

Topography, the Mode of Communication and the Subject – A Spinozist Reformulation of Althusser’s Theory of Ideology*

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I. The problematic of overdetermination

As is well known, the core of Althusser’s project of recasting Marxism can be crystallized into the problematic of overdetermination, which aimed to overcome the dilemma of conjuncture and structure and, ultimately, to capture the originality of the conception of causality posited by Marx and by Marxism. In fact, the problematic of overdetermination played an important role,

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particularly in helping Marxism break with the essentialist and teleological views of economism and Hegelian Marxism by relativizing the explanatory role of the mode of production. Although it provides an alternative approach to socio-historical causality, a form in which historical events or phenomena are never reduced to a single or uniform causality, the conception of overdetermination remains a mere ‘place holder rather than a positive alternative’ (Levine, 2013, 279)¹⁾ if it serves only to denote that.²⁾ In light of this, the theoretical role of ideology appears as particularly important in Althusser’s theoretical system, for ideology is posited on his scheme as another universal element of society/history and, as such, it concretizes the problematic of overdetermination. According to Althusser, both the ‘process of “production” and “reproduction” originally depend on unconscious ideological conditions’ and ‘the social formation or the formation of the subject is no longer representable in dualistic terms – a thesis that logically leads us to abandon the image of superstructure’ (Balibar, 1993a, 8).³⁾

Admitting the theoretical potential of Althusser’s theory of ideology, however, it must also be pointed out that this theory remains to be developed. It does not exist in a coherent or stable form yet, as Montag points out (Montag, 2013, 17). Althusser’s theorization of ideology is not consistent throughout his entire *oeuvre* – particularly not in relation to his own concept of epistemological rupture, for instance – and seemingly contrasting views on this issue co-exist in it. In addition, his theory fails to explain the formation of resistant subjects, which is in a sense Althusser’s primary theoretical object.

1) See also Montag(2013, 94).

2) Another problem is that ‘determination in the last instance’ lacks a clear demarcation from economism and reinforces teleology insofar as it fixes the economic instance as the ultimate cause of historical development.

3) See also Balibar’s foreword to Althusser(2014, 229-246) and Collier(1989, Ch. 2).

To make Althusser's arguments meaningful, it is necessary to resolve these difficulties. In view of this, this paper attempts to reconstruct Althusser's theory of ideology by incorporating his definition of ideology and his later reformulation of topography - a reformulation associated with the question of communication in the author's writings. Althusser did not specifically use the term 'communication', but it can be said that the term is immanent in his framework because his own conception of ideology implies that the way people consciously or subconsciously communicate with each other has material impact on them. Based on this assertion, I will argue that the reformulation of the notion of topography in Althusser's work from the late 1970s - something that is generally interpreted to deny or refute his own theorization of epistemological rupture in his earlier work, for example, *For Marx* and *Reading Capital* - plays an important role in clarifying the idea of ideology, thereby elaborating the problematic of overdetermination. In so doing, I will also try to complement what remains undeveloped in Althusser's theory of ideology: that is, the formation of revolutionary or alternative subjects. While concentrating on the problem of reproduction, his theory of ideology leaves the transformation of the ideological structure and of the subject ambiguous. So, this paper explores how the formation of new subjects can be addressed in Althusser's framework, particularly in terms of the conflictual constitution of ideology and the Spinozist problematic of communication: the dialectic between reason and passion. We will start with the question of how the notion of topography leads to that of communication, and then we will relate this discussion to Althusser's theory of ideology.

II. The materialism of topography: from topography to the mode of communication⁴⁾

The notion of topography, which ‘represents in a definite space the respective sites occupied by several realities’ (Althusser, 1971, 135n), was used by Althusser to denote the schema of the causality of a social formation consisting of the economy, politics, and ideology. With this schema, Althusser tried both to overcome the problems of the classical metaphor of infrastructure/superstructure and to address the reality and the specificity of those different instances. On that basis, the author constituted the structural causality of overdetermination, and in the process criticized Hegel’s notion of expressive totality. In the writings from 1976 to 1978, he prioritized ‘topography’ over ‘epistemological rupture’. The notion of topography began to take a different meaning and played a central role in his later works (Balibar, 1993b, 105-106).⁵⁾

In ‘Transformation of Philosophy’ (1976) and ‘Marxism Today’ (1977), Althusser derived a different conception of topography from Marx’s Preface to the 1859 Contribution. He did so to explain the reality and conditions of the formation/function of theory:

This is clear in the Manifesto as well as the 1859 Preface, where the exposition takes the form of a topography. Thus Marx expounds his own ideas twice, in two very different forms. He first presents them as principles of comprehensive analysis... His ideas are thus present... in their theoretical

4) The section is a further development of Kang(2012).

5) According to Balibar’s interpretation, the concept of topography becomes the fundamental concept while subsuming the concept of epistemological rupture within it in the writings from 1976–8, particularly in ‘Marxism Today’. Thus, materialism takes priority over the dialectic in them (Balibar, 1993b, 110–111).

form...[i.e.] the means of explaining a global reality. But Marx's ideas make a second appearance, when he situates them in a position determined and limited by this global reality... among the 'ideological forms in which men become conscious of [class] conflict and fight it out (Althusser, 1990, 274-275).⁶⁾

Here, Althusser addressed theories or ideas not in terms of 'principles of explanation of the given whole' but 'in terms of their possible effect in the ideological, and therefore political, class struggle' (Althusser, 2006, 48). His point is that theory (ideas) enters into a dual relationship with the social structure - insofar as it is a component part of the society that it attempts to explain, theory plays the role of explaining society at the same time as it affects it. Accordingly, Althusser points out that the measure of Marx's materialism 'is less the materialist content of his theory than the acute, practical consciousness of the conditions, forms and limits within which these ideas can become active' (Althusser, 1990, 276). Based on this idea of 'the double inscription or position of ideas (theories) in the topography', Althusser argues that 'ideas can become active only in and through ideological forms' (Althusser, 2006, 48). What is problematic about this reformulation of topography is that it seemingly runs counter to the fundamental meaning of epistemological rupture in Althusser's work. The earlier formulation of the notion of epistemological rupture posits science as being antithetical to ideology; that is, it indicates that Marxism as a science has to break with ideologies. The reconceptualization of topography, however, formulates that Marxism should become an ideological form in order to be effective - something that invites accusations of voluntarism and relativism. Althusser

6) See Althusser(1970, 4) and Balibar's Foreword to Althusser(2014, xiv).

now seemed to have injected class struggle too deeply into theory in order to modify his earlier theoreticist tendency. This, in turn, would destroy his previous arguments. However, Althusser's self-criticism is not always destructive, and, in my view, the notion of 'topography' can be seen as something that complements/concretizes the conceptions of 'ideology' and 'epistemological rupture'. The reformulation of topography can, therefore, have positive effects not just on his own theoretical trajectory but also on Marxism in general. It can serve to develop Althusser's redefinition of philosophy and of historical materialism, and it can also serve to clarify and complement a fundamental gap in Marxism, which will be explained below.

