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Structural Theory

By means of what concept or what set of concepts is it possible to think the
determination of a subordinate structure by a dominant structure; in other
words, how is it possible to define the concept of a structural causality?
(Althusser, in Althusser and Balibar, 1970: 186)

The social theory which developed after the Second World War worked in a
complex continuation of the framework of Saint-Simonianism with its
Marxist additions: economics (transformed into a theory of modes of
production) and dialectics (idealist philosophy transformed into the logic of
historical materialism). The coin had been turned in postwar French theory:
the sociological, socialist, Comtean, Durkheimian development was replaced
with the German, Russian, then Chinese developments of Marxism. After
the war, in other words, that side of the Saint-Simonian legacy which had
been on a journey to other parts of the globe, came home to France. First
theoretical Marxism in France was worked through in an encounter with
German existentialism and phenomenology. From the 1960s it was worked
through from the materials available from the French epistemological tradi-
tion shorn of its references to 'sociology' but not to 'anthropology': in a
word, it became structuralist in one form or another (just as there had been
rival forms of existentialism). Many Marxist existentialists made the transi-
tion to the new methods and problematics, but there were many, such as
Edgar Morin, who held on and resisted the new fashion with increased bit-
terness (Kofman, 1996: 11-16), just as there were some who remained loyal
to structural Marxism (such as Bourdieu) after its general collapse in the
1970s. The irruptive force of structuralism was due to the fact that across a
number of disciplines new and brilliant writers appeared together: Althusser,
Barthes, Baudrillard, Bourdieu, Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, Kristeva, Serres
and many others. Serres, usually so tolerant and once described as 'perhaps
the only philosopher in France whose work is consonant with the spirit of
structural analysis' (Descombes, 1987), said of Sartre that he 'crushes every-
thing and understands nothing ... he delayed the arrival of all the real innova-
tions' (Serres, 1995: 41).

The linguistic or structuralist turn and the moment of 'theory'

Although 'structuralism', as a method, developed from a number of sources -
linguistic, anthropological, mathematical - it did not become effective as a
movement in social theory until the 1960s, when it dramatically displaced

'existentialism' from its dominant position in French thought. The problem of the precise nature of structuralism has been discussed many times, and there is still an ongoing debate (see the self-critical remarks of Descombes in Yamamoto, 1998: 464). For those commentators wedded to existential philosophy, the upsurge of this new set of ideas came as an 'invasion' (Gutting) into the genuine centre of French thought which will always be existentialism. However, as can be seen from the previous analysis, it is existentialism which came from outside (Husserl, Heidegger, Lukacs, Marcuse, and many others). And if the works of Durkheim and Mauss were claimed by various existential writers (e.g. Lyotard) as representing a tradition to be drawn towards their own position, this was done in the face of anthropologists such as Lévi-Strauss and Dumézil who, from the death of Mauss in 1950, claimed that tradition was structural not existential (Lévi-Strauss, 1987). This challenge provoked the famous debate between Lévi-Strauss and Sartre; Sartre was never able to find the means to launch a counter position (Sartre, 1971).

The 'structuralists' emerged into prominence suddenly and triumphantly with key works on methodology by Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Serres, Foucault, Lacan, Althusser, followed by analyses by Bourdieu, Baudrillard, Kristeva, Sollers, etc. In fact this movement was very varied, and it placed *theory* centre stage. The transition was complex as Baudrillard later pointed out. His books, *The System of Objects*, and *Consumer Society*, published in France in 1968 and 1970 respectively, maintained a perspective which he suggested was a critical Marxism: semiology and sociology organised together within the existential problematic of alienation and the society of the spectacle (1988b: 77-8). Theory still gave importance to the centrality of the acting subject, the subject's imaginary, and the scene cast in theatrical terms. Resistance to capitalist society was conceived as the 'transgression of the categories of political economy: use-value, exchange-value, equivalence' (1988b: 77). But this problematic had already been challenged in 1960s by the new Althusserian structuralist discourse which by 1968, as Derrida later confirmed, had become 'the dominant discourse ... of the Marxist intelligentsia' (Kaplan et al., 1993: 200). It then widened its influence in politics (Poulantzas), economics (Bettleheim), and was highly influential for a short time in literary theory (Culler, 1975). In particular, the structuralist discourse was taken up by the avant-garde artists, musicians, writers and cultural theorists who contributed to the journal *Tel Quel* (the works of Sollers, Barthes, Todorov, Kristeva, Genette, Faye, etc.), which was drawn into debate with leading PCF intellectuals.

