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# Pluralism in action: A Marxian (Althusserian) Overview. Issues of Theory and Politics.

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**ABSTRACT:** The major heterodox systems of economic thought elaborated their critical viewpoint either through adoption of an alternative empirical economic anthropology (as occurs with the *post-Keynesian* or *Neoricardian approach*) or through insistence on the variable-evolutionary nature of the economic agent (*old-Institutional School*). However, they do not articulate *radically* different theoretical strategies from the dominant neoclassical system. This is not true of the Marxian system of thought, which in Althusser's analysis is established by virtue of a unique *epistemological break*, whether from the different (heterodox or otherwise) versions of *economic humanism* or from the more "elegant" *institutional humanist historicism*. The above differentiation is not only of interpretative significance but has crucial consequences for economic policy. The Althusserian tradition of Marxism perceives the capitalist state neither as a *neutral instrument* nor as an *autonomous institutional "subject"*. On the contrary, class domination is organized by the state within a social formation. It is the balance of social forces that imposes the specific form of the state and of economic strategy.

**Keywords:** Heterodox economics, theoretical anti-humanism, capitalist state theories, Althusser.

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## 1. Introduction

The present paper aims at contributing to the ongoing dialogue on the subject of *pluralism* in economic thought. Given that it touches on more themes than can be discussed within the limits of a brief presentation, its character is more *allusive* than analytical.

The discussion on *pluralism* or *heterodoxy* cannot be conducted abstractly, that is to say before defining the theoretical field covered by the abovementioned concepts. This is the subject we propose to deal with in the *first part* of this paper, the aim being to formulate a Marxian approach, deriving first and foremost from the Althusserian reading of Marxism.

Obviously, the crucial – as it turns out – differences between the economic approaches comprising the current of heterodoxy have important consequences for the manner in which the process of conflict over economic policy is understood. This will be the focus of our comments in the *second part* of the paper, above all in reference to the concept of the state.

Finally, in the *third and final part* we make a brief comment on the current of heterodox economics and its theoretical (and political) utility.

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## ***Part I: on the diversity of the heterodox bloc***

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### **2. The General Anthropological Basis of Classical Political Economy (the definition of *economic humanism*)**

In this section we shall attempt to describe the *general structure* of the theoretical object of Classical Political Economy, mainly following the analysis of Althusser (1997: 160-4). The arguments of the latter largely overlap with the corresponding approaches of Godelier (1972) and Foucault (2002). Moreover, as noted in any case by Althusser himself, the conclusions that follow are not “restricted to the classical forms of Political Economy, since the same basic *theoretical* categories still underlie the work of many economists today” (*ibid.*: 160). We shall return to this question below.

According to Althusser *there are two basic characteristics* of the theoretical system of Classical Political Economy.

The *first* has to do with the rigorously *empirical* methodological orientation, which is accompanied by a requirement for *measurability* of economic phenomena. This means that economic events and phenomena are allocated within a strictly defined *field* retaining the basic quality of *homogeneity*. “The field and the phenomena that constitute it and fill it are *given*, i.e., accessible to direct observation and attention (...). This homogenous field is a defined space in which the different economic determinations, factors or phenomena are, by virtue of the homogeneity of the field in which they exist, comparable, and, to be precise, *measurable*, i.e., *quantifiable*” (*ibid.*: 161). *Every economic fact is in essence measurable*<sup>1</sup>. It is worth

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<sup>1</sup> As an indicative example we might mention the labour theory of value. To Smith and Ricardo there was a point to referring to *absolute value* precisely because it was a *measurable concept* able to be recorded in *given empirical* units of socially necessary labour. This element of measurability was in no way an object of critique for the opponents of Ricardo. Insisting on the *relative character of value*, the latter indirectly identified as *metaphysical*, and so outside the range of acceptable scientific discourse, any reference to the concept of *absolute value*. This

noting that we meet with this characteristic, no doubt more emphatically, in later neo-classical analyses and particularly in the formalistic way in which neo-classical thought is developed from the 1950s onwards (Weintraub 2002). This completely vindicates Althusser's remark that "modern political economy remains faithful to the empiricist, 'quantitative' tradition of the classics" (*ibid.*).

