

**BIOGRAPHICAL
DICTIONARY
OF
NEO-MARXISM**

Edited by

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Preface

The list of names included in this volume emerged from a complicated and lengthy process involving Marxist scholars from every region of the world. The problem is self-evident: depending on where the line is drawn the number of entrants could easily double or triple. As it is, the final list from each nation or region is a product of the collective wisdom of at least three well-known, usually indigenous experts and does, I think, comprise a fair and representative sampling of each area's significant neo-Marxian theory and practice. The essays were then written by scholars with an intimate interest in and knowledge of a particular entrant. Unanticipated difficulties have nonetheless cropped up, further complicating the selection and writing processes. Several distinguished radicals—most, but not all, East Europeans—have for personal and political reasons asked me to omit their names. Moreover, some entrants have asked me to omit relevant biographical information. While each case was dealt with individually, in almost every instance I have acceded to the request. The notation "n.a." indicates that relevant information is either unavailable or is being purposefully withheld.

Many important Marxists who are omitted from this book can be found in the *Biographical Dictionary of Marxism* (also published by Greenwood Press), which surveys Marxian thinkers who qualify as materialists, whereas this volume deals with nonmaterialist Marxists. The terms *orthodox* and *nonorthodox* might be pertinent were it not that many Third World Marxists—who are included in the *Biographical Dictionary of Marxism*—consider themselves "unorthodox" with regard to revolutionary tactics and strategies even though unquestioningly accepting the "orthodox" science of historical materialism. In any case, relevant terms are defined and analyzed in the introductions of each book. Where a materialist's impact on neo-Marxism is noteworthy I have listed his or her name herein with the notation, "See the *Biographical Dictionary of Marxism*." An asterisk in the text indicates that a separate entry is listed in this book for the preceding name; a dagger, that an entry can be found in the *Biographical Dictionary of Marxism*.

In addition to the over 205 biographical entries, ten group, movement, or journal entries are listed as well: *Arguments*, Austro-Marxism, empiriocriticism,

legal Marxism, liberation theology, the Prague Spring, *Praxis*, Situationist International, *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, and structural Marxism. (The Frankfurt School is examined in the Introduction.) Although their most important representatives are usually allotted separate entries, these ten headings have been judged as crucial to understanding the evolution of neo-Marxism in their respective nations or in the West generally.

Each essay is followed by a two-part bibliography consisting of significant primary works (paragraph A) and useful secondary material (paragraph B). It is intended as a friendly guide to further relevant reading, not as a complete listing of either primary or secondary sources. There are, happily, many essays published herein that are the first systematic summaries and analyses of their subjects now available. In these cases, of course, paragraph B has been omitted. Where politics rather than theory has distinguished an entrant, paragraph A became superfluous. Wherever possible, English translations of original works are listed.

There are several potentially useful ways to use this biographical dictionary. It is, of course, designed primarily as an accessible tool for researching individual neo-Marxist theorists. Organized alphabetically, the essays on major twentieth-century nonmaterialist radicals—with bibliographies—are quickly and easily located. The index, in which key terms are matched with their appropriate author(s), permits readers to track down the source and meaning of technical words and phrases that have turned many radical journals into lexical nightmares. The list of Entrants by Nationality (Appendix I) encourages area specialists to relate radical theorizing to the diversity of national and regional cultures, facilitating cross-cultural comparison and analysis. Finally, the Introduction highlights Marx's own contributions to the subsequent proliferation of Marxian theories by emphasizing the potentially incompatible theoretical premises he embraced. Readers can thus easily link both neo-Marxist schools and specific neo-Marxists back to their source in Marx, evaluate their faithfulness, and speculate on the subtle distinctions between useful innovation and apostasy.

I want to applaud enthusiastically each and every contributor for the consistently high quality of their work, for their support and, when it was necessary, sympathy, and their willingness to spend valuable time and energy on a collective project they believed in. Greenwood Press's Cynthia Harris remained helpful, informative, and efficacious during the entire duration of this project, and I thank her. I ruefully admit that the pressures and frustrations of working constantly for almost three years with over one hundred busy scholars from six continents, as well as with numerous translators, typists, and aides, have occasionally overwhelmed my ability to cope gracefully. Those closest to me have probably suffered most. Yet, remarkably, their understanding and patience never dimmed. To Elaine, Jesse, and Colin I again pledge my love and appreciation, and promise to try harder next time.