In the socio-historical science, which deals with human behavior and social phenomena, theory is, as we have mentioned, part of the reality it attempts to explain. Individuals and groups can react to theory and, in so reacting, they may produce consequences different from those that the theory predicts. In a sense, Marxism and the workers' movements have forced capitalism to transform itself. If this is really the case, and if we suppose that capitalism has not followed the path that Marx suggested, it can be said that Marx was wrong not because he simply made a mistake in explaining and calculating the historical trajectory of capitalism but because he failed to expect or to measure how capitalism would react to his own diagnosis. It can also be said, ironically, that capitalism could survive Marx's dialectical prognosis because it admits (either consciously or unconsciously) his scientific realism, in that the behavior of capitalists is somewhat Marxian by being sensitive to economic crises. Investors' reaction to stock price forecasting is a good example. They react not only to changes in stock indexes, which basically reflect the movement of the market in general, but also to stock forecasting. Therefore, stock market forecasting is not independent of the stock

fluctuations. It is, instead, an integral part of it, and it influences the stock price movement by acting on investors' behaviors.⁷⁾

Leaving aside the problem of whether Marx's 'moment of truth' as an economist has arrived (particularly with regard to his formulation of the tendency for the profit rate to fall), we would like to stress that the idea of topography points to an important aspect of the conditions of socio-economic knowledge: that is, people's responses to a theory, particularly in the socio-economic sciences, are integral to the validity and effectiveness of that theory. Considering that the effectiveness of historical materialism is always proved by and through the political actions of workers or subjects (or agents), its conditions lie in the fusion of historical materialism with the working-class movement, and therefore in the material conditions of communication.

This can be better understood if we can locate it in the context of Althusser's self-criticism. In his earlier theorization of historical materialism in

7) This can be comparable to 'observation conditions' in modern physics as well: in microphysics, observations are not independent of the phenomena they attempt to explain. In quantum physics, the position and the momentum of a particle cannot simultaneously be calculated with precision in quantum mechanics, but only one value can be precisely determined at a time: the measurement error of the position of a moving particle under experimental conditions can only be made to approach zero, provided one accepts a measurement error of ∞ in its momentum, and vice versa. This appears to weaken or alter conventional scientific standards of measurement. According to Cohen-Tannoudji, however, this does not so much deny the objectivity of reality or scientific causality as recognise the conditions of observation that are intrinsic to the phenomena they attempt to explain; physics today can no longer 'describe reality itself directly; physicists describe ... a *phenomenon* as an element or a moment of reality placed under observation conditions that are as well defined as possible'. This 'does not in any way deny the existence of a reality independent of observations', but rather implies that observation itself can affect and change its result, and thus that relations between observation (theory) and the object should be considered/reflected in theory itself to properly account for reality, i.e., phenomena related to its object, which is also the fundamental assumption of Althusser's formulation of topography. See Cohen-Tannoudji(1992, 62-63). See also Bunge(1979).

Reading Capital, Althusser attempted to secure the scientific character of Marxism at the epistemological level by inventing a new model of causality in accordance with the science of history.⁸⁾ For Althusser, historical materialism could be, as Della Volpe insists, as scientific as the natural sciences, but this could only be achieved not at the methodological level but only at the epistemological level by constituting a model of causality specific to it. The problem with this formulation is that, in the process of constituting this model, historical materialism was treated as though it were a closed and perfect system of science. As is well known, Althusser's earlier formulation of historical materialism was denounced as 'structural determinism' or 'structuralist abstractionism' (Miliband, 1983, 32). The historical movement of social formations was addressed in terms of structural necessity, while contradiction was treated as a derivative of structural necessity (Althusser, 1976, 142 - 38, 290 - 91). This would imply that class struggles or social phenomena obey the laws of structural necessity mainly determined by the causality of the mode of production (the class struggle was dealt with as the object of the natural sciences) and, thus, that there is no alternative path in history. Such a formulation runs contradictory to Althusser's own conception of overdetermination in that the latter presupposes that conjunctures bifurcate or deviate at each moment of their development rather than being structurally pre-determined.⁹⁾ In fact, Althusser criticized himself as well for producing a structuralist interpretation of historical materialism (Althusser, 1976, 132-141) and undertook the task to reform the structuralist deviations of his early period along with redefining philosophy as the class struggle in theory in the last

8) See Badiou(1993, 32).

9) For the latest discussions on structural causality, see Montag(2013, Ch. 5) and Morfino (2015).

instance (Althusser, 1976, 58). What does this new definition mean? How are we to understand it? How is it related to the reformulation of topography?

Althusser's thesis of 'philosophy as class struggle in theory' plays a dual function in the formulation of historical materialism. First, it designates the structural reality of class exploitation, which philosophy reflects: that is, class struggle as a structural concept.¹⁰⁾ For Althusser, capitalists and proletarians do not 'precede the production of surplus value; to the contrary, it is the production of surplus value, [i.e. exploitation] which creates them' (Althusser, 1976, 49-50).¹¹⁾ This implies that class exploitation works as a core constraint of capitalism, not that the voluntary human actions determine the historical trajectory. Second, it posits political actions (the object of socio-economic analysis in general) as being integral to the scientific character of historical materialism; that is, its scientific content in socio-economic science can be proved not just by structural constraints/reality that the theory accounts for, but by political actions of the masses. However, this does not simply mean that it is men who make or determine history. Rather, it suggests that the relationship between theory and its receiver is integral and intrinsic in the discourses that deal with social phenomena as their theoretical objects. (As mentioned above, people's behaviors in response to the content of theory, for example, stock price forecasting or capitalists' behaviors in response to what Marx's analysis refers to, influence the effectivity of theory itself). Moreover, Althusser's reformulation of structural causality strongly suggests that fusion between labour movement and theory is not pre-given, and the scientific

10) See also Lock's Introduction to Althusser(1976, 22).

11) According to Althusser, exploitation is already class struggle: that is, the attack on the proletariat waged by the bourgeoisie. Thus, it is 'the exploitation of one class by another that constitutes the division into classes'.

character of historical materialism does not automatically realize itself simply because it is right. Now, we can return to our initial issue regarding the conception of topography. When Althusser says ‘ideas can become active only in and through ideological forms’, this does not mean that ‘theory’ and ‘ideology’ are the same. It considers the relationship between theory and its receiver/observer as intrinsic (both as *explanandum* and *explanans*): how ideas are reflected and realized in people’s behaviors and how they react to the theory are constitutive of the validity/effectivity of the theory – the material causality of ideology/ideas. It also means that if dominant ideas are realized in apparatuses and institutions, alternative ideas should also be materialized in concrete forms (the necessity of alternative-ideology in its materiality). Therefore, the redefinition of philosophy, grounded in the idea of topography, is inevitably related to Althusser’s own formulation of ideology.¹²⁾

Now, we move to the core of the new definition of philosophy as class struggle and of the formulation of topography. If fusion between the labour movement and theory is not pre-given, we can ask if something needs to mediate the relationship between political actions and theory. With his redefinition of philosophy, Althusser assigns this role of mediating people and theory to philosophy (i.e. Marxist philosophy as an alternative force in opposition to the ideological state apparatuses and thus as political practice for the proletariat). Marxist philosophy not only designates the reality/mechanism of class exploitation (objective side of the new definition) but also represents the proletarian position (the unique meaning of Marxist philosophy, the subjective side of the new definition. It also has another objective aspect in that it denotes the necessity of alternative ideology, particularly considering

12) Althusser(1971, 185); Althusser(2006, 136).

that, according to Althusser, there is no practice except by ideology and in ideology) to counterpose the bourgeois philosophy and ideas. As mentioned above, this kind of reformulation invited the criticism of voluntarism. However, though it has some subjective elements, it is not voluntarism itself; philosophy is dually determined by politics and science. To understand this point, we need to understand another aspect of Althusser's redefinition of philosophy.