*Secondly*, the abovementioned homogeneity in the field of economics is organically linked to a range of concrete issues having to do with the *empirically given* economic nature of human beings. "That is to say that economics can only think of economic facts as belonging to the homogeneous space of their positivity and measurability on condition that it accepts 'naïve' 'anthropology' which founds all the acts involved in the production, distribution, reception and consumption of economic objects on the economic subjects and their needs" (*ibid.*: 162).

In accordance with the flow of Althusser's analysis, these observations lead to the following basic conclusion: "*the peculiar theoretical structure of Political Economy depends on immediately and directly relating together a homogeneous space of given phenomena and an ideological anthropology which bases the economic character of the phenomena and its space on man as the subject of needs (the givenness of the homo oeconomicus). (...) The homogeneous given space of economic phenomena is thus doubly given by the anthropology which grips it in the vice of origins and ends*" (*ibid.*, the emphasis is in the original text).

### 3. Neoclassical humanism

At the basis, therefore, of the analyses of classical political economy we find an active *theoretical humanism*, that is to say a comprehensive *problematic* which organizes economic discourse in terms of a certain (empirical) conception of man as a *primary subject* of his needs. It is the same theoretical humanism that *survives* in a different form and more vigorously in the background of later neo-classical analyses. Although there are many differences that serve to differentiate the latter from classical economists, it can easily be seen that that the basic anthropological (essentialist) structure that characterizes the object of classical political economy *survives intact* placing its stamp also on the neoclassical theoretical framework. We might indicatively quote the following extract from the work of Marshall (1956: 22, 32):

*For in the first place, they [economic theories, (author's note)] deal with facts which can be observed, and quantities which can be measured and recorded; (...). In the second place, the problems, which are grouped as economic, because they relate specially to man's conduct under the influence of motives that are measurable by a money price, are found to make a fairly homogeneous group. (...) Economic laws are statements with regard to the tendencies of man's action under certain conditions. (...) The raison d' être of economics as a separate science is that it deals chiefly with that part of man's actions which is most under the control of measurable motives; (...) They deal with a man who is largely influenced by egoistic motives in his business life to a great extent with reference to them (...). They deal with man as he is: but being concerned chiefly with those aspects of life in which the action of motive is so regular that it can be predicted, and the estimate*

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position has remained a constant of the dominant non-Marxian economic analysis from Bailey to Böhm-Bawerk and even Joan Robinson. Marx's attitude to the *labour theory of value* was, by contrast, critical. He regarded it as a *pre-monetary empiricist theory*, subjecting the element of measurability to stringent criticism (see Marx 1990, Heinrich 1999: 278-280, Milios et al. 2002).

of the motor-forces can be verified by results, they have established their work on a scientific basis (emphasis added).

The above extract contains a clear formulation of the two fundamental characteristics of the object of classical theory. *Firstly*, the *measurability-quantifiability* of economic phenomena and the requirement that in the domain of economics one should “deal with facts which can be observed, and quantities which can be measured”. It is precisely for this reason, as previously asserted by Althusser, that economic phenomena appear inscribed within a “homogeneous group”. *Secondly*, the existence of a deep anthropology as *fundamental reason* for the homogeneity of economic phenomena: “they deal with man as he is, (...) influenced by egoistic motives”.

It seems that classical political economy, and first and foremost Adam Smith, naturally, has opened up an ideological terrain for interpretation of the capitalist reality whose *general characteristics* are also retained in later neoclassical analyses. “The content of the anthropology changes but the anthropology survived” as Althusser (1997: 163) commented. The same conclusions was supported by Foucault (2002). After Ricardo *homo economicus* would constitute a *primary category* for the dominant economic analyses. He a “given” and “finite” being, while “economics has rested, in a more or less explicit fashion, upon an anthropology that attempts to assign concrete forms to finitude” (Foucault *ibid.*: 280). Or, as Knight (1960: 71) put it: “I do not see how we can talk sense about economics without considering the economic behavior of an isolated individual”.

If we endeavour to be entirely schematic in describing the changes that accompanied the so-called *neoclassical or marginal revolution* we may assert quite specifically that neoclassical theory is the result of the transformations that occurred in the field of classical theory when it was taken over by the purely utilitarian conception of a homo oeconomicus based on the characteristically one-dimensional model of the pleasure machine (the Bentham paradigm). And the consequences are in no way inconsiderable. A new problematic is now determining the way economic questions are formulated<sup>2</sup>.