ALTHUSSER, LOUIS (b. 1918). Born on 16 October 1918 in Birmandreï, Algeria, Althusser was educated in Algeria, Marseille, and Lyon in France, and received a degree in philosophy in 1948 at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. His thesis, "The Notion of Content in Hegel's Philosophy," was prepared under the supervision of philosopher Gaston Bachelard.* After completing his degree, Althusser began teaching at the Ecole Normale Supérieure and was for a time *secrétaire* of the school. In his youth, Althusser was active in the Catholic youth movement, joining the Jeunes Etudiants Catholiques in 1937. In 1948 he joined the French Communist Party (PCF).

Althusser's work is complex, highly controversial, and often ambiguous; but at the same time it has been tremendously influential in shaping the issues addressed by contemporary Marxists.† Althusser's texts consist of a philosophical investigation of the science and philosophy founded by Marx. They are also interventions in a particular historical conjuncture. The context for the development of Althusser's project is the period of de-Stalinization following the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Althusser rejects the economism and dogmatism of Stalinism† and at the same time rejects the left's attempt to purge itself of Stalinism by drawing on a Hegelian Marxist humanism, which, relying on Marx's early works, evokes themes of freedom, alienation, reification, and the placement of "man" at the center of history. Althusser locates the basis for his criticisms and for his reformulation

of Marxism in a rereading of Marx. The project is thus reflexive (or circular) in that Althusser rereads Marx to trace the development of a scientific Marxism, but he also utilizes that scientific Marxism as the method guiding the rereading of Marx and the social whole.

In place of economism, the position that all change (including the transition to socialism and communism) can be explained as being determined by the economic infrastructure alone, Althusser proposes a special role for ideology in explaining the reproduction of conditions of production. Ideology is neither false ideas nor false consciousness, but neither is it scientific. It is a system of representations within which individuals "express, not the relation between them and their conditions of existence, but *the way they live* the relation between them and their conditions of existence." Ideology is a lived relation that expresses a "unity of the real relation and the imaginary relation between [individuals] and the real conditions of existence" (*For Marx*, pp. 233–34). Ideologies exist in apparatuses (for example in ideological state apparatuses such as the school, the church, the family, trade unions) and their practices. In these material practices, "governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus" (*Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 169), ideology positions (a term borrowed from Lacan) individuals as centered, unified subjects in a particular relation to their conditions of existence. Althusser characterizes this process as a hailing or interpellation (a term borrowed from Freud) of the subject. Subjects, in this ideological subjection, live out their relation to existence, so structured, thereby reproducing their conditions of existence.

Because Marxism is, for Althusser, not an ideology but a science, it allows us to appreciate the role of ideology in every society, as well as to appreciate the way in which particular ideologies are constituted within a complex, structured, concrete social whole. This whole is constituted in and among four levels: the economic, the political, the ideological, and the theoretical. In contrast to the conception of society as a dialectic of base and superstructure with the superstructure an epiphenomenon of the base, or the conception of society as a homogeneous, expressive totality, Althusser conceives of a decentered, structured whole, within which each of the levels has a certain relative autonomy and independence. The levels develop unevenly, generated by and thereby generating contradiction. The levels articulate upon one another in a hierarchy of effectivity, their relative autonomy and independence based on a dependence to the whole: "The structure of the whole and therefore the 'difference' of the essential contradictions and their structure in dominance, is the very existence of the whole" (*For Marx*, p. 205). The interplay of difference is regulated by the economic, which is determinant "in the last instance," in that it "determines which of the instances of the social structure occupies the determinant place" (*Reading Capital*, p. 224) within a particular mode of production. Although determination by the economic is "never active in the pure state" (*For Marx*, p. 113), it does determine the hierarchy of effectivity of the various levels of the social whole.

The motor of history is, then, contradiction, not the subject, as in Marxist humanism and in the early Marx as Althusser reads him. History is, for Althusser, a process without a subject within which all phenomena (including subjectivity) are overdetermined in the articulation of the semi-autonomous levels in concrete historical conjunctures. Causality is depicted as structural (as opposed to mechanistic or expressive) in that effectivity is exercised in and through overdetermined contradictions within a complex structure in dominance. Structural causality displaces the humanist problematic that places the subject at the center of history ("man makes his own history") and replaces it with the affirmation of the primacy of contradiction over the subject as well as over process and structure as the motor of history.

