, too modest, I suspect, for many philosophers today who, not content merely to produce theories of justice (an enterprise so utterly foreign to Althusser and Foucault), would design the blueprint of the well-ordered and fair society of tomorrow. But the modest questioning of certain obviousnesses produced effects of the most explosive kind. Some of the world's most eminent historians, sociologists, and philosophers were moved to "put out the fire." The ferocity of their reactions may today appear surprising or even startling. But we should not be surprised: the ferocity is a sign of how sensitive certain ideological points can be, of how utterly intolerable is the mere questioning of some "certitudes." In this, even the most bitter tirades are valuable indicators.<sup>9</sup> They suggest that the simple, if

8. Foucault, "Questions of Method," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 83.

9. The reader will recall the terms of E. P. Thompson's refusal even to criticize this particular work of Althusser's: "'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses'. . . is perhaps the ugliest thing he has ever done, the crisis of the idealist delirium. I will spare

unexpected, questions that Althusser and Foucault dared to ask about "certain commonplaces" possess a force that is not nearly exhausted and will likely turn out to be more important than the systems that their opponents and many of their admirers have attributed to them.

The most unforgivable question that Althusser and Foucault asked concerned the subject. Their stubborn insistence that the individual was not given, but constituted or produced as center of initiatives, an effect, not a cause of the conflictual processes of ideology or power (a thesis central to both works) had, as Althusser put it, "everything required to offend . . . common sense."<sup>10</sup> While this notion has received much attention, its theoretical precondition (at least in the sense Althusser defined the interpellated or constituted subject) has nearly been passed over in silence by the controversies of the last two decades. It is a theoretical point (not the only one but one of the most important) where the two works overlap and which, from a certain position, prevents them from being entirely separated, even as it is the point at which the two works might seem most opposed. I refer to Althusser's assertion (which has no formal or explicit counterpart in *Discipline and Punish*), in a language so different from that of Foucault as to appear irrelevant to his project, that ideology has a material existence. It was precisely because such a phrase seemed to Foucault to contain an insurmountable paradox that he, from very early on, rejected the term "ideology." It appeared impossible that "ideology" could be dissociated from some form of ideal or immaterial existence, whether ideas or consciousness:

I wonder whether, before one poses the question of ideology, it wouldn't be more materialist to study first the question of the body and the effects of power on it. Because what troubles me with these analyses which prioritize ideology is that there is always presupposed a human subject on the lines of the model provided by classical philosophy, endowed with a consciousness which power is then thought to seize on.<sup>11</sup>

And this is precisely the paradox of Althusser's attempt to undermine what he called "the ideological concept of ideology" with the

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myself the tedium of criticism, since in its naivety, its refusal of all relevant evidence, and its absurd idealist inventions it exposes itself" (174).

10. Althusser, *Essays in Self-Criticism*, trans. Grahame Locke (London: New Left Books, 1976), 94.

11. Foucault, "Body/Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. and trans. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 58.

notion of "ideology" itself, forcing a word whose ever visible etymology reminds us of its reference to ideas (in the mind and thus endowed with an ideal or spiritual existence), as well as whose use in a variety of Marxist and non-Marxist discourses seemed almost ineluctably to refer to a notion of consciousness, *against* "ideas," *against* "consciousness," and, finally, *against* every form of interiority, leaving nothing recognizable in his conception of ideology but the name. Of course, such a tactic was entirely in keeping with what Foucault himself called "the tactical polyvalence of discourse," the rule that enjoins us to "conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable," and which implies constant "reutilizations of identical formulas for contrary objectives."<sup>12</sup> This is not to say that Althusser's exploitation of this specific theoretical polyvalence entirely prevented his notion of ideology from being read as a continuation of earlier theories, or even as a not very original theory of the indoctrination of preexisting consciousnesses.<sup>13</sup> On the contrary, the evidence of the last two decades confirms that the very use of the term "ideology" (which he nevertheless considered unavoidable given the absence of more effective concepts) tended to obscure the radical originality of Althusser's theses on the nature of human servitude, their irreducibility to preceding theories of ideology.

Althusser approached the central thesis of the "Ideology" essay (ideology interpellates individuals as subjects) through two preliminary theses "one negative, the other positive. The first concerns the object which is 'represented' in the imaginary form of ideology, the second concerns the materiality of ideology" ("Ideology," 162). The conjunction of these two theses perfectly captured the apparently paradoxical nature of Althusser's notion of ideology. For how could ideology be simultaneously imaginary and material, and how could the notion of the "imaginary" be conceived, except in reference to a consciousness whose illusions, whose false ideas, prevent it from knowing or perceiving the real? It is noteworthy that the negative thesis of the imaginary was widely taken up by commentators (and not just those who discerned in it an allusion to the work of Lacan), while the positive thesis of the materiality of ideology went nearly ignored.<sup>14</sup> The "imag-

12. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1980), 100.