Neoclassical theory from the outset included a significant potential for *mathematicisation*, in contrast to classical political economy<sup>3</sup>. The connexion of mathematics with economics is organic and does not constitute a *relation of application* but is more a *relation of constitution*, in the sense that mathematics are an active component in the discipline of neoclassical economics. This was made abundantly clear by the very fact of the intervention by Marshall, the substance of which is that economics, in contrast to the other social sciences, is considered to be closer in structure to the physical sciences (Marshall 1956: I.ii.§1, I.iv.§1, §5)<sup>4</sup>. The turn towards comprehensive mathematical formalism which took place in the 1950s (for example see Weintraub 2002 and Rutherford 2000) is nothing more than one particular instance of a change that was taking place *within* the broader neoclassical

<sup>2</sup> For more comprehensive commentary on the relative literature see Sotiropoulos 2006.

<sup>3</sup> The interventions of Walras and Marshall are revealing in this connexion. The former develops neoclassical theory within the framework of systems of equations (Walras 1984) whereas the latter in the “Mathematical Appendix” to Principles (1956) attempts to approach the problem of value and distribution as a problem of optimization.

<sup>4</sup> “The scientific student of history is hampered by his inability to experiment and even more by the absence of any objective standard to which his estimates of relative proportions can be referred. (...) *The economist too is hampered by this difficulty, but to a lesser degree than other students of man’s action; for indeed he has some share in those advantages which give precision and objectivity to the work of the physicist*” (Marshall 1956: 36-7, emphasis added).

problematic. Of course if we expand on Althusser's general observation (1990: 88-92), the turn towards mathematical formalism is perhaps merely a *symptom of the weakness* of neoclassical thought, at a time when its heterodox critics were going from strength to strength on the conflictual terrain of the social sciences.

#### 4. Keynesian humanism

In this section we propose to argue that the Keynesian intervention is articulated on the basis of the general foundation of the previous economic humanism. For yet another time, *the content of the anthropology changes but the anthropology survived*. It is moreover worth pointing out that by the term "Keynesian" we here understand both the various post-Keynesian approaches and the analyses of the neo-Ricardian current<sup>5</sup>.

The critique that Keynes undertook of the neoclassical orthodoxy of his day is characterized by two basic points.

*Firstly*, Keynes describes as "general" his own approach to economics, distinguishing it from the corresponding neoclassical approach, which he treats as a "special case". He accordingly comments: "I shall argue that the postulates of the classical theory are applicable to a special case only and not to the general case" (Keynes 1973: 3). This position implies that the range of his critique is perhaps limited, in the sense that he does not subject to *radical questioning* the structural characteristics of the neoclassical problematic but merely *disagrees* with a number of "tacit assumptions" that are crucial for it: "our criticism of the accepted classical theory of economics has consisted not so much in finding logical flaws in its analysis as in pointing out that its tacit assumptions are seldom or never satisfied" (*ibid.*: 378).

*Secondly*, behind the arguments organized by the economic discourse of *effective demand* and the break with Say's law there is the *continuous presence* of a new (alternative) conception of the economic nature of the agents, that is to say a *new economic anthropology*. It pervades the entirety of Keynes' text, emerging very clearly in later analyses by representatives of his school.

Our purpose here is not so much to become embroiled in a great controversy, which has indeed continued to the present day as it is to target those basic elements in it that comprise *Keynesian humanism*.

A key concept in this connection is *uncertainty*, which reflects the *psychological structure* of economic actors confronting the factor of time. "The concept of quantifiable, statistical risk has been substituted for Keynes's uncertainty notion where the latter *recognizes that people may be ignorant about the future*. (...) The decision maker *believes* that during the lapse of calendar time between moment of choice and the date(s) of payoff, unforeseeable changes can occur. In other words, the decision maker *believes* that reliable information regarding future prospects does not exist today" (Davidson 1994: 87, 89, emphasis added)<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Neo-Ricardian thought has perhaps from its outset moved within the general Keynesian problematic. For more on this see Dutt & Amadeo 1990, Eatwell 1983, Garegnani 1992, Kurz 1992.

<sup>6</sup> Keynes elaborates further in an article of 1937: "By 'uncertain' knowledge, let me explain, I do not merely distinguish between what is known for certain and what is only probable. The game of roulette is not subject, in this sense, to uncertainty; nor is the prospect of a Victory bond being drawn (...). The sense in which I am using the term is that in which the prospect of a European war is uncertain (...). About these matters there is no scientific basis on which to form any calculable probability whatever. We simply do not know" (cited in Dutt and Amadeo *ibid.*: 105).