With the new definition, philosophy no longer appeared as the theory of theory judging the scientificity of other theories but rather represented the instance of practice, particularly in the field of science and politics. It is, in fact, the scientific practices that produce scientific knowledge, actually demarcating/renewing the line between idealism and materialism, not philosophy; philosophy only represents the instance of practice in theoretical and political instances, and clearing obstacles for scientific practice by reminding the scientific practices of its fundamental condition of science, continuing ruptures (practice). Thus, its practices, for example, the practice of demarcating a line between materialism and idealism, become the object of theoretical proof (the object of continuous renewing) in the field of historical knowledge; this is why Althusser remarks, 'in philosophy we can only think through metaphors' (Althusser, 1976, 104), and accordingly conceived of the philosophical rupture as a metaphor (Althusser, 1976, 177).

This reversal applies to the relationship between historical materialism and materialist dialectic. According to the new definition, philosophy, as an ideological opposition based upon some scientific truth, represents the interests of the proletariat against dominant bourgeois ideas. This means that philosophy not only reflects the theoretical content of historical materialism but also becomes a political practice itself: the mediator between politics and scientific

theory as an ideological form. So, the role has changed. The function of Marxist philosophy as a revolutionary discourse and practice is not to determine the scientificity of historical materialism. What philosophy does now is to become the object of scientific proof; how Marxist philosophy fuses with mass movements is constitutive of historical materialism and becomes the object of scientific analysis (As Rancière points out, political actions work like a proof (Rancière, 1995, 47), i.e. “take on the form of logical proof” (Marchat, 2011, 133) as if they verify the core theses/values of historical materialism by transforming them into the practice of political movements and thereby realizing them in reality). Therefore, the relationship between philosophy and theory was reversed by the new definition of philosophy. However, the relationship is not unilateral or linear insofar as the relationship of philosophy to mass movements is determinant of the effectivity (and theoretical validity) of historical materialism. In other words, the fusion of Marxist philosophy, which reflects the theoretical content of historical materialism which mainly accounts for the relationship between class exploitation and the trajectory of capitalism, with mass movements can be said to transform the conditions by which the scientificity of historical materialism is measured, if not altering the entire trajectory of capitalism (‘conditions are determinant’). This means that the trajectory of history is not pre-determined, and at the same time reveals a fundamental problem with regard to historical materialism or socio-economic analysis in general; the relationship between theory and the masses, mediated by philosophy, becomes a crucial issue in historical materialism.

As mentioned above, this theoretical shift was for Althusser a breakthrough to retain the scientificity of historical materialism and to open conjectural bifurcations coming from political actions, and, in my view, it was a better, if not perfect, way (than his earlier formulation in *Reading Capital*) to realize

his original plan to account for the structure and conjuncture at the same level of historical causality. What is important in this reformulation of philosophy/historical materialism is that Althusser did not take the scientificity of historical materialism for granted: the scientificity of historical materialism was now verified and proven not only by scientific practice but also by political practice – that is, ‘the double determination by the scientific positivities [e.g. an analysis of social production] and historical events and struggles’ (Tosel, 2001, 11). This means that the effectivity and validity of historical materialism lie in its fusion with the working-class movement in the sense that the theoretical content of historical materialism, that is, the theory of class struggle, is mediated and proved by the political actions of the working class. Thus understood, we can summarize the theoretical meanings of topography and the redefinition of philosophy as follows. First, the problem of mediating the relationship between Marxist theory and people’s perception (or the reception of the theory) becomes inevitable in understanding the efficacy of historical materialism as a social theory/practice to the extent that its theoretical validity/efficacy can be determined/mediated by the political actions of the masses. Second, insofar as it accounts for political actions not from a voluntarist perspective but from a structuralist or Marxist perspective, ‘topography’ points out the necessity to take into account the conditions of these political actions, not confined to the economic instance. Here communicative relations become important, and the affective relation of society needs to be considered as well in that emotional bonds work as a crucial element in the formation of social/political movements. Then, the conception of topography, if implicitly, suggests the mode of communication in that people’s interactions (i.e. how people connect emotionally or rationally with each other) and how they react to the theory are constitutive of the

validity/effectivity of the theory. This is not to say that people can be controlled by ideological manipulation, but that the communicative structure through which ideas and emotions circulate through people exists materially and independently of the economic infrastructure, affecting how people think and act and thus the theoretical efficacy of historical materialism through the formation of the masses, i.e. political bodies/movements. According to this logic, the psychic economy of the masses constitutes a core dynamic of society, and the scientificity of historical materialism is not pre-given, but will be verified by the way it is accepted by the masses, which is fundamentally conditioned by the communicative materiality of society including the materiality of signifiers (as the media of communication). Thus, the term 'communication' we are employing here is not Habermasian, but Spinozist; the problematic of sociability or the theory of conscious or unconscious communicative relations is here closely interlinked with the theory of knowledge, and this is why we have to pay attention to Spinoza's theory of knowledge/emotions. As mentioned earlier, Althusser did not apparently developed this point, but when his reformulation of philosophy/topography regards people's reactions to theory as constitutive of the efficacy of theory, the theoretical possibility to put it in a broader perspective of communication emerges. To be more precise, combining it with the materiality of ideology, which is based on the materiality of the signifier, would lead to the 'mode of communication'.

III. The Problem of Ideology : Lacan and Althusser

For Althusser, ideology, having its own materiality and mechanism,

operates mainly on the symbolic:

the moment of the imaginary is marked and structured in its dialectic by the dialectic of the Symbolic Order itself, i.e., by the dialectic of human Order, of the human norm in the form of the signifier itself, i.e., in the form of an Order formally identical with the order of language (Althusser, 1971, 210 - 211).

In this framework, ideology is understood not just as the deformation or false representation/reflection of reality, but in relation to the representation/recognition of the real:

Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence... it is not their real conditions of existence, their real world, that 'men' 'represent to themselves' in ideology, but above all it is their relation to those conditions of existence which is represented to them there. It is this relation which is at the centre of every ideological, i.e. imaginary distortion of the ideological representation of the real world (Althusser, 1971, 162-164).

This mechanism allows Althusser to theorize the model of interpellation as the core mechanism of ideology, and, as is well known, it was Lacan's theory of the symbolic¹³⁾ which Althusser referred to in elaborating on the fundamental mechanism of ideology. However, there is one major difference between Althusser and Lacan, though they share the problematic of the symbolic. Since this point is important in understanding Althusser's theory of ideology, we need to illuminate a bit more on the theoretical differences

13) For Lacan, 'the language is structured like a language' (Lacan, 1999, 41) and thus 'language is the condition of the unconscious' (Lacan, 1970, 75).

between Althusser and Lacan, which concerns their view about the general structure of the unconscious. In general, Lacan privileged language as the structure of the unconscious: the unconscious is structured like a language. On the other hand, Althusser, while suggesting that the general theory of the signifier could provide a general theory for the theory of the unconscious, warned that ‘the GT [general theory] of the signifier should be distinguished from the RT [regional theory] of language’ (Althusser, 2003, 63). Althusser did not confine the general structure of the unconscious and thus of ideology to a linguistic mode but rather addressed it in more general terms to the extent that he associated it with representations, concepts, gestures, feelings, modes of behavior, prohibitions, permissions, and so on.¹⁴⁾ Thus, Althusser, in contrast to Lacan, included not only modes of representation but also non-representative elements into the instance of the symbolic.