13. See, for instance, Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill, and Bryan Turner, *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), 20–24.

14. To my knowledge, the most extended treatment of the topic of the materiality of



inary form of ideology" appeared to be the *only* link between what had heretofore been understood as ideology and Althusser's often bewildering attempts to separate himself from all the familiar bearings. For many readers ideology was still "false," "illusion," even the false consciousness (why not?) of an interpellated subject, a subject constituted, yes, but constituted as already possessing the false (imaginary) ideas that in turn give rise to actions that tend to the reproduction of (rather than resistance to) the existing relations of production.

Such an interpretation, however, was not simply a misreading projected onto Althusser's text. For how else are we to understand the distinction, seemingly so central to Althusser's notion of ideology (and stated at the very outset, prior to the section "On Ideology"), between the "Repressive State Apparatus" that functions (in the last instance) "by violence" and the "Ideological State Apparatuses" that function "by ideology" ("Ideology," 145)? Of course, the statement that Ideological State Apparatuses function by ideology is, formally speaking, an empty tautology (at least until Althusser defines ideology); by opposing it to the violence of the Repressive Apparatuses, however, he appears to endorse a political dualism of force and consent (a term, it should be noted, that is conspicuously absent from the essay and from Althusser's work in general), of a double but asymmetrical domination that exercises force and violence on the body, but only as a last resort, the preferred mode of domination being that which persuades the mind to choose of its own irreducibly free will to subject itself to the powers that be. The servitude that is freely chosen will prove much more durable than that which is forced upon an unwilling subject in that it is lived as legitimate and lawful. Ideology here becomes indoctrination, the inculcation of beliefs (whether true or false) that will inevitably find expression in the actions of the individuals who "possess" them. There thus appears a linear sequence: ideas (the ruling ideas) are communicated to individuals who form beliefs that cause them to act. The fact that such notions are fundamentally incompatible with the elements of Althusser's definition of ideology in the final section of "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" did not prevent many readers from taking the essay as a variant of the traditional theory of ideology. For this very reason, it is worth (re)tracing the line of demarcation that separates what is new and unprecedented in this

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ideology is that of Paul Hirst in *On Law and Ideology* (London: Macmillan Press, 1979): approximately one and a half pages.

extraordinarily complex and heterogeneous work from the images, words, and even concepts that preserve a continuity with the "tradition" of ideology.

Althusser began his discussion of his second, positive, (but still preliminary) thesis with a warning that ideology, even as it could be said to be imaginary, did not consist of false or illusory ideas "contained" in the minds of individuals (and still less in some collective mind or spirit) that would then cause them to act in certain ways. The entire discussion of ideology here is designed to call radically into question the notion that mental beliefs cause physical bodily actions. It is at this precise point that he lost a large majority of his readers and it is not difficult to see why. The arguments that follow "Thesis Two: Ideology has a material existence" move from paradox to paradox, not forward to new conclusions but backward into Althusser's text itself, contesting and undermining certain formulations (e.g., violence and ideology), or, more precisely, the certitudes, the unquestionable givens upon which such formulations appear to be based.

Althusser begins his discussion of the material existence of ideology with the statement, in certain ways calculated to appeal to a kind of orthodoxy, that the Ideological State Apparatuses, each of them, is the "realization of an ideology" ("Ideology," 166). Now, "realization" in this sense is, for a number of reasons, not a usage we would expect to find in Althusser. It seems that we are to understand that the ideology precedes its expression in the materiality of an apparatus, as an idea precedes (and causes) an action. This would of course mean that ideology has an (ideal?) existence prior to its material incarnation, a notion that is ruled out by the second thesis itself: ideas do not (ever) have a spiritual or ideal existence, only a material one. Without taking up any of these questions, Althusser (in the same paragraph) restates ("returns to") the thesis: "An ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice or practices. This existence is material" ("Ideology," 166). The restatement, of course, changes the meaning of the original statement in certain important respects, given that "always exists in" is not the same as "is realized in." The reformulation eliminates the suggestion of the temporal and causal priority of ideology in relation to the apparatuses and thus eliminates any notion that ideology can exist external to its material form.