In the above context economic agents are *rational* in an entirely different sense from that of the corresponding neoclassical rationality. The behavior that Keynes postulates is rational within the uncertain environment in which decisions makers operate. “The economic environment may well be looked upon by economic agents as organic or non-ergodic, in which they make crucial experiments” (Dutt & Amadeo 1990: 108). This *shift* in the definition of the economic nature of the subjects has two basic implications which are the essence of the break with the neoclassical framework. Keynes’s capitalist becomes easily discouraged when facing uncertainty and it is in no way sure that he will proceed to make investments that will secure the much-desired full employment. Moreover, “he has developed Animal Spirits, a kind of neurotic instability of the will to command, and is prone to retreat to Liquidity Preference at the slightest sign of gloomy economic weather” (Foley 2002). The economic system may well be, therefore, *inherently unstable*.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that Keynes introduces a new orientation to interpretation of capitalist society, *the general characteristics of the neoclassical approach are preserved intact*, that is to say both the *measurability* of economic phenomena and the spontaneous character of a *given economic anthropology*. The difference from the system of the neoclassical economists may be attributed precisely to the nature of the empirical hypotheses determining the foundations of subjective behaviour. Keynes himself is disarmingly frank about this. Many references are to be found in his system to historically unchanging “fundamental psychological factors” determining diachronically the behaviour of economic actors (Keynes 1973: 126-7).

We might in conclusion note, perhaps, that there is no necessary connexion between the *mathematical formalism* of present-day neoclassical analyses and the concept of *economic humanism* as employed in this paper. Thus the critique which is addressed to the former by the post-Keynesians (see for example Chick & Dow 2001, Arestis 1996) remains grounded in the more general terrain of economic humanism. Moreover, despite the fact that there is an endeavour to link the Keynesian problematic with the “old-institutionalism” (see immediately below), elements of unalloyed Keynesian anthropology are continually being revived behind the basic conclusions of the system in question. These are, nevertheless, issues that we do not have time or space to deal with comprehensively at this point.

## 5. Historicist humanism (*old-institutionalism*)

The two schools of economic thought just examined above tend – albeit in different ways – to define rational economic behaviour *as being a constant feature of human nature*, an everyday and commonplace fact of experience derived from some non-historical or trans-historical *a priori*. This is a methodological tactic familiar from the time of Adam Smith, and before (in this connection see Godelier 1972: 15, Rubin 1989).

At the opposite extreme to the views of a historically unchanging human nature we occasionally encounter formulations of various alternative *historicist approaches* which represent human economic nature as *a malleable product of history*. Although we could by way of illustration mention a number of such examples of relevant interventions, we propose to focus our analysis on the current of economic thought that is known as *old-institutionalism* and linked in the first instance to the names of Veblen, Mitchell and Commons.

A key category in this current of thought are the “*institutions*”, that is to say the systems of embedded social rules and conventions shaping *social inter-actions*. “In part, rules are embedded because *people choose* to follow them repeatedly. (...) From this perspective, institutions are emergent social structures, based on commonly held habits of thought: institutions are conditioned by and dependent upon individuals and their habits, but they are not reducible to them. *Habits are the constitutive material of institutions*, providing them with enhanced durability, power and normative authority” (Hodgson 2003: 164, emphasis added). But on the other hand the habits themselves are shaped through the repeatability of behaviours and thoughts. In other words, they are the result of *prior activity*. Thus, “through their habits, individuals carry the marks of their own unique history” (Hodgson *ibid.*).

The *cumulative historical causation* we described is a central element in the approach of the institutionalists:

The situation of today shapes the institutions of tomorrow through a selective, coercive process, by acting upon men’s habitual view of things, and so altering or fortifying a point of view or a mental attitude handed down from the past (Veblen 1899, 190).

The dependence of institutions upon habits partly roots institutions in the dispositions of individuals. Institutions are structures that face individuals, as well as stemming from individuals themselves. Accordingly, institutions are simultaneously both objective structures ‘out there’, and subjective springs of human agency ‘in the human head’. *Actor and structure, although distinct, are connected in a circle of mutual interaction and interdependence* (Hodgson *ibid.* emphasis added).