Althusser’s original plan to generalize the problematic of ideology by including both representational and non-representative elements into the instance of ideology poses a couple of questions concerning its general mechanism and the formation of the subject. First, as Althusser himself indicated, the general theory of the signifier does not yet exist. As Althusser admits, Lacan’s linguistic model of the unconscious provides a reference point to elaborate on the theory of the signifier in general. To the extent that the theoretical objects of psychoanalysis differ from those of linguistics. However, the linguistic model of the signifier does not suffice to produce the theory of the signifier in general. Moreover, historical materialism, which deals with broader social relations as its theoretical object, including non-linguistic communicative relations, demands a broader theory of the signifier.

14) See Althusser(2003, 50-51, 76).

In reality, we can find a theoretical gap or parallax between the linguistic and non-linguistic models in Althusser's theorization of ideology. On the one hand, as Lecercle shows in *A Marxist Theory of Language*, the theory of interpellation addresses the formation of the subject from the linguistic point of view. In this model, the formation of the imaginary centres around the linguistic instance, the necessary effect of which is the subject, that is, the 'I' effect - 'it is the language that speaks and which interpellates the individual as a speaker' (Lecercle, 2006, 163), and the 'linguistic structure of assigning a predicate to a subject reconstructs/rearranges reality around "I" [subject], and produces an inversion of reality (Kang, 2018, 71).'¹⁵⁾ That is, Althusser's ideology functions when individuals become subjects, through the ideological inversion intrinsic to the function of language. So, Althusser's subject is doubly linguistic; first, as mentioned above, it takes the form of language in that it is "marked and structured in its dialectic by the dialectic of the Symbolic order itself..... in the form of the signifier itself, i.e. in the form of an Order formally identical with the other of language" (Althusser, 1971, 210-211); second, it is linguistic in that it operates on the ideological inversion produced by the grammatical structure of subject-predicate relation.

On the other hand, it is also possible to find a different mode of interpellation in Althusser's theory of ideology - the so-called Pascalian model: 'Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe'. This implies that it is an ideology materialized in practices and rituals that interpellates the individual as a subject. This model does not exclude language as its element, but contains the theoretical possibility to address non-linguistic models of subjectivation while inscribing the grammatical model as part of the

15) The sentence, 'I go to work at the factory' posits 'I' as the subject of decision while hiding away the institutional structures that condition the enunciation/decision

broader spectrum of practice, i.e., the materiality of actions inscribed/inserted within rituals or institutions (Kang, 2018, 70). Thus it can be more effective than the Lacanian linguistic model in accounting for the mode of subjectivation, and the formation of collective and anthropological identities such as class and sexual identities since these identities are mainly mediated by various non-linguistic signifiers such as gaze (Foucault's pan-opticism), behaviors, gestures, know-how, and disciplines in the factory, etc (Kang, 2016b, 190).

In fact, Althusser treated these two models of the formation of identity/ideology as though they were two different aspects of the same process, and the interpellation model appears to have priority over the Pascalian model as the latter's inner mechanism/dynamic. However, we can ask whether the Pascalian model is more general or broader in the sense that the speech act is part of practices or rituals, as Lecerle explains: 'Institution - ritual - practice - speech act - subject' (Lecerle, 2006, 165). (As I argued elsewhere, this is important given that when we are interpellated as workers or women/men; this process may not necessarily involve the first-person identification, which is denoted by the Lacanian model, but rather anthropological and collective identities, which are conditioned by various non-lingual modes of behavior.¹⁶) Thus, the process of interpellation may more closely involve the non-first person formation of identity).¹⁷) The Pascalian model at least designates the ideological instance, which is not reducible to the linguistic instance. So, we can apply what Althusser used in criticising Lacan to clarify what Althusser's theory of ideology contains; it is necessary

16) As Deleuze explains, the third person can pre-exist the first person, i.e. 'I speak' (Deleuze, 2009, 55).

17) See Kang(2018, 74).

to distinguish between the linguistic and the non-linguistic aspects of interpellation, which is a precondition for constituting the general theory of the signifier. From a similar perspective, Butler points out that Althusser's model 'must be dissociated from the figure of the voice in order to become the instrument and mechanism of discourses whose efficacy is irreducible to their moment of enunciation' (Butler, 1997a, 32).¹⁸⁾

To sum up, the demarcation line between the linguistic and the non-linguistic instances in the constitution of the subject remains unclear or is not fully developed in Althusser's theory, even though he acknowledged its theoretical necessity in constituting the general theory of the signifier. In the current theoretical conjuncture, we cannot easily deny the fact that we have not reached the level of constituting the general theory of the signifier. In the following sections, therefore, we will deal with how Spinoza's theory can work as a guiding thread, if not a solution, in addressing this theoretical aporia by providing a potential general theory with which to subsume these two models and, more importantly, the problem of how the formation of alternative ideology or subjects is to be theorized. As is well known, the latter constitutes a fundamental weakness of Althusser's theory of ideology/subject.¹⁹⁾

IV. Spinoza and Althusser

Spinoza's philosophy was an important theoretical mediator in Althusser's theory, as Althusser himself admitted: 'we were Spinozists'. Although

18) See Montag(2013, 168).

19) See Althusser(1971, 148–158). See Rancière's criticism of Althusser's conception of ideology(Rancière, 2011, 74–76).

Althusser drew primarily on Spinoza's theory of knowledge, rather than his theories of the state and the imaginary, it is the latter, or, more generally, Spinoza's conception of communication, that can nevertheless shed light on what is latent in Althusser's theory of ideology. Spinoza anticipates Freud in that he presupposes that the affective or emotional currents that go beyond consciousness affect the human mind. Both theorists also attempt to explain the psychological life of people and their emotions in terms of the causality of emotions (the emotions of hatred, anger, envy, etc., considered in themselves, follow from the same necessity and force of nature as all other particular things), and ultimately formulate the dynamics of the psychic economy of people. Yet, what makes Spinoza's position distinct is that it inscribes these dynamics into a broader perspective of communication consisting of two poles. At one pole, men are governed by rational communication pursuing mutual interests. Man (the human body) requires a great many other bodies to conserve itself,²⁰⁾ and no one in solitude is strong enough to defend himself and procure the necessities of life.²¹⁾ Therefore, men have a direct interest in agreeing with others insofar as they desire their own preservation.²²⁾ This implies that rational communication is the basis for the constitution of the common good and community. However, this pole is fundamentally intersected by the other pole, the affective life of men. Men are governed by unconscious and affective currents, which flow through individuals; individual or collective identity is formed along the path/mechanism of 'the imitation of the affects',²³⁾ a process of imaginary

20) Spinoza(1992, 176) (Part IV Proposition 39 Proof).

21) See Spinoza(2000, 64).

22) See Spinoza(1992, 171-172) (Part IV Proposition 35).

23) See Spinoza(1992, 119) (Part III Proposition 27 and its Scholium). See also Montag(1999, 26-61).

identification with its ‘mechanism of introjection, projection and projective identification’.²⁴⁾ For Spinoza, the constitution of collective imagination or collective identity along this communicative mechanism is a very important axis underlying the state, and its dissolution is detrimental to the fate of the state; the fate of society is fundamentally conditioned by these rational and affective currents.