This chapter examines Kristeva, Althusser, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, as representing the key figures in the debates of this moment, when 'structuralism' attained its complete hegemony over social theory in France, and then began to accommodate itself to the failure of May 1968 and the revolutionary project that theory had set itself. (The 'structuralist controversy' is reported in Macksey and Donato, 1972, and is critiqued by Anderson, 1983, and Merquior, 1986.) What is striking in the perspective of this analysis is that structuralism not only brought with it the epistemological

in French thought. The problem has been discussed many times, and if-critical remarks of Descombes in Sartre wedded to existential philosophy came as an 'invasion' (Gutting) in which will always be existential-revision analysis, it is existentialism-egger, Lukacs, Marcuse, and many and Mauss were claimed by various resenting a tradition to be drawn in the face of anthropologists such as the death of Mauss in 1950, claimed ial (Lévi-Strauss, 1987). This challenge Lévi-Strauss and Sartre; Sartre a counter position (Sartre, 1971). inence suddenly and triumphantly i-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Serres, analyses by Bourdieu, Baudrillard, ment was very varied, and it placed complex as Baudrillard later pointed nd *Consumer Society*, published in maintained a perspective which he gy and sociology organised together nation and the society of the spec- nportance to the centrality of the d the scene cast in theatrical terms. ceived as the 'transgression of the lue, exchange-value, equivalence', ready been challenged in 1960s by rse which by 1968, as Derrida later discourse ... of the Marxist intelli- an widened its influence in politics id was highly influential for a short In particular, the structuralist dis- de artists, musicians, writers and urnal *Tel Quel* (the works of Sollers, etc.), which was drawn into debate

Althusser, Foucault, Deleuze and as in the debates of this moment, te hegemony over social theory in d set itself. (The 'structuralist con- Donato, 1972, and is critiqued by /hat is striking in the perspective of brought with it the epistemological

heritage of the French tradition, but it also brought a keen interest in ideological or 'spiritual' authority.

From de Beauvoir to Kristeva

Julia Kristeva (b. 1941) became the most prominent feminist theorist when existentialism gave way to structuralism in the 1960s. She is associated with structuralist theory in the same way as de Beauvoir was with existentialism. For Kristeva, de Beauvoir is 'a chronicler who knew how to construct an entire cultural phenomenon' (existentialism). Prolific author of novels, at least one of which is autobiographical, Kristeva was associated with Philippe Sollers in a relationship many compared with that of de Beauvoir and Sartre. But instead of *Les Temps modernes*, Kristeva's journal was *Tel Quel* (which lasted from 1960 to 1982). Indeed Kristeva herself even made the comparison and to her own advantage, asking if it was not the 'austere and comparative of this feminist in search of rationalism that gave *Les Temps modernes* its true erotic consistency?' By contrast, Kristeva writes of 'complicity, friendship, love':

The eruptions, encounters, loves, passions, as well as more or less liberated or controlled eroticism that have shaped each person's biography constitute ... the deepest influences on an individual path ... Only a diary, a novel, could perhaps one day restore the wild indecency of it' (cited in Stanton, 1987: 219-20, 234).

Even if Kristeva had a university career and was a leading member of a journal *Tel Quel* (which was far from the sole preserve of university academics), it was a different career from that of de Beauvoir. Kristeva was trained in linguistics and psychoanalysis, and became a mother. Kristeva appropriated a scientific mode of analysis, and became a leading pro-Chinese Maoist intellectual. She applied Althusser's notion of theoretical modes of production to the analysis of textual as a process of production in its own right (French, 1995: 160-78). But she chose to base herself not in Althusserian circles but in 'the revolutionary aestheticism of *Tel Quel*' (Stanton, 1987: 229; for the politics of this group, see Marx-Scouras, 1996).

In the end she came to regard her involvement and the action of this group as a *perversion*. She defines it thus: 'a coherent structure determined by an ideal (this ideal was *theoretical* for us ...) which nevertheless uses the abjection of a reality, one that is neglected or even foreclosed, on behalf of libidinal or sublimated gratifications.' Kristeva, moving more and more from Marx to Freud, saw, she said, a society turned into a 'killer mechanism of individual difference.' 'Society is a crime committed in common' ... we have never ceased observing the truth of Freud's famous statement' (cited in Stanton, 1987: 232). Maoism in France at that moment, she held, was an antidote to this process of homogenisation.

Kristeva, in the last phase of her Marxist career, went to China with a group from *Tel Quel* in April-May 1974 and wrote a book entitled *About Chinese Women*, in which her social, rather than psychoanalytic or linguistic,

theory was in evidence. She has not sought to express regrets about her Maoist period: 'I would do it again ... [we] were in search of a utopia' as 'a way of asking questions about the Western tradition' (Kristeva, 1992). Kristeva's journey to China described in her book is of considerable interest (even if it has been criticised by some as being condescending, see Spivak). The book is in two parts. The first is a statement of Kristeva's theoretical presuppositions guiding her analysis. The second part is her analysis of the situation of Chinese women and a report on her visit. As a Bulgarian, raised in a communist culture, she 'recognised' her own 'pioneer komсомол childhood in the little red guards' - yet the experience was one of an encounter with a 'unique logic that no exoticism can account for' (Kristeva, 1977: 12). She spends some time deciding how to locate herself as a writer on China: not as a militant writing propaganda, but as someone who tries to make the *otherness* visible from a position where 'our capitalist monotheistic fabric is shedding, crumbling'. She writes from the 'underground', alongside those who 'speak differently' (1977: 14); a woman but not a woman locked up inside a 'secret society of females'. She speaks as one who is 'fed up' with being, through European culture, a 'Jewish mother, Christian virgin, Beatrice beautiful' (1977: 15). 'To relieve her of this weight ... it is equivalent to a second Renaissance' that is not a ministry for women's affairs.