In terms of this logic, the historical development of institutions is continuously transforming the human nature of economic agents, who nevertheless continue to play the central role, remaining the *primary subject of historical development*. The “actors” of “structures” are at the same time the authors of the very same “structures”. Or, to put it differently, employing a phrase from Althusser’s text, the *conjunction of humanism and historicism* – authentic product of which is the institutional school of economics – “depends on a remarkable presupposition: that the ‘actors’ of history are the authors of its text, the subjects of its production” (1997: 139). “But this presupposition too has all the force of the ‘obvious’, since, as opposed to what the theatre suggests, concrete men are, in history, the actors of roles of which they are the authors, too” (*ibid.*). This point has been the subject of an apt comment by Popper (2005). Social uniformities can *change* from one historical period to another and *human activity* is precisely the force that changes them. “For social uniformities are not laws of nature, but *man-made*; and *although they may be said to depend on human nature, they do so because human nature has the power to alter and, perhaps, to control them*” (*ibid.*: 6, emphasis added).

Human subjects continue to play a *central role* in the formation of inter-subjective institutional relations, which in turn form and mould the capacities and behaviours of agents in fundamental ways (Commons 1931, Hodgson 2003: 164). “*History then becomes the transformation of a human nature, which remains the real subject of the history which transforms it. As a result, history has been introduced into human nature, making men the contemporaries of the historical effects whose subjects they are, but – and this is absolutely decisive – the relations of production, political and ideological social relations, have been reduced to historicized ‘human relations’, i.e., to inter-human, inter-subjective relations. This is the favourite terrain of historicist humanism*” (Althusser *ibid.*: 140, emphasis added).

The nature of subjects may thus be in continual transformation, following and guiding the transformations of institutionalised social structures, but the category of the “human” itself continues to play a central *theoretical role* in the concept of economic organization and development. To recall the words of Commons (1931): “an institution is collective action in control, liberation and expansion of individual action. (...) And collective action is more than control and liberation of individual action – it is expansion of the will of the individual far beyond what he can do by his own puny acts”. At the heart of its problematic, institutionalism thus remains a *theoretical historicist humanism*.

So there is obviously a *deeper connexion* between this and the previous traditions, which should not pass unremarked. Whether human (economic) nature exists outside history or history enters into human nature, the *key factor* in historical development is as always *the human being* as centrally “*primary subject*” accountable for all economic phenomena.

This general conception of *theoretical humanism* ceases to apply in the Marxian system, with which we now propose to deal.

## 6. Marxian theoretical anti-humanism (and anti-historicism)

In what follows we shall attempt to highlight the *distinctiveness* of the Marxian analysis, which in contradistinction to the preceding currents of thought might in a general sense be designated *theoretical anti-humanism*. This is one of the central points of Althusser’s intervention.

### 6.1 *The other Marx or Marx’s Other or the Marx of others*

(*point of departure for misinterpretations of the Marxian oeuvre*)

It should be made clear at the outset that *Marx was not always a Marxist*. We do not propose here to embark on a detailed presentation of the moments that shaped his thought. Let us, on the contrary, accept as adequately grounded Althusser’s periodicization according to which from 1845 onwards a *new* and irreversible theoretical problematic begins to pervade the writings of Marx, finally crystallizing in 1857 and afterwards in the works of his “maturity” (Althusser 1969: 31-39, Balibar 1995: 13-15).

The “youthful works” dating from *prior* to the break (above all the *Manuscripts of 1844* and the *Holy Family*) bear the stamp of a unmistakable *idealistic theoretical humanism*. Specifically, Marx’s first encounter with Classical Political Economy, which takes place in the *Manuscripts of 1844* represents the most systematic form of anthropological (essentialist) critique based on the argumentation of Feuerbach. The critical disposition of the young Marx takes as its starting point the key concept of *alienated labour*<sup>7</sup>. According to Althusser in his relevant commentary

<sup>7</sup> “We shall start out from a *actual* economic fact. The worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and extent. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he produces. The *devaluation* of the human world grows in direct proportion to the *increase in value* of the world of things. Labour not only produces commodities; it also produces itself and the workers as a *commodity* and it does so in the same proportion in which it produces commodities in general. This fact simply means that the object that labour produces, its product, stands opposed to it as *something alien*, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labour is labour embodied and made material in an object, it is the *objectification* of labour. The realization of labour is its objectification. In the sphere of political economy, this realization of labour

(*ibid.*: 159), if we investigate the semantic field of this concept, we may discover that it can only fill this role of *original basis* “so long as it *receives it* as a mandate and commission from a whole *conception of Man* which can derive from the *essence of Man* the necessity and content of the familiar *economic concepts*”.