In relation to Althusser’s theory of ideology, Spinoza’s model is particularly important to the extent that it is able to develop what Althusser’s project initially intends to do. What is not clear in Althusser’s introduction of Freudian psychoanalysis in elaborating the Marxist idea of ideology is how to explain the formation of collective identities. While psychoanalysis addresses the problem of the unconscious on an individual level (e.g. the formation of individual identity, the relationship between analysis and analysant, etc.), the Marxist framework of ideology requires accounting for the same problem on a collective level – for example, class and nation. In Althusser’s theory, this gap was not successfully filled. Though Althusser’s notion of the imaginary is able to address the ideological inversion based upon the formation of the grammatical subject, it does not effectively address the problem of collective identities. The model of ‘inner voice’ or the grammatical model of subjectivity in Althusser’s theory is only one instance of subjectivation, and probably not enough to take the role of general theory. As mentioned above, the first-person formation of identity does not necessarily precede the non-first person identification particularly in relation to anthropological/collective identities. On the other hand, Spinoza’s theory of the imaginary suggests the way in which collective identity is formed along the path/mechanism of ‘the imitation of the

24) See Balibar(1998, xviii).

affects' (Spinoza, 1992, 119), a process of imaginary identification with its 'mechanism of introjection, projection and projective identification'.²⁵⁾ In fact, Spinoza's major theoretical aim is the proper explanation of the cause or logic of mass movements and the imagination and imaginary identity of the masses. What is also important in this mechanism is that Spinoza does not treat the formation of individuality and that of collectivity separately. For him, as Balibar stresses, individuality (or even the affect) is a function of communication (the individual does not precede individuation, but is a construction; even the masses, not to mention the classes, are constituted (in the form of 'we/us') in the process of communication), and thus individuality and collectivity are the effects of the same process. Such a theorization can allow one to better theorize the problem of 'subjectivation', particularly in relation to the formation of collective identities, by adding another mechanism of ideology, which is based on the affective communication of the masses.

However, what is problematic with Spinoza's theory of communication in an attempt to articulate theories of the lingual and non-lingual modes of communication (or in formulating the general theory of ideology) is that there is no theory of language and the symbolic in Spinoza. Therefore, Macherey points out that what cannot be found in Spinoza can be found in Freud: a theory of language and the symbolic (Macherey, 1992, 198-200). Yet this gap does not prevent one from introducing the theory of language into his theory. In *Theological-Political Treatise*, Spinoza suggests that, to construct and understand the meaning of a text, one must consider that language is preserved by the learned and the unlearned, and is employed differently from period to period; the meaning of words is not subject to the manipulation of the learned

25) See Balibar(1998, xviii).

or of theologians, but it is they who have to immerse themselves in it to change the meaning. For Spinoza, it is not an individual who fixes the meaning of language; rather, the meaning is formed and determined by the common use of the common people in the process of exchanging ideas and opinions (Spinoza, 2007, 105). This is to say, as Montag clearly shows, that *Theological-Political Treatise* deals with the materiality of language and grasps it as ‘the producer and product of collectivity’ (Montag, 1999, 10)²⁶ and, thus, that the problematic of language is immanent in Spinoza’s theory of communication. Spinoza’s conception of common notion in *Ethics* is also based on the use of the words of language, and presupposes that knowledge is the product of communication and collective thinking (in Spinoza’s system, nobody thinks alone). Therefore, the theoretical gap of a specific theory of signifiers in Spinoza’s theory is not simply a defect but opens up some theoretical space to elaborate on the relationship between language and communication, and between language and the formation of identity. In particular, the duality immanent in Spinoza’s theory of communication compensates this theoretical gap. Spinoza does not treat affective communication and representational communication (such as common notion) as two different entities, but rather as different aspects of the same process:²⁷

26) According to Montag, the fundamental argument of TTP is that ‘speaking and writing, the actual forms of language, possess an irreducibly corporeal existence, and as such affect our bodies, moving them to act’ (Montag, 1999, 22).

27) *Ethics* IV Proposition 4, Corollary. Proposition 6, Proposition 7 – man is necessarily subject to passive emotions... an emotion cannot be checked or destroyed except by a contrary emotion that is stronger than the emotion that is to be checked. Therefore, what matters is to achieve the unity of adequate knowledge and of joyous, and thus active, affects, which strengthen the power of individuals, not to remove them, which coincides with Althusser’s position on ideology and topography. Since ideology is an organic part of society, and there is no practice outside of it; it is required to work on ideology, not to escape it.

Every idea is already accompanied by affections, and even adequate ideas do not remove the affections attached to them. Therefore, as mentioned above, Spinoza's theory can be used to dissociate Althusser's theory of ideology from the figure of the voice, and their moment of enunciation, thereby allowing us to generalize it. This is not to say that the Lacanian notion of the symbolic is meaningless or should be abandoned, but that the articulation of Althusserian/Lacanian model of interpellation with the Spinozist notion of communication has the potential to theorize a broad conception of subjectivation, i.e. the mode of subjectivation based on multiple identification. What is required is not just to understand the ideological inversion in the grammatical interpellation based on the materiality of signifier, but to see/theorize the formation of plural identities in an individual, and of collective identities.

It is Balibar who sees this potential in Spinoza's theory of communication and attempts to extend Althusser's theory of ideology to the problematic of the mode of communication by means of Spinoza's theory of affects.²⁸⁾ As mentioned earlier, Balibar's theoretical attempt clarifies what remains underdeveloped or implicit in Althusser's theory (and in Marx's as well²⁹⁾), and develops the latter's problematic of overdetermination into the overdetermination of the mode of production and the mode of subjectivation.³⁰⁾ Particularly, his elaboration of equal-liberty allows us to address how

28) See Balibar(1998).

29) In fact, Balibar mentions that the Spinozist framework of communication explains what Marx does not explain. That is, Spinoza proposes the mode of communication as a fundamental structure of society, while Marx proposes the mode of production as another fundamental structure/condition (Balibar 1994, xvi).

30) Probably, it is time to see another aspect of Spinoza vs. Hegel. Althusser, Balibar, and Macherey focus on Spinoza to transform the Hegelian Dialectic (negativity vs. positivity). While Macherey explains in *Hegel ou Spinoza* (Macherey, 1979, 259) that there exists in

ideology can be transformed, which Althusser did not properly explain, by showing that ideology consists of universal elements, and thus can be conflictually constituted – we will come back to this point later. If this is the case, we can also find continuity between later Althusser and Balibar. In other words, Balibar’s attempt to articulate Spinoza and Marx can be read as an indirect answer to what Althusser called the crisis of Marxism, which, Althusser thought, was not just a political crisis but closely related to theoretical gaps/crisis in Marxism (the theories of organization and labour movement). Although it is an important point in understanding Althusser’s and Balibar’s theories, it goes beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, it will focus on the matter of how Althusser’s theory fails to properly theorize the transformation of ideology, and attempt to theorize it within Althusser’s framework. In so doing, we will, albeit briefly, deal with how Balibar replies to this problem.

V. Ambivalence of reproductive interpellation

The last point to address is the problem of how to theorize transformation in the problematic of ideology. For Althusser, the question of ideology basically involves the question of ‘the reproduction of the conditions of

Spinoza a certain form of dialectic without the negation of the negation, Balibar endorses and pursues the strategy of developing a non-teleological formulation of dialectic (Balibar 1996, 118–119). However, Hegel’s formulation of “I” that is “We”, “We” that is “I” (Hegel 2018, 108) implies the simultaneous constitution of individual and collective identities. Hegel’s idea of recognition, which is the core dynamic of the master-slave dialectic, can also be read as an important dynamic of the conflictual constitution of the universal.

production'. Althusser wrote that for every social formation to continue to exist, it must 'reproduce the conditions of its production at the same as it produces, and in order to be able to produce. It must therefore reproduce 1. The productive forces, 2. The existing relations of production'. In this sense, Althusser combined the question of ideology with two basic questions:

- 1) How does the reproduction of the conditions of production work?
- 2) How is the reproduction of labour power guaranteed?