Her analysis of the Western experience is primarily an account of the place of woman in religion (1977: 17-33) and the symbolic temporal order (1977: 34-8). Her analysis suggests that

one betrays, at best, one's naïveté if one considers our modern societies to be simply patrilinear, or 'class-structured' or capitalist-monopolist, and ignores the fact that they are at the same time (and never one without the other) governed by a monotheism whose essence is best expressed in the Bible: the paternal Word sustained by a fight to the finish between the two races (men/women) (1977: 22-3)

Her solution to the problem of monotheism: 'to go on waging the war of the sexes' which must revolutionise 'our entire logic of production (class) and reproduction (family)', that is 'without a perverse denial of the abyss that marks the sexual difference'. 'Once this total change is effected', China will be understandable, but without it 'susceptible ... to being cast as another perversion' (1977: 23).

Thus her critical analysis rests almost entirely on her analysis of monotheism:

There is one unity ... This unity that the God of monotheism represents is sustained by a desire that pervades the community, making it run but also threatening it. Remove this threatening desire - this perilous support of the community - from man, place it beside him: you have woman, who is speechless, but who appears as the pure desire of speech, or who ensures, on the human side, the permanence of the divine paternal function. (1977: 19)

The decisive addition here to the main accounts of the development of monotheism in sociological terms is the explicit analysis of its sexual dimension, here taken from Ernest Jones's psychoanalytic analysis of religion.

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However, in Kristeva's case the analysis leads to the conclusion that 'militants in the cause of their fathers ... are dramatic figures where the social consensus corners any woman who wants to escape her condition: nuns, "revolutionaries", "feminists" (1977: 32). The term which Kristeva introduces again at this point is that not of deviation but one drawn from the vocabulary of pathology: *perversion*.

Thus Kristeva takes a different theoretical route from that of de Beauvoir, one which might be called social-psychoanalytic and in fusion with the symbolic cultures of the Other (precisely critiqued by de Beauvoir as producing Woman as Other). Although this route does join up with Marxism, it does so with the considerable inflection which Bataille, and indeed eventually Althusser, gave it - towards a Catholic-anthropological thematic. And this became more and more influential as Kristeva's career developed as she broadened the anthropological influences to include Mary Douglas, most notably in her study *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection* ([1980] 1982) which recasts her theory of gender as an psychoanalytic anthropology of religion which has as its object the 'solutions given for phobia and psychosis by religious codes' in a critical reading of Céline (1982: 48). At the end of the work she refuses that feminism which conserves the power of horror as the 'last of the power seeking ideologies' in order 'to go through the first great demystification of Power (religious, moral, political, and verbal) that mankind has ever witnessed' (1982: 208, 210).

Althusser: 'high priest of Marxism'

Althusser, looking back from the 1960s, suggested that no French intellectual had written a history of philosophy in France because it was so second rate:

It takes some courage to admit that French philosophy, from Maine de Biran and Cousin to Bergson and Brunschvicg, by way of Ravaisson, Hamelin, Lachelier and Boutroux, can only be *salvaged* from its own history by the few great minds against whom it set its face, like Comte and Durkheim, or buried in oblivion like Cournot and Couturat ... [and those] few conscientious historians of philosophy, whom in part French philosophy owes its renaissance in the last thirty years (Althusser, [1968], 1971: 33-4)

Althusser himself, born in 1918, moved to Marxism after an early period of intense involvement in Catholic movements. His mentor for a time was Jean Guittton, who later wrote a book on the Virgin (*La Vierge Marie*, 1957). Althusser was taken, while a 'strong believer' at the end of the 1930s, to Paris as Jean Guittton's protégé, where he condemned 'materialism in philosophical terms [with the help of Ravaisson] in front of an audience of nuns' (Althusser, 1993: 93). The church had reacted strongly against what it saw as a considerable challenge to its 'mission', and condemned Marxism in 1937 as 'intrinsically bad', and again in the 1940s which led to a policy in 1949 of

excommunication for those espousing communism. In 1946 Althusser had taken up a radical proletarian position within the church, and was quoting Marx: 'for the Christian who does not usurp God's place, the human fatherland is not the proletariat of the human condition, it is the proletariat *tout court*, leading the whole of humanity towards its emancipation' (1997: 27). Within a Hegelian and Catholic framework, Althusser allied himself early on with the proletarian class as the vanguard agency (1997: 30). He joined the French Communist Part (PCF) in 1948 at the moment paradoxically of his closest collaboration with a religious group called 'The Community', founded by a Dominican father, even though in 1947 he had ceased being a 'firm believer'.