We are not able here for reasons of space to embark on any detailed description of the arguments of the young Marx<sup>8</sup>. Let us confine ourselves to two general observations emerging primarily from the analysis of Rancière (1996: 81-110).

*Firstly*, the anthropological theory of the young Marx appears precisely as a general essentialist approach to the relationship between humans and nature and between one human and another. By extension, the concepts that constitute the terrain of interpretation – such as, for example, the concept of *exchange* or of *industry* – are very far from being emancipated from every psychological or anthropological implication. The critique of the young Marx ought thus to be presented, perhaps, as *elaboration* and *systematization* of the latent anthropological discourse of classical political economy. In other words this critique is in no way to be distinguished in the basic features of its theoretical content from the works of classical political economy.

In Marx’s theoretical scheme, the capitalist appears as the driving force for the development of the economy, and political economy can be regarded as the immediate expression of *capitalist subjectivity*. The worker is subordinated to the laws of the economy through obedience to the dictates of *capitalist calculation*, whose spokesperson is the economist. Marx, quoting Smith, reiterates: “the plans and speculations of the employers of capitals regulate and direct all the most important operations of labour, and profit is the end proposed by all those plans and project” (Marx 1844: manuscript 1, Smith 1981: I.xi.p.10). We thus perceive that when all is said and done the problematic of the young Marx retains the two basic features of the classical theoretical outlook, that is to say the *latent anthropological element* and the characteristic of *measurability*.

*Secondly*, the philosophical approach Marx experimented with during the period in question may indeed be “profoundly coloured by the Feuerbachian problematic”, but it nevertheless simultaneously leans “hesitantly towards a return from Feuerbach to Hegel” (Althusser 1969: 158). We may thus discern a *historicist element* in the young Marx’s own analysis. The abovementioned *capitalist subjectivity*, which plays a central role in the organization of economic life, is not static and suprahistorical in character and is fated itself finally to be lost *within the more general movement of private property*.

In the dialectical schema of the young Marx, the first to appear is the *capitalist of luxury* who indulges in extravagant enjoyment of wealth. The fate of this historic stage is to be surpassed by a subsequent phase, that of calculation. The *capitalist of calculation* is now the industrial capitalist who carries through the subordination of pleasure to capitalist rationality. The preceding stage is however the last in the evolution of private property, because after it comes abolition of the capitalist through

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appears as a *loss of reality* for the worker, objectification as loss of and bondage to the object, and appropriation as estrangement, as *alienation*” (Marx 1844, first manuscript).

<sup>8</sup> The theoretical schema of alienation shaping the critique of the young Marx is well-known. The *subject*, the human being, articulates the terms which comprise his substance in an *external object*. During the phase of alienation this object becomes foreign to him. The substance of the human being has passed over into an unknown entity. This unknown entity is in turn imposed as the real subject, consigning the human being to the position of its object.

subordination of calculation to wealth<sup>9</sup> (Rancière *ibid.*: 105-6). Wealth which is the result of calculation is the wealth which has unfolded out of human potentialities. It represents the humanization of the sensible world made possible by alienation, end of the course by means of which the world's physical objects have been rendered human physical objects, constituting a world in which the human being can rediscover himself and recognize his own substance, that alienated substance which, in the guise of alienated labour, has amassed the wealth (Rancière *ibid.*).

Without insisting on the essence of the Marx's argumentation, we see that the whole schema implies that the economic subject *is transformed* and ultimately *disappears* with the evolution of private property. Political economy has been reduced to an anthropological history of the relations between human beings and nature and human beings with each other.

The two preceding elements comprise the *prehistory* of mature Marxian thought. This is a prehistory which in general terms shares many common characteristics with the current of pluralism, likewise critical of neoclassical theory. To the classical economic thought predominant in his age, the young Marx counterposes either a *critical anthropology* or a *Hegelian historicist scheme of self-transformation of subjectivity*<sup>10</sup>.