Ultimately, these two problems led to the question of how ideology contributes to the reproduction of the mode of production and class domination. This problematic of ideology plays an important role in 1) elaborating and developing Althusser's own problematic of overdetermination in that it proposes that ideology has its own materiality and mechanism, which is irreducible to the causality/reality of the mode of production, and 2) accounting for how and why capitalism manages to reproduce itself despite continuous crises. What is problematic with this formulation of ideology is that while mainly focusing on the function of ideology in terms of reproduction, it tendentially ignores or leaves unanswered the role of class struggle in the process of ideological reproduction: that is, the conflictual character of ideology. Although Althusser's account of ideology has some functionalist elements, it distinguishes itself from functionalism in that 'Ideology and ideological state apparatuses' did not ask how it is possible that reproduction of the system takes place, but rather asked how it takes place (Lock, 1996, 73); it did not presuppose a self-regulating system, but rather tried to prove, as Bidet notes, that 'the public institutions are the instruments of class struggl

e... [and] assure the reproduction of domination' (Bidet, 1995, 11). Thus, Althusser himself attempted to think of and 'inscrib[e] the possibility or even necessity of a *break* with the dominant capitalist system at the precise point of the system's fragility'³¹⁾ by pointing out that 'it is only from the point of view of the classes, i.e. of the class struggle, that it is possible to explain the ideologies existing in a social formation' (Althusser, 1971, 185).

However, it is also true that 'Ideology and ideological state apparatuses' and *Sur la Reproduction*, though describing the ISAs (ideological state apparatuses) as institutions of class struggle (Lock, 1996, 73), do not provide a detailed explanation of the relations between the general mechanism of de-(or counter-interpellation) and its concrete aspect (class ideologies and a material determination of the imaginary by class antagonism). In other words, the general mechanism or dynamics of ideology in terms of reproduction, that is, interpellation, are given but the explanation of counter-interpellation in terms of its inner mechanism is lacking in Althusser's account of ideology.

In a sense, we can utilize some theoretical elements from Althusser's reformulation of topography to constitute a theory of counter-interpellation and to defend Althusser's theoretical position from the charge of functionalism. As mentioned above, if his earlier theorization of ideology deals mainly with the problem of interpellation in terms of its materiality or its material mechanism, the conception of topography addresses the problem of de-interpellation in terms of its materiality. That is to say, it starts to account, albeit only descriptively, for the problem of counter-interpellation or de-subjection in its own materiality by including the reception of the theory as constitutive of its validity/efficacy, thereby denoting one important condition for alternative

31) See Althusser(2014, XV).

social movements to emerge (theory as an ideological form). However, this does not suffice to account for the emergence of new subjects in that it can only denote negatively a condition of de-interpellation but does not explain positively how ideological revolts can happen. In order to deal with this question, we need to pay attention to contradictions/conflicts in the symbolic, which remained in Althusser's theory of ideology but the theoretical potential of which he was not fully aware. Thus, the next section attempts to investigate how the idea of contradictions in the symbolic can help understand the formation of resistant subjects.

VI. **De-interpellation and its mechanism: contradictions in the symbolic**

Since Althusser was not clear about the elaboration of de-interpellation in terms of its general mechanism, the task of developing it has been left to others, and we can find a persuasive theorization in Lecercle's linguistic model. To extricate Althusser's theory of ideology from the charge of functionalism, Lecercle makes reference to Derridean dissemination. According to Lecercle, the interpellative process is also the process of de-interpellation in that language slides from the speaker's intention in the same process of its reproduction. Lecercle argues that the 'speaker is therefore interpellated to her place by language but insofar as she makes the language her language, she counter-interpellates it' (Lecercle, 2006, 167).³² This implies that the process of interpellation is also the process of counter-interpellation, and thus reminds

32) See also Kang(2018, 70, 78-9).

us of Althusser's theorization of overdetermination, the fundamental meaning of which is that the process of reproduction is nothing other than the process of transition. However, here, it is necessary to ask whether Lecercle's model leaves the problem of the (re)constitution of ideology underdeveloped, while prioritizing the moment of dissolution over that of constitution. In a sense, to think about the transformation of ideology is to think about the reconstitution of ideology – that is, the re-convergence of disseminated interpellation, which becomes more important when we think of the formation of collective identities. If counter-interpellative actions remain disseminative, not leading to a convergence, they are schizophrenic, and rather mostly serve to reproduce the existing ideological tendencies. (This is what Althusser's underdetermination implies (Althusser, 1976, 187).)³³ This also implies that, as Balibar (2008) points out, the universal becomes universal in the form of domination. Therefore, it can be said that the problem of 'at which moment an individual subject separates itself from the (existing and dominant) collective mode of subjectivation' is a precondition of ideological transformation, but not a sufficient condition. What is crucial in thinking about the transformation of ideology is to find where and how disseminated individuals converge to form a new form of identities (or a new dominant universality).

Then, how can we think of the reconstitution of dissemination? Althusser gave a provisional, answer, if not a solution, to this question in 'Transformation of Marxism' (Althusser, 1990, 258-261), where Althusser

33) Althusser invoked 'underdetermination' to denote 'a threshold of determination which, if it is not crossed, causes revolutions to miscarry, revolutionary movements to stagnate or disappear, and imperialism to rot while still developing, etc.' Therefore, it implies (1) determination which leads not to a significant convergence, and (2) that the process of reproduction is nothing other than the process of transition. See also Balibar(1996, 115).

briefly mentioned that dominating ideologies could not be dominant without universal elements. Although it is a very important point in understanding the contradiction in ideology, and thus in theorizing the appearance of new subjects, Althusser did not fully develop this point (Althusser, 1971, 182).³⁴⁾ However, we can derive from it the idea of universal and thus conflictual constitution of ideology and utilize it to account for the dynamics immanent in the process of ideologization; dominant ideologies must include the universal elements of the imaginary of the masses in order to be dominant, and consequently harbour contradictions within themselves.³⁵⁾ As Balibar explains,

the dominant ideology at a given society is a specific universalization of the imaginary of the dominated... it elaborates ... such notions as Justice, Liberty and Equality, Effort and Happiness, etc., which draw their potential universal meaning from their belonging to the imaginary of the individuals who live the masses' or the people's conditions (Balibar, 1993a, 12-13).

If this is the case, ideology is fundamentally unstable and works in opposite directions (composition/decomposition-reproduction/transformation) due to the need for ideology to universalize the imaginary of the masses, and there is a possibility of latent revolt in ideological domination. Althusser's theory of ideology did not entirely remove the possibility of ideological revolt, and we can apply this logic to the workings of schools as a key ISA. Schools in capitalistic societies mainly and necessarily function to reproduce the class structure of production and to justify the existing social order and power relations based on the capitalistic relations of production (schools correspond

34) See also Althusser(1995, 188); Pêcheux(1982, 218).