But while the second formulation solves certain problems associated with the first, it also poses new questions. I refer specifically to the use of the preposition "in": ideology always exists *in* an apparatus. Let

us go further and combine the two formulations to achieve the full effect of the paradox: ideology always exists in the apparatus that is its realization. Thus ideology is neither the cause (in any commonly accepted sense of the term) nor the effect of the apparatuses that constitute its material form. This is not, however, the first appearance of this precise paradox in the history of philosophy. Althusser had, as Michel Pêcheux put it, "a real companion in heresy . . . who also knew the art of taking unforgivable questions to extremes."<sup>15</sup> Of course, Althusser was well aware of this companion, whose importance not simply for this essay but for Althusser's work as a whole was notorious. When it comes to the question of ideology, he argued that "to be a Spinozist or a Marxist . . . is to be exactly the same thing" ("Ideology," 175). As is well known, Spinoza questioned the model of every conception of the originary subject (or actor or agent of an action): God. For the relationship of God to the created world cannot be that of an actor separate from his action, which would thus be the expression of a preexisting intention. God can only be an immanent cause whose will and intentions exist solely in an actualized state: "God could not have been prior to his decrees nor can he be without them."<sup>16</sup> Human beings insist on imagining God as a transitive cause, whose will precedes his actions and decrees because they, argues Spinoza, imagine themselves (or their minds) to be the free causes of their actions, whereas in fact mind and body, thought and action are simultaneous and inseparable, and determined by the same causes. Perhaps Althusser deliberately refrained from directly using the Spinozist language that caused such controversy when it appeared at the end of *Reading "Capital,"* but the concept is there: ideology is immanent in its apparatuses and their practices, it has no existence apart from these apparatuses and is entirely coincident with them. Ideas have thus disappeared into their material manifestations, absent causes that "exist" only in their effects (or, to add a Freudian reference that is entirely in keeping with both Spinoza and Althusser, ideas in this sense are causes that are ever only constituted *nachträglich*, retroactively, as the effect of their material effects).

It is certain to be objected at this point that ideas, even those that have disappeared into their material forms, must originate somewhere; and even if we are not methodological individualists who trace all

15. Michel Pêcheux, *Language, Semantics, and Ideology: Stating the Obvious*, trans. Harbans Nagpal (London: Macmillan Press, 1982), 214.

16. Benedict Spinoza, *The Ethics*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1982), Proposition 33, Scholium 2.

action back to an original actor (or actors) and all thought to an originating "thing that thinks," is it not the case that consciousness or mind retains a place in this scheme if only as a relay point that facilitates the translation of "ideas" and "thought," however instantaneously, into ideological practices that, after all, depend on the corporeal obedience of individuals? Must these individuals not first (be made to) believe in order then to obey? But Althusser denounces even this notion as "an absolutely ideological 'conceptual' device (*dispositif*)" insofar as it separates ideas ("endowed with a spiritual existence") from "(material) behavior" (*comportement*), and institutes the priority of the former over the latter ("Ideology," 167). So, according to this conceptual device, if an individual "believes" in God, then he or she will go to church and pray. If an individual "believes" in the law, then he or she will obey it. What if an individual does not act according to the beliefs that he proclaims openly or "knows" secretly that he holds? He is then either a hypocrite or, more interestingly for our purposes, does not know what he believes. It is probable that Althusser, at this point in the text, had in mind a passage from Descartes's *Discourse on Method*: "In order to ascertain their real opinions, I ought to take cognisance of what they practiced rather than of what they said, not only because, in the corruption of our manners, there are few disposed to speak exactly as they believe, but because very many are not aware of what it is that they really believe, for as the act of mind by which a thing is believed being different from that by which we know we believe it, the one is often found without the other."<sup>17</sup>

Althusser subjects such statements to a symptomatic reading: despite the insistence on separating spiritual ideas from material actions, as internal intentions that are externally realized, this "ideology of ideology," faced with a discrepancy between the ideas and beliefs on the one hand and actions on the other, must, precisely to preserve this conceptual device, posit ideas other than those that the originating subject thinks it has, ideas that "correspond" to the actions the subject performs. The fact that these interpolated ideas do not preexist "their" actions, i.e., the actions that correspond to them, can mean only one thing: "The ideology of ideology thus recognizes, despite its imaginary distortion, that the 'ideas' of the human subject exist in his actions" ("Ideology," 168). The formula is repeated: just as ideology always ex-

17. Cited in Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 82.

ists in an apparatus, so do ideas (of individual subjects) exist in (their) actions. It is at this point that Althusser crosses a certain threshold in his "restatement" of his thesis concerning the ideas and actions of individuals: "His ideas are his material actions" (169). A few lines later, as if to blunt the force of his critique or to obscure the tracks of his theoretical detour (through Spinoza, whose name is not mentioned once in the section "ideology has a material existence," arguably the most Spinozist part of a very Spinozist essay), he tells us that while the term "ideas" has disappeared from further considerations of ideology, the notions of "belief" and "consciousness" survive (169). This is a very revealing moment in that it shows Althusser's desire to preserve or, rather, appear to preserve an entire conceptual vocabulary, with the sole exception of the term "ideas." It is as if it would be too much altogether to eliminate the terms "belief" and, even more, "consciousness" (the importance of which for Marxist thought in all its diversity can hardly be overestimated). But do these terms and, even more importantly, the notions of interiority that they suggest actually survive in Althusser's text? Should we, as so many readers have done, take Althusser at his word?