By 1845 and after Marx's thought has of course reached a "point of *no return*", and this conditions subsequent developments (Althusser 1976: 66). Gradually (and not without hesitations) disowning *its prehistory*, it "continues endlessly to do so (...) by *rejecting* what it considers to be *error*, according to the process which Bachelard called 'the epistemological *break*'" (Althusser *ibid.*: 114). Marx's settlement of accounts with the ideological framework of his prehistory would never cease. The latter would continually follow in the train of his thought like its antagonistic Other, above all through the reading of those who did not understand the pioneering nature of his intervention. And evidently the list of his misinterpreters is long. Henceforth Marx was to enjoy a great career either as putative continuer of the tradition of classical political economy or as a genuine exponent of the Keynesian logic or even as a historicist or institutionalist. In other words most (heterodox) economists adopted a stance of tolerance towards a *non-Marxist* Marx.

The theoretical framework of Marx's youthful *oeuvre* suggests another Marx, *antagonistic Other to the Marx* who, misrepresenting the essence of his own message, appears as the *Marx of others*, of those, that is, who attempt clumsily to insert him into types of economic thinking not in keeping with the main body of his revolutionary thought.

## 6.2 Our Marx: theoretical anti-humanism

The key concept for comprehension of the Marxian approach to economics is the concept of *mode of production*. It is a subject, of course which has received

<sup>9</sup> "Pleasure is therefore subsumed under capital, and the pleasure-taking individual under the capital-accumulating individual, whilst formerly the contrary was the case. The decrease in the interest rate is therefore a symptom of the annulment of capital only inasmuch as it is a symptom of the growing domination of capital – of the estrangement which is growing and therefore hastening to its annulment. This is indeed the only way in which that which exists affirms its opposite" (Marx 1844, manuscript 3).

<sup>10</sup> The Hegelian form of historicism in question is no doubt distinctly more interesting than the historicist analyses of the old-institutionalism.

considerable attention in the relevant bibliography<sup>11</sup>. Here we will confine ourselves to a few explanatory remarks.

In every concrete historical era, such as for example that of capitalism, the process of production is conducted on the basis of specific social criteria, that is to say it takes place under the regime of specific *relations of production*. The social prerequisites for the productive process in other words involve the specific type of relations between the *agents of production* which exist as a function of the relations between these agents on the one hand and the *material means of production* on the other.

Nevertheless, in Marx's analysis neither the concept of agents of production nor that of means of production possess the monolithic character which characterizes them in other approaches to economics. On the side of the means of production we find the distinction between the *object of production* and the *instruments of production*. On the side of the agents of production we find, besides the distinction between labourer and labour power, an essential distinction between *direct agents* whose labour power is set to work in production, and other men whose role in the general process of production is that of owners of the means of production, but who do not feature in it as labourers or direct agents, since their labour power is not used in the production process. By combining or inter-relating these different elements we shall reach – according to Marx's analysis – a definition of the different modes of production which have existed and can exist in human history (Althusser 1997: 176).

We should also note that this is not just a simple combinatory game, because *it is the relations between these elements that determine their own social nature*. To obtain the different modes of production these different elements do have to be combined, but by using specific modes of combination which are only meaningful in the peculiar nature of the *result* of the combinatory.

The application of specific relations to the different distributions of the elements present produces a limited number of formations which constitute the *relations of production* of the defined modes of production. These relations of production determine the connexions between the different groups of agents of production and the objects and instruments of production, and thereby they simultaneously *divide the agents of productions into functional groups*, each occupying a definite place in the production process. *The relations between the agents of production are then the result of the typical relations they maintain with the means of production and of their distribution into groups defined and localized functionally in their relations with the means of production by the structure of production*.

As already mentioned, we do not propose to embark upon a new detailed discussion of the concept of mode of production. Nevertheless on the basis of the brief comments so far offered it is possible to put forward the following crucial observations.

*Firstly*, from the moment that the social nature of the agents of production is constituted, together with the relations of production, *the social classes cannot be separated from the class struggle: the class struggle and the existence of the classes are one and the same thing* (Althusser 1976: 50). This is a fundamental point distinguishing Marx's system from every other theoretical system that takes into account the factor of social classes.

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<sup>11</sup> For example see Poulantzas 1973, 2000, Althusser & Balibar 1997, Bettelheim 1968, Milios et al. 2002.