With Althusserian Marxism – and it was a significant school – social theory was again reconstructed, this time on the basis of epistemological concepts such as structural causality, overdetermination, condensation and displacement. This was a project conceived within the tradition established by Comte and Durkheim, transmitted by Bachelard and Canguilhem but introducing from outside these key Freudian-Lacanian terms. The early nineteenth-century model developed by Comte identified the irruption and struggle of positivities (science and industry) against theology, thereby inducing of placement new revolutionary (metaphysical) formations. In both Comte and Althusser an elaborate methodology was required to formulate an abstracted theoretic locus within which these processes of displacement occur. For Marx (Althusser) it was the 'social formation'; for Mauss it was in the advanced societies 'the nation'; and for Comte it was 'Humanity'.

For Althusser, as for Comte, theory in the domain of science was no passive reflective process; on the contrary, it was an active practice, a practice which put to work to produce knowledge. Just as there is an economic mode of production in Marx's social analysis, so there are theoretical modes of production (Generalities I) which work to transform conceptual raw materials (Generalities II) into the finished bodies of abstract and concrete conceptual knowledge (Generalities III). Theories are dynamic motors; they are the means of production in science, making a systemic conceptual machinery which is applied in a process guided and regulated by methodological rules and unified by epistemological solidarities. Thus there are new conceptual elements which work together in a new way whenever a scientific revolution occurs. If Althusser was drawn into Marxism through an involvement in Catholic Action and coming to face with the 'social question' (1993: 205), his redefinition of the social was crucial to what became known as Althusserianism: Marx's new object of analysis was not the social as such but the 'social formation', within which the economic mode of production was determinant in the last instance. This was reframed in a new idea of how causality is effective within such a totality: the economic is an absent or 'metonymic cause'. When Jacques-Alain Miller proposed this term it was immediately adopted by the group.²

Althusser proposed different kinds of 'theory' which could be identified by using the term in different ways, as Ben Brewster once tried to define:

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theory' which could be identified when Brewster once tried to define:

a distinction is made between "theory" (in inverted commas), the determinate theoretical system of a given science, and Theory (with a capital T), the theory of practice in general'. Althusser replied to this definition to give more precision via a corrected conception of theory:

I now regard my definition of philosophy (Theory as 'the Theory of Theoretical Practice') as a unilateral and, in consequence, false conception of dialectical materialism. ... the new definition of philosophy can be resumed under three points: (1) philosophy 'represents' the class struggle in the realm of theory, hence philosophy is neither a science, nor a pure theory (Theory), but a *political practice of intervention* in the realm of theory; (2) philosophy 'represents' scientificity in the realm of political practice, hence philosophy is not *the* political practice, but a theoretical practice of intervention in the realm of politics; (3) philosophy is an original 'instance' (differing from the instances of politics and politics) that represents the one instance alongside [auprès de] the other, in the form of a specific *intervention* (political-theoretical). (Althusser, in Althusser and Balibar, 1970: 321)

Thus Althusser defines a complex intersection between social science (the realm of theory) and politics, as the junction (Theory) of a double intervention. Later still he reflected that the tendency to give primacy to theory was a 'theoreticism', a particular Marxist 'deviation' (see Althusser, 1976: 124). But the main deviation called 'theoreticism' was buried beneath a secondary deviation (and problematic), structuralism' (1976; 127). Derrida once again pointed out that there was a risk that 'the move to eliminate theory with a capital "T" or theory of ideology as well as ideology from history [was] problematic until such time that a concept of history were produced.' Althusser's critique of 'the metaphysical concept of history did not mean "there is no history"', said Derrida (in Kaplan, 1993: 193).

What Althusser did to resolve his 'theoreticism' was to argue that the process of the production of theory is not a pure action of thought, but that for Marx 'the conjunction of the three theoretical elements (German philosophy, English political economy, French socialism) could only produce its effect (Marx's scientific discovery) by means of a *displacement* which led the young Marx not only onto proletarian class positions but also proletarian theoretical positions' (Althusser, 1976: 160). Very soon, by 1978, even the thesis of the three sources of Marxism came to be criticised because it too rested on the idea that the process of intellectual production was purely one of inversion or conjuncture rather than a complex set of interventions, including a political one that was worked out 'on the terrain of working-class struggle' not imported into the movement by an intellectual from the outside (in Elliot, 1987: 316).