Because ideology is "an organic part of every social totality" (*ibid.*, p. 232), and because the totality is an "ever pre-given complex whole" (*ibid.*, p. 207), this presents a problem for Marxism's ability to separate ideological consciousness (which takes itself for its essence) from the real problems to which it exists in relation. In one of the most controversial and ambiguous moments in his work, Althusser attempts to escape this dilemma by implying a kind of privileged position for the science of Marxism (historical materialism or the science of history). This new science enables us to "know the world outlooks which philosophy represents in theory; it enables us to know philosophy." It revolutionizes philosophy, which becomes dialectical materialism, the theory of theoretical practice. Philosophy ceases to be idealist, the goal of which is to "interpret the world," and "becomes a weapon with which 'to change it': revolution" (*Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 19).

The support for the distinction between Marxism as a science and ideology derives from Althusser's particular rereading of Marx. Althusser reads Marx symptomatically. This entails a search for each text's theoretical problematic (a term borrowed from Jacques Martin), defined by Althusser as the underlying unity and starting point for reflection of the objects of thought in a particular theoretical formation. Althusser locates several periods in the evolution of Marx's problematic from a humanistic to a scientific one: 1840-44, the early works, based on a Kantian-Fichtean problematic; 1845, works of the break, based on Feuerbach's anthropological problematic; 1845-57, transitional works; and 1857-83, mature works, based on a scientific, Marxist problematic.

Althusser's symptomatic reading of Marx relies on an anti-empiricist, Marxist epistemology. Empiricism holds to the radical separation of subject and object, and the scientificity of theory resides in its ability to provide the subject with knowledge of the "real" object through observation. In contrast, Althusser asserts that there can be no identity of essence between objective reality and our knowledge of it. Rather, a science operates on and transforms already ideological raw materials (concepts or facts) into the concrete-in-thought (knowledge). This abolishes a distinction between theory and practice in that theory is a particular kind of practice, where by practice is meant "any process of transformation of a determinate given raw material into a determinate product, a transformation

effected by a determinate human labour, using determinate means (of 'production')" (*For Marx*, p. 166). The scientificity of Marxism resides then in that it is not ideological (it does not guarantee a unity of subject and object) and in that by utilizing a Marxist epistemology it can account for itself "by taking itself as its own object" (*ibid.*, p. 39). In reading Marx symptomatically, Althusser considers the project a "question of producing, in the precise sense of the word, which seems to signify making manifest what is latent, but which really means transforming (in order to give a pre-existing raw material the form of an object adapted to an end), something which in a sense already exists" (*Reading Capital*, p. 34). In the transition from the early to late Marx, Althusser reads just this same transition from idealism, humanism, and an idealist epistemology to a Marxist science and epistemology:

The Young Marx of the *1844 Manuscripts* read the human essence at sight, immediately, in the transparency of its alienation. *Capital*, on the contrary, exactly measures a distance and an internal dislocation (*décalage*) in the real, inscribed in its structure, a distance and a dislocation such as to make their own effects themselves illegible, and the illusion of an immediate reading of them the ultimate apex of their effects: fetishism." (*Ibid.*, p. 17)

Althusser has been severely criticized, both by those who have been completely unsympathetic to his project and by those who have been largely sympathetic. Most significantly, he has been criticized for his theoretical antihumanism, which he has continued to defend; for being a structuralist, which he has denied; for suggesting the autonomy of science, which he attempts to deny; for being functionalist, particularly by implying that the sole function of ideological state apparatuses is to reproduce the conditions of production; for taking a theoreticist position that is divorced from political practice, which he attempts to correct by asserting that "philosophy is, in the last instance, class struggle in theory" (*Essays in Self-Criticism*, p. 150). Althusser's significance, however, resides much less in the articulation of any particular theoretical or political formulation than in the effectivity of his interventions in reshaping the terrain within which contemporary Marxist theory and practice continues to develop. In particular, we should recognize Althusser's role in bringing to the forefront the appreciation of the relative autonomy of practices within the social whole, the role of contradiction in the development of the social whole, the lack of guarantees in the development of a revolutionary politics, the conception of ideology as a lived relation embodied in apparatuses and practices, and finally the interpellation of subjects at the center of ideological discourse.

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