35) See also Voloshinov's theorization of multiaccentuality in Voloshinov(1986, 23, 81).

structurally to the workplace), but they have to respond to the democratic values and expectations associated with the equality of access to opportunities for social mobility and equality. In other words, schooling in a capitalist society would not serve the former role without responding to the latter aspect. Therefore, as Carnoy and Levin suggest, 'even as schools reproduced capitalist relations of production, contradictions to capitalist development emerge from that very reproductive process' (Carnoy and Levin, 1985, 77). In terms of the educational content, capitalism does not stand entirely on the false consciousness of people but is itself based on its own rationality, which Weber focuses on, and is more persuasive and rational than the previous systems. Ideology is not separated from 'know-how'; even though this know-how is 'wrapped up in the massive inculcation of the ideology of the ruling class', as Althusser points out, it also has universal and rational aspects, without which ideology will not function. At this chasm lies the possibility of ideological bifurcation/transformation/reconstitution. Therefore, we have to pay attention to the dual character of education, that is, ideological apparatuses, in capitalism. It is no doubt that a labour force with higher skills is conducive to creating more profits (and more use-value), but, as Bowles and Gintis point out, it is 'simply impossible for higher education... to transmit useful high-level skills to students without, at the same time, developing some of the students' critical capacities and transmitting some of the truth about how society operates' (Bowls and Gintis, 1976, 206).³⁶⁾

36) Overeducation and the underutilization of education, which are typical in the advanced capitalist countries and are closely related to continuous degradation of the value of labour power, would reinforce these ideological contradictions; '[s]chooling continues to prepare and orient most young people inappropriately for the jobs available to them. Dissatisfied workers created demands for change in the relations of production' (Carnoy and Levin, 1985, 179).

As mentioned above, the dual character of ideal universality, that is, the universal and thus conflictual constitution of ideology, only remains latent in Althusser's theory, but it is Balibar's proposition of equal-liberty that addresses this point. According to Balibar, the proposition of equal-liberty, which originates in the historical event of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*, 'by virtue of simplicity and revolutionary radicality, hides within themselves from the outset a contradiction that prohibits from becoming vested in a stable order', and its instability opens up space, which the oppressed or the alienated can utilize to claim their universality. ('An intrinsic part of the truth of the [1789 *Declaration*] is its "negative universality... its absolute indeterminacy"' (Balibar, 1994, 41-49).) In short, the declaration of the rights of man, which posits every man as a 'free and equal' being, comprises the essential reference point in the formation/deformation of modern subjectivity. Insofar as it is recalled at every moment in the class struggle to maintain the existing and dominant forms of exploitation, it risks its dissolution at every moment, and also functions to reunite the fission it entails - the dialectic of deconstruction and constitution. This means that 'symbols related to equality, liberty and justice occupy a unique and ambiguous place in the symbolic by attracting the oppressed and alienated, thereby having unique political effects (Kang, 2018, 78).'

It is worth mentioning, albeit briefly, that such a theorization inverts the Lacanian notion of the symbolic. Unlike Lacan's theorization of R-S-I, which attributes the role of structural stabilization to the emergence of the symbolic while locating contradiction within the real, contradictions, for Balibar, are 'inherent within the symbolic to the extent that it admits that some symbols circulating through symbolic areas work not only as anchoring points but also as melting points (Kang, 2018, 78).' Some unique and special symbols - for

example, liberty, equality, justice, etc. – work differently from other signifiers and, because of the existence of these ideals, the instance of the symbolic or of the space of politics is intrinsically unstable and thus left indefinitely open, which Althusser did not properly recognize while locating the class struggle in the instance of the real. While his primary concern was to grasp contradictions within modes of production, he seemed to relativize the problem of ideological contradiction by disregarding the existence of contradictions in the symbolic, which, in a sense, runs contradictory to his own theory of ideology. However, if ideology has real effects and runs on its own materiality, as Althusser argues, its contradictions should also be located within itself. If not, the notion of overdetermination, which aims to break with the univocal, teleological notion of historical causality, becomes meaningless in that it effectively denies contradictions in the symbolic³⁷⁾ and thereby restores, albeit implicitly, teleology or economism by rendering them a mere reflection of ‘modes of production (Kang, 2018, 77).’ The fact that Althusser did not properly realize the contradictions in the symbolic becomes apparent not just when he ascribed the role of structural interpellation to the instance of the symbolic but also when he criticized discourses on liberty, equality, etc. as bourgeois discourses (as is well known, his formulation of epistemological rupture posits them antithetical to scientific discourses: for example, historical materialism) (Althusser, 1970, 227). In contrast, it is necessary to pay attention to contradictions in the symbolic and thus to clarify the idea of universal/conflictual constitution of ideology, as a contradiction in ideology, which remains implicit in Althusser’s theory, in order to make Althusser’s framework of ideology more consistent and meaningful. It is particularly

37) It also implies that there are other universal contradictions, which are irreducible to class antagonism, but it does not deny the universality of class contradiction.

important in that it allows one to address the emergence of new subjects in terms of non-economic contradictions and thus to provide a tool to think of multiple interpellation. In addition, the theoretical implication of topography becomes more obvious when it incorporates the idea of universal/conflictual constitution of ideology in it in the sense that it allows one to think of the conditions in which Marxist philosophy becomes ideologically effective in conjunction with ideal universality, such as liberty and equality. Ideal universality does not always hide contradictions in capitalism but serves to reveal them, thereby becoming the conditions in which class contradiction makes itself manifest, as Balibar's proposition of equal-liberty (or Derrida's theorization of justice as indestructible) suggests. This implies, in Althusserian terms, that political ruptures, conditioned by the universal/conflictual constitution of the symbolic, precede and activate social movements, not that scientific/epistemological ruptures always precede/determine political ruptures.³⁸⁾

There is one last thing to be mentioned as regards the universal/conflictual constitution of ideology: the idea of a universal/conflictual constitution of ideology also resonates with Spinoza's model of the imitation of the affects in the sense that the latter denotes contradictions within ideology, which is fundamentally conditioned by the affective currents flowing through people. As mentioned earlier, the mechanism of 'the imitation of the affects' is an identification process through which both individual and collective identities

38) As explained in Section 2, philosophical and political rupture can precede and condition epistemological break (Althusser, 1976, 68). Althusser also wrote that it was by moving to take up absolutely new, proletarian class positions that Marx realised the possibilities of the theoretical conjunction from which the science of history was born (Althusser, 1976, 157). This does not mean that political ruptures are the same as epistemological ruptures, but should be taken to imply that political ruptures can be a condition for scientific ruptures to emerge.

are formed in circulating ideas and affections, and we need to pay attention to the fact that it is an ambivalent process through which the masses' activity can change to passivity and vice versa. This is to say that as Balibar explains, this identification process is unstable since it contains its contrary, and thus can change to its contrary at any moment.³⁹⁾ For instance, the feeling that what I love is shared by others can work in both ways. On the one hand, it can create a social bond by reinforcing reciprocal love. On the other hand, it can lead to a fear that I may be deprived of what I desire by others; the obverse of the feeling that I can obtain the good through interaction with others is that I may not be able to obtain it without the help of others; the feeling of love is able to change to its contrary at any moment (Balibar, 1998, 110-111). So, although the idea of an active and collective transformation of the masses is present in Spinoza, it is not based on the presupposed rationality of individuals nor does it produce teleology. Balibar calls this process 'the dialectic between reason and passion' (Balibar, 1998, 122), which is characterized by its fundamental instability. This is what Althusser failed to adequately cope with when he addressed ideology in terms of reproduction, and Spinoza's theory of communication provides a tool with which to modify its static characterization; ideological space is not stable but doubly conflictual: on one hand, ideal universality such as justice and liberty, which is integral part of the symbolic, can serve to decompose and to recompose ideology (ideology needs to be universal in order to become effective, but its universal elements can deconstruct or implode it); on the other hand, the psychic economy of the masses works opposite ways (people vacillate between passivity and activity - individuals are passive when they are subject to the

39) According to Spinoza, emotions cannot be checked or destroyed except by a contrary emotion that is stronger than the emotion that is to be checked (Spinoza, 1992, 158).

flows of the affects, but they are active when they know the cause of their affections, and understand the relations (the imitations of the affects) between their body/mind and other bodies/minds)), and thus constitutes the ideological instance as a conflictual/contradictory space.