In fact, the word "consciousness" appears only once in the remainder of the essay. Not only is it placed in quotation marks, but it is immediately qualified in the following way: the reproduction of the relations of production is assured "in the 'consciousness,' i.e., in the behavior" (*dans la conscience, c'est-à-dire, dans le comportement*)<sup>18</sup> of individual subjects. Consciousness, i.e., behavior: the reference here is not only to the content of Spinoza's famous, and equally offhanded, remark (*Deus sive Natura*, God, i.e., nature) but, even more perhaps, to Spinoza's philosophical strategy. Fifteen years after the publication of "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Althusser wrote:

What also fascinated me about Spinoza was his philosophical strategy. . . . For Spinoza began with God! He began with God and finally (I believe, in accordance with the tradition of his worst enemies) he was (like Da Costa and so many other Portuguese Jews of his time) an atheist. A supreme strategist, he began by laying siege to the enemy's

18. It is essential to note that *comportement* is consistently rendered in the English translation of the essay as "attitude," which suggests an internal, subjective state, whereas the French suggests the opposite, namely external conduct of behavior. Ben Brewster's otherwise accurate and elegant translation has thus unfortunately contributed to a misunderstanding of the materialism proper to the essay.

most vital and most heavily fortified point or rather placed himself there as if he were his own enemy and therefore not under suspicion himself of being the enemy, taking over the enemy's theoretical fortress and turning it against that enemy, as if one were to turn the cannons of a fortress against its occupants.<sup>19</sup>

One scholar has called the procedure Althusser refers to here the "strategy of the *sive*,"<sup>20</sup> the strategy of remaining inside the dominant conceptual regime while carrying out an operation of theoretical transformation and translation: God or nature, right or power, preserving words while changing their meanings and then returning these words against this regime. Althusser has preserved the language of interiority, the words "belief," "consciousness," in the very same sense that Spinoza preserved the concept of God, in order more effectively to subvert it.

To illustrate this point, Althusser takes an example from Pascal, condensing into a single sentence a series of arguments and postulates from the *Pensées*: "Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe." This "wonderful formula," he writes, "will enable us to invert the order of the notional schema of ideology" ("Ideology," 168). The order to which he refers is of course the causal order according to which thought precedes action as its cause: if an individual kneels down and prays, such an action is the consequence of that individual's belief in God and his desire to act upon his belief (for he might suffer from "a weakness of will"). Pascal's hypothetical libertine, however, poses more complicated problems. His difficulty concerns belief, not action: convinced that his destiny has been wagered, he wants to believe in God but cannot, he desires to desire God but feels only emptiness where the desire he desires to feel ought to be. Pascal's advice to the libertine is truly "scandalous": what you do is more important than what you believe. Perform the prescribed gestures and utter the prescribed words and your lack of belief will not matter. But perhaps even more scandalously, he reassures the libertine that action or practice, to use Althusser's term (at least, if it is conducted according to rituals performed within the apparatus of the Church), will *produce* belief, thus instituting a tendential primacy of the body over the soul, of matter over spirit. To invert "the notional schema of ideology," however, is not necessarily to call it into question. For Pascal's position

19. Althusser, "L'unique tradition matérialiste," *Lignes* 18 (1993): 85–86.

20. André Tosel, *Spinoza ou le crépuscule de la servitude* (Paris: Aubier, 1984), 55.

appears to resemble a kind of behaviorism, a theory of the conditioning of the mind through the body that makes the soul a mere reflection of the body without substance or material form.

Althusser, however, has set for himself the opposite objective: to demonstrate the material existence of ideas, beliefs, and consciousness. Accordingly, he immediately translates Pascal's language into "a more directly Marxist vocabulary" in order to show that "we are not dealing with an inversion at all":

I shall therefore say that, where only a single subject (such and such an individual) is concerned, the existence of the ideas of his belief is material in that *his ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject.* [169: Althusser's emphasis]

Althusser's translation is again a betrayal of the original in that every notion of a sequence and a separation between the mental and the physical, the soul and the body, spirit and matter has disappeared, and further, the ideas that "are" the actions of an individual no longer transcend physical existence insofar as they are always already "inserted" into practices that are in turn governed by the rituals of an apparatus. The four repetitions of "material" in this passage are important. Words may remain (e.g., "belief," "consciousness"), but Althusser has effectively banished any notion of interiority, or rather, he shows that the internal is always already translated in the Spinozist manner into the external "expression" which it cannot be understood to precede and outside of which it has no existence. There are only exteriorities, not only the materialities of actions and movements but also the materialities of discourse, whether written, spoken, or silent and invisible, but still material, still producing effects as only the material can, not originating "inside" us whether in intentional speech acts or in the unintentional but nevertheless eloquent speech that is spoken to us in the secrecy of sleep, the speech that is ours but is spoken only where we are not. Ideas, beliefs, consciousness are always immanent in the irreducible materiality of discourses, actions, practices.