Althusser had also worked to a new position in considering the relation of theory to truth. In his paper 'On Theoretical Work' ([1967] in Althusser, 1990) he argued that theory exists 'in the practical state' in the political practice of political parties. These are principles, and even 'theoretical content' which may be 'in advance' of their theoretical reflection. This idea led Althusser to some extreme formulations, because he was immediately drawn to the conclusion that

The political practice of a revolutionary party, the structure of its organisation, its objectives, the forms of its action, its leadership of the class struggle, its historical achievements, etc., constitute the *realization* of Marxist theory ... As these principles are theoretical, if this realization is *correct*, it inevitably produces results of *theoretical* value. (Althusser, 1990)

The materials of this theoretical productivity include

resolutions fixing the party line, political discourses defining it and commenting on it, programmatic slogans recording political decisions or drawing out their conclusions. These can be actions undertaken, the way they are conducted as well as the results obtained. These can be forms of organization of class struggle ... These can be methods of leadership ... the way problems of the union of theory and practice in the union of theory and practice ... are resolved. (Althusser, 1990: 65)

Althusser noted that where the practice is *incorrect*, the analysis should take the form of 'historical pathology' of deviations (1990: 65). Thus one can be in the truth without being able to speak the truth, and one can be in error without being able to speak error. By 1978 Althusser had launched a massive critique of the French Communist Party, a party that was in crisis, as was Marxist theory in general. Althusser attacked the way the leadership of the Party regarded its precious possession of political truth which it could bring to the masses from the outside, indeed from above. The Party apparatus, and the relation of theory to practice, had become a mirror image of the bourgeois state itself (see Elliot, 1987: 301-2). Althusser also condemned the prevailing forms of theorising in the USSR, with a carefully aimed attack on how mistakes were dealt with, and how the political process failed to learn from the direct experience of proletarian struggle. He concluded that the Soviet style of practice was an example of a 'deviation without a norm' (in Lecourt, 1977: 10).

Theory and power

Althusser claimed in his last writings that it was his theory of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) which had been his central achievement. The seeds of the idea can however be found in other writers like Barthes, who had already noted the importance of 'interpellent speech' (*parole interpellative*; Barthes, 1973: 125), a term which Althusser was to make central to his theory of the state. Althusser provided the general theory in a sense for Barthes' analyses and this turned out to be his major theoretical innovation in the field of social analysis. In his autobiography Althusser refers to his own experience in the family - for him an experience of an ideological apparatus of the bourgeois state - during which his parents instilled into him 'the supreme values prevailing in the society in which I was growing up: absolute respect for absolute authority'. He elaborates on this theme:

In addition to the three great narcissistic wounds inflicted on Humanity (that of Galileo, that of Darwin, and that of the unconscious [Freud]), there is a fourth

the structure of its organisation, leadership of the class struggle, its realization of Marxist theory ... As on is correct, it inevitably produces

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and even graver one which no one wishes to have revealed (since from time immemorial the family has been the very site of the *sacred*, and therefore of *power* and of *religion*). It is an irrefutable fact that the Family is the most powerful ideological State apparatus. (Althusser, 1993: 104-5)

This theory of the ISAs was essentially Althusser's way of confronting the problem that knowledge does not flow in a vacuum but is implicated in complex ways with the structure of power and authority in society. This problem 'refers us to a theory of the material (production), social (division of labour, class struggle), ideologies and philosophical conditions of the processes of production of knowledge' (Althusser, 1976: 156). Althusser's paper on the ISAs was published with the title 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)' (1971). It was written in 1969 and was 'no more than an introduction to a discussion' (1971: 123). The essay was originally conceived as parts of five chapters of an eleven chapter book (the first of two volumes) on the concept of the superstructures in Marxist theory. This was drafted out in full but remained unpublished. The basic idea was to set out the nature of Marxist philosophy as both a theoretical and political intervention. The ISAs paper constituted 40 pages out of a 150-page manuscript, nevertheless its formulations were remarkable (Grane, 1983, includes Althusser's defence of the ISAs thesis).

The main theme of the paper is that the State, in Marxist theory, is divided into ideological and repressive aspects, and functions to reproduce the conditions and relations of production for the dominant social class. As there are ideological formations that function to maintain the position of the dominant class, they should, according to Althusser, be regarded as State apparatuses. No examples of the (R)SAs were given in the published version of the paper, though it is suggested they function by violent means primarily. Althusser provides a list of the formations which function primarily by ideology: the religious, familial educational, legal, trades-union, media and cultural apparatuses (the drafted book has chapters on the legal and trade union ISAs). The unity of this set of formations is to be found in their function, which is to reproduce the class hierarchies. The paper provides a new conception of ideology as a process that works by 'interpellation' or hailing of individuals into subjecthood, in both the sense of individuality, and as subject (subjected to a Subject (authority in some form)), of inter-individual and self-recognition, and a guarantee of the reality of the individual as individual in a world of things (1971: 169). There is an analysis of a key ISA, the Christian faith and its rituals (1971: 165-70), but the main thesis of the paper is that it is not the political ideologies of bourgeois society that are fundamental but rather the unsuspected 'educational ideological apparatuses'. Althusser in this analysis draws on the anthropological and theological concept of ritual and applies it indiscriminately across a range of activities, particularly to 'rituals of ideological recognition' (1971: 162). But it is a short step to begin to consider the higher educational institutions as a crucial site of struggle, as Althusser did in his analysis of the student revolt of May 1968 (Macciocchi, 1973: 301-20). Subsequently it is also a short step for

Althusserians after Althusser to consider that there may be a 'theoretical state apparatus' (Zizek, 2001: 225ff).