VII. Concluding Remarks

Until now, we have investigated the theoretical roles that the new conception of ‘topography/philosophy’ plays, particularly in relation to Althusser’s theory of ideology, and the theoretical potentials, tasks, and obstacles it poses in expanding the theory of ideology into the Spinozist problematic of communication. More than anything else, the problematic of communication has meaning in that it reveals another underlying structure of society, which is irreducible to the materiality denoted by the mode of production, and thereby provides a theoretical tool with which to account for the formation of the subject as a consequence of the dual process of the mode of production and ideological structure, which allows us to do non-linear theorization of historical causality. Here, the role of dialectic as the theory of contradictions is important. To the extent that contradictions are immanent not just in the economical instance but in the ideological instance, there is always a possibility of latent revolt in the conjuncture. It implies, *a fortiori*, that they transform themselves in their reproduction process; they have to keep changing themselves in order to continue coping with internal and external contradictions, and at this chasm lies the possibility for alternative subjects or new forms of subject to emerge.

The problematic of communication also has a strategic meaning in that it

implies, at a deeper level, that, using Lacan's terminology, revolutionary movements must be located and implemented at the level of the symbolic, and at the psychic economy of the masses. If it is the case that the imaginary is an integral part of every society (or if there can be no social practices without representation), what matters in alternative social relations is not to escape from existing imaginaries/representations towards the constitution of society free from ideology or any representations but to work on them (the symbolic) to cope with the problem of the imaginary.⁴⁰ Deleuze's concepts of 'deterritorialization', and 'nomadology', which posit refusal of 'retreats into the forms of representation' as their core dynamics (Deleuze and Guattari, 1977, xiii - xiv),⁴¹ can be understood as a version of the former, but, because individuals are not free from trans-individual relations, these remain implausible ways to deal with the problem of the imaginary of the masses. In fact, this is what Spinoza's theory of the affections implies. According to him, affections always accompany ideas, and thus cannot be removed. So, passive affections, which are the cause of one's impotence/inability and constitute a core dynamic of both the foundation and the dissolution of the state, need to be transformed into active ones. Thus Spinoza argues:

[A]ll patricians should be of the same religion, a very simple religion of

40) Montag is right to say that, discourse, at some stage in Althusser's development of the theory of ideology, appears less real than practice, situated outside of reality (Montag, 2013, 133); Althusser tended to think of discourses as not affecting reality outside practices that make use of discourse, which becomes obvious as well when Althusser produced a reductive view of liberty and equality, while reducing them to bourgeois legal ideology.

41) For them, 'escape is revolutionary—withdrawal... provided one sweeps away the social cover on leaving, or causes a piece of the system to get lost in the shuffle. What matters is to break through the wall', and 'desiring-production is continually overcoming the limit, becoming deterritorialized, causing its flows to escape, going beyond the threshold of representation' (Deleuze and Gattari, 1977, 277, 313).

a most universal nature as described in that treatise. For it is of the first importance to guard against the patricians' being split into sects, showing favour some to this group, some to that, and furthermore against becoming victims to superstition, seeking to deprive their subjects of the freedom to say what they think (Spinoza, 2000, 118).

Here Spinoza stresses the need to elaborate on (symbolic/collective) representations (as a centre of gravity) to achieve the “unity of adequate knowledge and of joyous and thus active affects which strengthen the power of individuals, not to remove them”, which in turn corresponds to Althusser’s later formulation of topography/ISAs. To put it in Lacanian terminology, what is required is elaboration and work at the symbolic level – for example, on representations such as liberty, equality, justice, etc., – in order to think of revolutionary movements, rather than simply counterposing them to reality (Waterman, 2001, 32-33).⁴²⁾ For instance, Peter Waterman proposes to ‘take “proletariat” as a metaphor for all the alienated, all those denied their past rights, their present capacities, their future potential’.⁴³⁾ He also notes that ‘there is increasing evidence and argumentation for the increasing internationalism of those alienated in many different ways’. This is not to deny the class struggle as an old, meaningless representation, but rather to inscribe the Marxist framework of class struggle in a broader concept of historical causality, which is fundamentally conditioned by the mode of communication. In this sense, the model of communication, which is inherent in Althusser’s theory of ideology, marks not only a limitation in Marxism but also a place to dig in to get over this weakness and to develop its scientificity, particularly

42) In a similar fashion, Irigaray stresses the strategic importance of language, i.e. the symbolic instance (Irigaray, 1993, 32).

43) See Kang(2016a, 22-23).

in relation to the problem of subject/subjectivation.

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[국문초록]

알튀세르는 이데올로기의 물질성 개념을 바탕으로 마르크스주의적 인과성 개념을 과잉결정적 인과성으로 재규정하면서 마르크스주의적 사회과학(역사인과성)의 한계를 극복하고자 했다. 특히 그의 이데올로기 이론은 라캉의 이론을 마르크스주의적 이데올로기 이론과 접합하면서 생산양식의 인과성을 벗어나 사회의 동학을 설명할 수 있는 새로운 모델을 제시했다는 점에서 큰 의미를 지닌다. 하지만 그의 이데올로기 이론은 언어학적 틀을 특권시하고 저항적 주체의 출현을 적합하게 설명하지 못 한다는 약점을 지닌다. 그의 이데올로기 이론이 그의 또 다른 핵심 개념인 인식론적 절단 개념과 모순적으로 충돌한다는 점도 주목해야 할 사항이다. 따라서 이 글에서는 스피노자의 교통양식 개념을 바탕으로 알튀세르 이데올로기 이론을 재구성하며 그 이론적 약점을 보완할 방법을 모색해 보고자 한다. 특히 그가 시도한 철학의 재정의(최종심급에서의 이론에서의 계급투쟁으로서 철학)를 교통양식의 관점에서 재해석하고, 그를 바탕으로 그의 이데올로기 이론을 재구성해보고자 한다.

[Abstract]

Topography, the Mode of Communication and the Subject

– A Spinozist Reformulation of Althusser's Theory of Ideology

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The theoretical role of ideology is important in Althusser's theoretical system in the sense that it posits ideology as another universal element of society/history and thereby concretizes his own problematic of overdetermination. Admitting the theoretical potential of Althusser's theory of ideology, however, it remains to be developed rather than existing in a coherent or stable form; his theorization of ideology/topography is not consistent throughout his entire oeuvre particularly in relation to his own concept of epistemological rupture, and shows weakness in explaining the formation of revolutionary subjects. So, this paper will attempt to 1) reconstruct Althusser's theory of ideology by incorporating Althusser's definition of ideology and his later reformulation of topography through the problematic of communication, 2) reinterpret his redefinition of philosophy (as class struggle in theory in the last instance) based on it, and 3) explore the possibility to account for the emergence of revolutionary subjects in Althusser's theory of ideology.

[Keywords] ideology, topography, grammatical/non-grammatical signifiers, the mode of communication(subjectivation), the symbolic

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