Here, Althusser plays certain theses from Spinoza's *Ethics* against the "ideology of ideology" that assumed its definitive form during the Enlightenment: "The philosophy of the Enlightenment . . . saw in knowledge and its public diffusion the solution to all personal and social contradictions, including the dissipation of all ideological illu-

sions."<sup>21</sup> When Kant wrote, "Argue as much as you like and about whatever you like, but obey,"<sup>22</sup> he certainly meant to lay the groundwork for an unending but orderly progress presided over by an enlightened monarch who, by simultaneously demanding corporeal obedience and allowing freedom of discussion, would himself be convinced to adjust the law to a constantly developing rationality that, in turn, would never be allowed to threaten social order with its zeal. But, even more, he imagined an intellectual freedom that coexists with but transcends bodily servitude, unconditioned by determinations that would remain of a purely physical order and that would therefore be incapable of affecting the activity of the mind.

Is it possible to think freely in a world of obedience? Spinoza, in the words of Althusser, "was not of this opinion." For him "the soul (the *mens*, the activity of the mind) is in no way separate from the activity of the organic body; on the contrary, the soul only thinks insofar as it is affected by the impressions and movements of the body, therefore it thinks not only with the body but *in it*, consubstantially united to it prior to any separation."<sup>23</sup> Against the entire liberal tradition from Hobbes (who was the immediate object of Spinoza's critique) to Kant (and beyond), which posits a human interiority free and separate from the laws (and forces) that govern the physical world as if it were "a kingdom within a kingdom . . . that has absolute power over its actions and is determined by no other source than itself,"<sup>24</sup> Spinoza argues that whatever decreases or limits the power of the body to act, simultaneously decreases the power of the mind (*mens*) to think (*Ethics*, Proposition 11). Spinoza judged a society not by its consciousness but by its rituals, practices, and institutions. As he explains in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, the longevity of the Hebrew state was no more a matter of its "collective consciousness" than of its divine election; its longevity was produced and insured by ceremonial rites and sacrifices, by the material and external manifestations of a faith that was less a religion than the ideology of the historical nation-state. Because the life of its people was "one long schooling in obedience . . . no one desired what was forbidden and all desired what was com-

21. Althusser, "L'unique tradition matérialiste," 96.

22. Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in *Kant's Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 55.

23. Althusser, "L'unique tradition matérialiste," 96.

24. Spinoza, *The Ethics*, preface, 3.



manded."<sup>25</sup> From Spinoza's account of the protodisciplinary society, it may be concluded that there can be no liberation of the mind without a corresponding liberation of the body, no criticism of the existing social order that is not immanent in acts and practices of resistance and revolt.

What are we now to make of the distinction between the violence of the Repressive State Apparatus and the "ideological" functioning of the Ideological State Apparatuses in the light of Althusser's Spinozism? It is certain that Althusser rejects the dualism inherent in Gramsci's formulations on hegemony: the centaur, half beast, half human, inhabiting simultaneously the world of ideas and beliefs (in which consent is shaped), and the world of force and violence. Althusser himself admitted that there was no absolute distinction between the Repressive State Apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatuses, arguing that every apparatus is characterized by a "double functioning" ("Ideology," 145). Even apparently purely ideological apparatuses such as the school or the church "use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion and selection, etc., to 'discipline' not only their shepherds but also their flocks" (145). Here, of course, we are just a step away from "discipline" in Foucault's sense. If we take seriously Althusser's statement that "we think with our bodies," then we can no longer understand the distinction between violence and ideology as a distinction between the external and the internal, between the domination exercised on bodies and the domination exercised on minds. Instead, we are forced to acknowledge the "consubstantiality" of force and persuasion, that there is no persuasion (or activity at all) of minds, except insofar as it is immanent in force that may be overwhelming or subtle, force that inflicts pain, damage, or death, or force that is quietly and unobtrusively physical, managing bodies and spaces with neither pain nor harm.

There remains, of course, Althusser's central thesis: ideology interpellates individuals as subjects. If with Spinoza Althusser holds that "mind and body . . . are one and the same individual thing" (*Ethics*, Part 2, Proposition 21) and consequently that if we think, we think with and in our bodies, there is, strictly speaking, no place for subjectivity in the modern sense. What, then, is this factitious if not fictitious interiority with which we are endowed, which is added to us, a

25. Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 266.