To retrace steps: included in Althusser's original ISAs paper is a brief historical sketch of the evolution of the French social formation. In the pre-Revolution period the social criticism was located in an anti-clerical and anti-religious struggle, since it was the religious ideological apparatus which embraced a range of functions including education. The French Revolution effectively transferred power to the new 'merchant-capitalist bourgeoisie' and replaced the old repressive apparatus with a new one, the popular army. The struggle was a much more protracted one in the field of education itself, involving a 'long class struggle between the landed aristocracy and the industrial bourgeoisie throughout the nineteenth century for the establishment of bourgeois hegemony of the functions formerly fulfilled by the Church'. Althusser's analysis of this struggle was that although the bourgeoisie could accommodate itself to various types of political regimes in France, it principally 'relied on the new political, parliamentary-democratic, ideological State apparatus [the Third Republic] to conduct its struggle against the Church and wrest its ideological functions away from it (1971: 144). Normally the transition from feudalism to bourgeois society sees a displacement between the alignment of institutions: from the dominance of the Church-family to that of the School-Family alliance (1971: 146).

If the transition from feudalism to capitalism involved this kind of social reorganisation of institutions, there would essentially be a further displacement in the transition from capitalism to communism, and this would involve the abolition of the 'bourgeois school' and the 'bourgeois family'. Althusser did not though outline what the new alignment would have to be. He was, he said, trying to rectify the thesis that the epistemological break occurs in pure thought, through the action of pure reason, and subject only to the principles of a logic of discovery, by placing theory within the framework of power and the State. The framework as elaborated by Althusser was defended and developed by Althusser's former students Baudelot and Establet, and by Bourdieu. It came under direct criticism from another of Althusser's former students, Foucault.

Foucault's alternative to state theory

The main impact of Foucault's intervention among sociologists and Marxists has been to question the role and value in analysis of all 'systemic' approaches, whether sanctions are seen as primary means of social integration, or whether the 'social formation' is conceived as a totality in which the State (RSAs and ISAs) is always linked to objective functions in class antagonisms. In Foucault's analysis of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, if these terms can be applied (since Foucault is also close to Durkheim), this is thrown into question in a number of ways: genealogy, a key dimension of Marx's approach, becomes a crucial form of analysis and detached from a

that there may be a 'theoretical' original ISAs paper is a brief sketch of social formation. In the presence of an anti-clerical and anti-ideological apparatus which education. The French Revolution 'merchant-capitalist bourgeoisie' with a new one, the popular army in the field of education itself. landed aristocracy and the industry century for the establishment of merely fulfilled by the Church. It although the bourgeoisie could political regimes in France, it principlimentary-democratic, ideological conduct its struggle against the 'ray from it' (1971: 144). Normally this society sees a displacement of the dominance of the Church: (1971: 146).

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among sociologists and Marxists analysis of all 'systemic' approaches, means of social integration, or as a totality in which the State performs functions in class antagonisms. Feudalism to capitalism, if these are so close to Durkheim, this is genealogy, a key dimension of Foucault's analysis and detached from a

theory of social system reproduction; the very idea of theory changes its nature; for it is not longer the site of a quest for laws, no longer engaged in a search for a system of functions, and no longer a domain in which the patterns of overdetermination are the analytic concern. Indeed the role and importance of system agents (class, class fractions, etc.) lose their centrality and one of the aims of the project is to destabilise terms that have long been taken for granted, either through redefinition (e.g. power) or through re-coining (e.g. governance and governmentality).

Foucault's objective here was to confront what he saw as the dead-end that theoretical Marxism in particular had reached, and to challenge state theory with the force of a real 'complexity' capable of halting easy or mechanical prophecy or guarantees of truth. What has emerged – and this might be seen as inherent in the logic of Foucault's projects – was that discourse analysis is detached from the problem of 'non-discursive practices', and the analysis of power is abstracted from social struggles or of social institutions.

To gain a clearer picture of Foucault's attempt to deal with the reality of these problems, it is necessary to emphasise that all his projects deal in various ways with the great divide across the Revolution (say the eighteenth/nineteenth century divide). In this he is always close to Comte and to Marx; they are all constructed in a linear manner, and indeed into fairly clear periods (for example the epistemes of *The Order of Things*) yet they all tend to make a critique of the traditional Marxist formulae. For example, in his lecture on Governmentality, Foucault explicitly criticises Althusser's reductive notion of the State to a functioning mechanism (reproducing the relations of production), and the consequence of making the State 'absolutely essential as a target needing to be attacked and occupied.' He adds that 'the State, no more today than at any other time ... does not have this unity, this individuality, this rigorous functionality, nor, frankly, this importance' (in Burchell et al., 1991: 103).

Foucault's analyses construct genealogies. They have the appearance of sequences which typically cross the divide of the French Revolution. They all end well before the present, often in the mid-nineteenth century, and this is reflected in Foucault's methodology. Whereas Comte thought we could know with certainty the future state, and Durkheim was sure that we could know the present one, Foucault holds in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* we can never even know the present, only the past. But does Foucault, in constructing his genealogies, suggest that he is studying a progressive movement in history parallel to Comte and Marx? It is very clear that Foucault's position is no simple endorsement of the progressive claims for these sequences: there is no immanent 'progression' between the states, there is no end point, no imminent higher stage. There are, however, conflictual tendencies: 'disciplinary normalizations come into ever greater conflict with the juridical systems of sovereignty' (in Burchell et al., 1991: 108); it was from the military camp in the mid-eighteenth century that the model of the panopticon arose (*Discipline and Punish* p. 171), and 'by means of such surveillance, disciplinary

power became an "integrated" system, linked from the inside to the economy' (p. 176). Not surprisingly, Foucault refers to the Napoleonic period, and I quote at greater length:

The importance, in historical mythology, of the Napoleonic character probably derives from the fact that it is at the point of the junction of the monarchical, ritual exercise of sovereignty and the hierarchical, permanent exercise of indefinite discipline ... At the moment of its full blossoming, the disciplinary society still assumes with the Emperor the old aspect of the power of the spectacle ... the ultimate figure ... by which the pomp of sovereignty, the necessarily spectacular manifestations of power, were extinguished one by one in the daily exercise of surveillance ... in which the vigilance of intersecting gazes was soon to render useless both the eagle and the sun. (p. 217).

The way out of this new 'society of normalization' is not a return to right and sovereignty, but towards the possibility of a new form of right, 'one which must indeed be anti-disciplinary, but one at the same time liberated from the principle of sovereignty' (in Burchell et al., 1991: 108).

There remain many basic problems with the legacy of Foucault's intervention, as I discuss in the next chapter. It has not become any clearer what this alternative actually signifies, let alone how it could be realised except at the level of the spiritual government of the self. Since Foucault endorsed their monumental two-volume study *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1977, 1988) perhaps Deleuze and Guattari pointed to a solution.

Deleuze and Guattari: segmentarity and fascism

Deleuze wrote an enthusiastic essay on structuralism ('A quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme?' (1973: 299), in which he concluded that structuralism constituted the crucial locus of theoretical 'productivity of our epoch' (1973: 334). Deleuzian structuralism was to find its way into another important variation of social theory. This variant is curious since it develops its ideas via a return to the sociology of Tardé, and explicitly in a rejection of Durkheim's idea of causation. In Tardé we have the theory of 'imitation' as 'the propagation of a flow' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 219), and an assertion of the principle of segment over organic whole: 'segmentarity is inherent to all the strata composing us' (1988: 208). Deleuze and Guattari realise that this idea implies another version of anthropologisation: 'Why', they ask, 'return to the primitives when it is a question of our own life?' Their answer is that segmentarity is not a prerogative of primitive societies, but modern states are no less segmentary (1988: 209). The question, they insist, is not one of an alternative centralisation. The biological analogy is false as well, since the brain, they say incautiously, is 'itself is a worm' (1988: 210). The political system implies working subsystems, and technology works not through specialisation by through a 'segmentary division of labour'. Thus conceptually, the key distinction is that the primitive system is a 'flexible' segmentary system but the modern one is 'rigid'.

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What is curious about the way that this idea is developed is that the theory of the division between spiritual and temporal powers is reintroduced (perhaps under the influence of Virilio's Catholicism) and is combined with the segmentalism not of Tarde but perhaps of Herbert Spencer (who theorised poly-segmentalism in doubly and triply compounded forms). Deleuze and Guattari add to this cocktail the notion of coding and overcoding for different levels in a conception which analyses the relation between abstract and temporal state, and the virulence of the war machine which arises externally to them (Virilio). Thus the tripartite scheme: first, primitive segmentarity of 'territorial and lineal segmentations'; second, the state apparatus which is realised as 'a rigid line, which brings about a dualist organization of segments, a concentricity of circles in resonance of a generalized overcoding'; and third, a war machine 'marked by decoding and deterritorialization' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 222). Totalitarianism is that conservative state in which the abstract machine becomes identical with the State apparatus itself. Fascism, on the other hand, is a 'suicidal' war machine which takes over the State, driving it to 'total war': 'the totalitarian state, which does its utmost to seal all possible lines of flight, fascism is constructed on an intense line of flight' (1988: 230).