paradoxical interior that, having no place in us, is constructed around us, outside of us? Interiority and consciousness (and the internal acts that supposedly occur within these unconditioned spaces) function as the supplement of servitude, its supplemental origin, the origin of the origin, the mark of a domination that folds back upon itself to add to its superior force the guarantee of its own legitimacy. The imposition of human servitude through force and fraud is not enough; it must retroactively produce its origins (in the modern epoch at least) in the will of each and every subject, "man by man," as Hobbes would say, a foundation that simultaneously rises upon and buries the violence of its origins, where "conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in short, force play the greatest part."<sup>26</sup> In the liberal tradition, this scheme takes the form of the "acts of will," the "intentions" that originate nowhere else but *in* ourselves (it is in this sense that each individual in his or her freedom is a "kingdom within a kingdom"), that found the political order (at least *our* political order) and are the guarantees of its legitimacy. This interiority is thus the site of origins, but origins that were never present: the consent that we have always already given and that "founds" the power that rises against us, the rights that we have always already transferred to the powers that be that, having received our authorization, cannot really be opposed to us. Althusser says it brutally: we are interpellated as subjects so that we will freely choose our own subjection. For Foucault (writing in 1971, one year after the publication of "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"), this was the very historical meaning of humanism, which he defined as "the totality of discourse through which western man is told: 'Even though you don't exercise power, you can still be a ruler. Better yet the more you deny yourself the exercise of power, the more you submit to those in power, then the more this increases your sovereignty.'"<sup>27</sup> But interiority is not an illusory presence to which the materiality of the body (with which we think) might be opposed, for the "interpellated" interior is itself "constituted" and therefore fully real, not opposed to the exterior but its continuation: the figure of the fold, whose importance for Foucault Deleuze has demonstrated at length,<sup>28</sup> is merely another way of understanding the ideological interpellation of individuals as subjects.

26. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Press, 1977), 874.

27. Foucault, "Revolutionary Action: 'Until Now,'" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 221.

28. Deleuze, *Foucault*, 94–123.

Despite (or perhaps because of) Althusser's subtle and enormously complex attempts to turn the notion of ideology against the ideological conception of ideology, Foucault expressed suspicion of the term *ideology* from very early in his career, and his suspicions, it must be said, were often directed at Althusser's uses of the term. It was as if Foucault followed with critical attention the successive definitions of ideology offered by Althusser and felt compelled to engage, often polemically, with them. Althusser's early definition of ideology as "the lived relation between men and their world,"<sup>29</sup> which was opposed by "science," was vigorously contested in the pages of *The Archeology of Knowledge*,<sup>30</sup> a number of whose arguments were in turn adopted by Althusser in his self-criticism of 1974. But this strange "dialogue," whose participants did not directly address or even name each other (perhaps it was unnecessary), did not stop there. Almost immediately after the publication of "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in *La pensée* in 1970, the terms of Foucault's critique of ideology changed, even as he himself renewed his acquaintance with Marxism and became an active participant in the extraparliamentary Left. The problem with the concept of ideology was no longer that it seemed to denote a realm of *doxa*, of belief and opinion in opposition to the sanctified world of scientific knowledge, but rather that ideology seemed logically confined to the realm of consciousness and ideas and therefore destined to remain idealist, diverting our attention from what is at stake in any form of subjection: the body, the body that works and whose power produces value, the body that obeys by acting or by refraining from action. In one sense, this critique of ideology cannot possibly be directed against Althusser's essay, in that its terms, its insistence on the primacy of the body, are exactly those we have just described in Althusser. But in another sense, Foucault may be understood to confront "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" with its contradictions and unevennesses, developing certain of its theses (notably those concerned with the materiality of ideology) in order to show their stark incompatibility with other elements of Althusser's discussion of ideology.

In particular, *Discipline and Punish* underscores the way the arguments that comprise the thesis "ideology has a material existence"

29. Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 1969), 233.

30. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Harper, 1972), 184–86.

appear to call into question the distinction between the RSA and the ISAs as a distinction between violence and ideology (understood in turn as an opposition of force and consent). As we have seen, the "citation" from Pascal, the image of the subjected body that is determined to kneel down, move its lips in prayer, and simultaneously to "believe," suggests that, while there is no question of the body being caused to act by a persuaded, indoctrinated, or deceived mind (contrary to some of Althusser's suggestions at the beginning of the essay), neither can "its" acts be understood as the effects of violence or repression (involving the army, the police, or the courts), which would, of course, not exclude a notion of a mind or consciousness that rationally calculates likely outcomes of actions, and decides to choose the wiser, i.e., safer course of obedience (a notion excluded by the essay's central thesis of the interpellated subject). Foucault, unencumbered by the "ideology of ideology," and having no need to turn its language against it, can argue in a directly Spinozist manner that since bodies (and the thinking that takes place in them, with them), and not consciousness or interiority, are at stake in the practices of subjection, and since only bodies determine bodies, it is all the more striking that so little attention has been paid to the physical processes of subjection, processes whose divergent modalities cannot be grasped in the terms of the violence-ideology distinction:

Subjection is not only obtained by the instruments of violence or ideology; it can also be direct, physical, pitting force against force, bearing on material elements, and yet without involving violence; it may be calculated, organized, technically thought out; it may be subtle, make use of neither weapons nor terror and yet remain of a physical order. [*Discipline and Punish*, 26]

Does this mean then that, as some critics have charged, humans are reduced to the level of brute beasts, not only without consciousness, but without even ideas or words or thought of any kind? Here Foucault's response (which is, as Pierre Macherey has argued in "Towards a Natural History of Norms," more Spinozist than Nietzschean)<sup>31</sup> is as well known as it is controversial: "There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power rela-

31. Macherey, "Towards a Natural History of Norms," in *Michel Foucault, Philosopher*, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong (London: Routledge, 1992), 179.

tions" (27). Knowledge, which is decidedly not the same thing as "consciousness," cannot be said merely to arise, as an effect separate from its cause, from power relations (note the plural, which emphasizes the conflict and antagonism that characterize power as Foucault defines it), which would then form the foundation to which it might be reduced. Knowledges (Foucault's nominalism enjoins us to speak of them in the plural) are in no way exterior to power relations, caused by them only finally to transcend them; rather, they can only be understood as immanent in the materiality of practices and apparatuses. Readers have often asked if *Discipline and Punish* is a history of ideas or a history of institutions, thereby imposing upon it the idealist dilemmas (mind or body, words or things, ideas or reality) that the work refuses from the outset.<sup>32</sup> Foucault, to use Althusser's language (and in this way make it evident that, despite his refusal of the entire problematic of ideology with its paradoxes and impasses, Foucault cannot completely escape the difficulties Althusser faced in speaking of the material existence of ideology), has written a history of ideas that cannot be separated from the physical, material practices in which they are (always already) realized. This, rather than the functionalism and defeatism that are often ascribed to him, would appear to be what is truly scandalous about his work: his refusal to regard the history of psychiatry, medicine, or criminology apart from their practical and institutional forms, namely, the asylum, the hospital, and the prison, the forms of the ordering and distribution of bodies in space in which these knowledges participate, the position that they, in their material incarnations, occupy in a field of conflicting social forces. If to confront the most noble ideas of human freedom with their often sordid materiality is a provocation, then nothing was more provocative than Foucault's observa-

32. It is interesting to note that Deleuze insists on the presence of a dualism (of the visible and the articulable) in Foucault's *oeuvre*, although he later qualifies it as "a preliminary distribution operating at the heart of a pluralism" (Foucault, 83). Foucault is thus contrasted to Spinoza, whom Deleuze describes as a "monist," a traditional but highly dubious proposition. See Macherey, "Spinoza est-il moniste?" in *Spinoza: Puisseance et Ontologie*, ed. Myriam Revault D'Allunes and Hadi Rizk (Paris: Kimé, 1994). It appears that because Deleuze tends, despite himself, to a dialectical reading of Foucault's work according to which each stage represents the interiorization/resolution of preceding stages, the realm of the articulable as stated in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* combines with its opposite, the realm of the visible, from *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, to produce a higher unity. It might be argued instead that the (Spinozist) notion of the mutual immanence of knowledge and power developed in the later work marks a decisive break with the dualism of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (the separation of practices into the discursive and the nondiscursive).

tions on the liberal dreams of Enlightenment thinkers. Thus, what has so offended contemporary readers is not that Foucault neglected the great themes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the ideas of freedom, right, and law, but rather, that he refused to regard them as disembodied ideals, existing in consciousnesses and representations. Instead he seeks to determine their "dark side," the technologies of power, the forms of struggle and subjection that accompanied and made possible the utterances that constitute these doctrines:

Historically, the process by which the bourgeoisie became in the course of the eighteenth century the politically dominant class was masked by the establishment of an explicit, coded and formally egalitarian juridical framework, made possible by the organization of a parliamentary, representative regime. But the development and generalization of disciplinary mechanisms constituted the other, dark side of these processes. The general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle was supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call the disciplines. [*Discipline and Punish*, 222]

From this point of view, not only is it impossible any longer to speak of an opposition between ideological apparatuses, on the one hand, whose primary function would be to produce "ideologies" understood in the old sense of ideas and beliefs, and, on the other, the repressive apparatus (always in the singular for Althusser), which would employ force or the threat of force; it is equally impossible to speak of the knowledges linked to an apparatus as being in any way external to (or innocent of) its functioning, like beautiful lies that would conceal or deny the harsh realities of the disciplinary regime. Instead, Foucault shows that the knowledges that took shape in an apparatus such as the army in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, knowledges that would be diffused to other seemingly counterposed apparatuses (e.g., the school), had nothing to do with what is usually meant by ideology, the "values," as Althusser suggests, of nationalism and social order. Rather, what was historically important about the army (like the police and the entire penal system) were the ideas, often nothing more than theoretical fantasies or strategic objectives (subject to the contingencies of "the perpetual battle" [*Discipline and Punish*, 26] that characterizes the field of social forces) immanent in its multiform

operations. The order that the army attempted to impose on its own ranks was, of course, not secured as much by the inculcation of values and beliefs as by the technologies of the body: the distributions according to which bodies were enclosed and simultaneously partitioned, the investments that sought, by working on bodies, by recomposing and reconfiguring them, to increase both their utility and docility and, finally, the forms of supervision, from perpetual and anonymous surveillance to the examination based on a normalizing judgment.