For Foucault, in his Preface to the first volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari proposed a new ethics 'to the non-fascist life'. At the end of the second volume it is clear that this should have been extended to both the non-fascist and 'to the non-totalitarian life'. And this would have meant surely not a return to the primitive condition of polysegmentalism, as Foucault seemed to imply, to 'develop action, thought, and desires by proliferation ... not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1977: xiii), but a strategy that deals with the abstract Machine, the State, and the war machine. This pushes the problem back still further and implies a political and a 'spiritual' project since fascism is not the only form of overcoding. It is in fact only the particular form of what might be termed a neo-Marxist return to the problematic Durkheim, Spencer and Comte: to the question of the relation between institutions, here 'abstract machine' (the spiritual power), the 'State' (the temporal power) and the 'war machine' (it was Spencer who took war out of Comte's evolutionary stages and made it potential State of any stage). But once this institutional problematic re-emerges with a revamped concept of Virilio's 'the war machine', it is clear that Tarde's - at base anthropological - model was a detour, since we return not to a body without organs (i.e. empty or full segmentalism) but to a problem of the specific complexity and functions of organs in the social body (society is not doubly or triply compounded from isomorphic segments). This new theory attempts to indicate ways in which a movement can avoid totalitarianism and fascism as it becomes a revolutionary force.

Deleuze and Guattari, as Marxists, here seem to revive Sorel's notion of 'active minorities' so despised by Mauss. All great innovations, whether left or right, come from proliferation: even 'fascism is inseparable from proliferation

focuses in interaction, which skip from point to point' (1988: 101). But this can be read, they say, also to suggest that 'the power of minorities is not measured by their capacity to ... make themselves be felt within the majority system, but to bring to bear the force of the non-denumerable sets ... even if they imply new axioms or, beyond that, a new axiomatic' (1988: 471). This is quite a different perspective from the one that works simply with class power, for 'what is proper to the minority is to assert a power of the denumerable, even if that minority is composed of a single member' (1988: 470). But if revolutionary class power is involved, then they assert that there is another agenda today: that 'of constituting a war machine capable of counter the world war machine by other means' (1988: 472).

This position is not simply a logic of socialism, nor a 'dispersion or fragmentation', but a logic of resistance to 'the peace of generalised terror' by a genuine revolutionary movement, one that situates itself at the base, within multiplicities and in the 'undecidable'. Deleuze has repeated these ideas several times. He insists in clarification, that the idea of the 'war machine' has 'nothing to do with war but to do with a particular way of occupying, taking up, space-time, or inventing a new space-time: revolutionary movements (people don't take enough account, for instance, of how the PLO has had to invent a space-time in the Arab world), but artistic movements too, are war machines in this sense'. Deleuze stresses, again, 'war machines tend much more to be revolutionary, or artistic, rather than military' (Deleuze, 1995: 172, 33).³

Conclusions

'Structuralism' was certainly a label, and it is still in use (see Serres, 1995b: 37). Althusser and Foucault dissociated themselves from it, but the label has stuck, as it has to Kristeva. So has the tendency associated with this movement to adopt terms which suggested the 'death of man', 'anti-humanism' in theory, 'process without a subject', the 'death of the author' and so on. This is in keeping with the movement's aims, which were not only to promote a scientific logic in the analysis of the social, whether it be in history, sociology or in literature or philosophy, but also, as Wernick reminds us, to promote a specific kind of ideological practice, to induce in the coming society a new form of scientific ideology (Wernick, 2001: 231; Althusser and Balibar, 1970: 131). But Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari also managed to fashion an alternative structuralist politics developed at first as an antifascist micropolitics. Yet in later writings it could be seen to presage a general eclectic theory of political and social forms.

There was another outcome of structuralism, which reached its height with the structuralist literary methodology of Barthes (1967, 1985) and Baudrillard ([1968] 1996c). As soon as the structuralist current began to fade, Baudrillard turned against it in a number of sharp critiques. The logic of these critiques, as I discuss in the next chapter, led to another shift into a more anthropological

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problematic and this involved a radical re-conceptualisation not only of the 'social' but also of 'theory' itself.

Notes

1 He mentions Cavallés, Bachelard and Hyppolite.

2 This angered Miller, who thought his concept had been 'stolen' - Althusser changed the term to 'structural causality' and passed the concept into general currency. Althusser referred to this as a 'ridiculous incident' in later reflections (1993: 209).

3 Was feminism completely absent from this perspective? Not quite. Woman? 'we all have to become that' (1988: 470, and see discussion of this demand by Braidotti, and Grosz, in Boudas and Olkowski, 1994).