In fact, Althusser's central thesis (ideology interpellates individuals as subjects) only takes on its full meaning in relation to what we might call Foucault's reading of the materiality of ideology, a notion rewritten as the "physical order" of the disciplines. The phrase "ideology interpellates" is often read as a (tragic) drama of recognition that resembles the dialectic of consciousness and self-consciousness in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*: the subject exists in itself and for itself only insofar as it is recognized (or hailed). Thus, the interpellation of the subject would itself be a subjective process, unfolding entirely within the realm of consciousness or intersubjectivity, it would thus be ideological in the old sense, a false idea or representation counterposed to reality. While such a reading is all the more surprising given the fact that Althusser called the theme of recognition an "ideological" motif that could not be explained except by abandoning any philosophy of consciousness ("Ideology," 173), it was Foucault who argued that, if we can consider the individual as subject "the fictitious atom of an ideological representation of society," we must regard that fiction correlatively as "a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called discipline" (*Discipline and Punish*, 194). For Foucault, the individual does not preexist his or her interpellation as a subject but emerges as a result of strategies and practices of individualization.

Foucault allows us to see the regime of individualization (or at least the descending individualization that particularizes and identifies those on whom power is exercised) as a strategy, perhaps the strategy of the disciplinary regime faced with the reality of mass movements, the reality of collective action made possible by the new enclosures of the factory, the prison, and the school:

It must also master all the forces that are formed from the very constitution of an organized multiplicity; it must neutralize the effects of counter-power that spring from them and which form a resistance to the power that wishes to dominate it: agitations, revolts, spontane-

ous organizations, coalitions—anything that may establish horizontal conjunctions. [221]

The same economic and political imperatives that led to the formation of masses, necessitated strategies that, at the level of knowledge, tended to reduction, segmentation, and serialization, in short, an entire “science of the individual” (191) and, at the level of physical forces, to separation, partitioning, and cellularity. Contrary to an entire tradition that can conceive of domination only as the denial of a natural individuality through forced collectivization, Foucault argues that:

Instead of bending all its subjects into a single uniform mass, the disciplinary regime separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units. It “trains” the moving, confused, useless multitudes of bodies and forces into a multiplicity of individual elements—small, separate cells, organic autonomies, generic identities and continuities, comminatory segments. Discipline “makes” individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise. [170]

The fantasy immanent in the practices of discipline is to abolish “the crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect,” and to replace it “by a collection of separated individualities” (201).

The individual thus abstracted from the mutual entanglements and dependencies, from the “coagulations” proper to social existence is then endowed with a soul, or, depending upon the domain of knowledge and the nature of its apparatuses, a “psyche, subjectivity, personality, [or] consciousness. . . . The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection more profound than himself. A ‘soul’ inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body” (29–30).

The soul is the prison of the body: no statement so captures the despair that many readers have claimed to have found in both “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” and *Discipline and Punish*. It is possible, however, to read these works otherwise. For, from the materialist positions that Althusser and Foucault occupy, there can be no total domination or total authority. Only rights and privileges can be transferred, alienated, or appropriated; power, which both Althusser



and Foucault conceive in physical terms, "is exercised rather than possessed" (*Discipline and Punish*, 26) and cannot be given or taken away. Only in the juridical imagination can the power of the masses, which is real and material no matter how ineffectual or dispersed its exercise, be taken or given away. If we read Althusser and Foucault to the letter, the dilemma we face is not how to secure greater rights and guarantees of our independence and autonomy, how to prevent the dominant ideology from infiltrating the sanctuary of our interiority, or how to transcend that which dominates us in order to negate through thought the existing state of affairs and imagine its utopian contrary. Our dilemma is rather how to increase our power, how to diminish the forces that individuate and separate us and thus prevent us from uniting with others in order to act and to think more effectively and with greater strength for our liberation. What can liberation mean without transcendence? An old voice reminds us that the materialism of Althusser and Foucault is not quite without precedent: there are "no ideals to realize," only a future consisting of forces already active in the present<sup>33</sup> whose triumph or even persistence nothing guarantees. To identify these forces and to find a way to participate in their struggle: perhaps Althusser and Foucault, in their lives as well as their works, meant nothing more than this.

33. Marx, *The Civil War in France* (Peking: The Foreign Language Press, 1970), 73.