Secondly, in contrast to historicist approaches, *the social relations of production are on no account reducible to mere relations between people (or to mere relations of groups of people), to relations which only involve people, and therefore to variations in a universal matrix, to inter-subjectivity* (Althusser 1997: 174). The relations of production necessarily imply relations between people and things, such that the relations between people and people are defined by the precise relations existing between people and the material elements of the production process. *It is essentially this position that comprises the crucially different element in the Marxian approach within heterodox economics.*

We saw that in the alternative currents within heterodox economics, the concept of the *subject* retains its central theoretical function. We have to do, in other words, either with a *static* or (at best) with a *historicized* anthropology. In Marx's approach, nevertheless, it is the structure of the relations of production that *constitutes and forms* individuals into social subjects, determining the *places* and *functions* occupied and adopted by the agents of production, who are never anything more than the occupants of these places, insofar as they are the "*supports*" of these functions. The term *theoretical anti-humanism* indicates precisely that the "true subjects" – *in the sense of constitutive subjects of the process* – are therefore not these occupants or functionaries but the definition and distribution of these places and functions, i.e. the relations of production. But since these are "relations", they cannot be thought within the *category of subject* (*ibid.*: 180).

Marx's theoretical choice to conceive the agents of production as bearers of class relations amounts to a shifting of emphasis onto the interpretation of the *capitalist power relations* that constitute economic reality. The agents are subject to the "laws" of the relations of production, which are relations of exploitation, that is to say antagonistic class relations. The social (class) nature of the agents, therefore, *does not pre-exist the productive relations*. This means that not only can it not be defined within the framework of an a-historical anthropology (neoclassicals, post-Keynesians), but that while ever the relations of production retain their specific concrete form, the inner essence of social inter-subjective relations between agents necessarily remains the same (post-Keynesians, old institutionalists). *History is not "written" by subjects but by the class struggle* and is accordingly a process without a constitutive subject<sup>12</sup>.

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## **Part II: heterodox economics and economic policy**

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### **7. Pluralism in action. The diversity of consequences (issues of politics).**

We now propose to touch on certain consequences of the abovementioned theoretical differentiations for the *state* and by extension *economic policy*.

In our analysis we shall employ arguments from the work of Poulantzas, which is situated within the Althusserian tradition of Marxism. The discussion under

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<sup>12</sup> Owing to lack of space we are necessarily schematic in the way we elaborate certain questions. The fact that individuals act within, and under the pressure of, forms of historical existence of the social relations of production does not mean that the political and ideological relations that develop between them are static, unchangeable and concrete. The institutional and ideological organization of society can take numerous different forms, always within the boundaries-potentialities set by the structure of capitalist relations of production.

way inside and outside the boundaries of pluralism appears trapped in a pseudo-dilemma between the state understood as a thing or *instrument and the state understood as autonomous Subject*<sup>13</sup>. We shall concern ourselves with these conceptions immediately below, contrasting them subsequently with the Marxian approach to the State. Many of the arguments we shall put forward are elaborations of positions we reviewed earlier when identifying the points of departure for analysis of the corresponding currents in economic thought.

### 7.1 The state as “thing” (post-Keynesian approach)

The harsh and protracted struggle between radical post-Keynesians and neoclassical proponents of neoliberalism has to do above all with the *framework* of economic policy proposals and not the character of the capitalist state, which is usually understood in a manner unburdened by considerations of class as a *state-thing* or *state-instrument*. The latter appears to be a precious but *passive* tool, which *either* (1) struggles to impose the natural order within which the economic activity of subjects might unfold (liberating the markets), prioritizing promotion of the unified interests of the social whole undifferentiated in class terms, as the most general neoclassical view would have it, *or* (2) comprises a (passive, as ever) object of appropriation by a specific set of vested interests, in accordance with the current post-Keynesian outlook.

The state does not cease to be interventionist even in the most typical neoclassical view. Important neoclassical economists such as Arrow and Hahn have at times expressed sympathy for specific interventionist and social-democratic economic policies. Hahn in particular has endeavoured to justify the whole general equilibrium theoretical project as an attempt to demonstrate the limits of the market mechanism (see Hodgson 2000: 320).

Though defending a different *quality*<sup>14</sup> of state interventionism, the analyses of the post-Keynesians essentially reproduce the instrumentalist conception of the State. The latter invariably remains a handy and *neutral tool*, which with proper handling can bring higher levels of social employment and a fairer distribution of income (and so greater social prosperity). Because basically both the post-Keynesian approach and the neo-classical approach are simply different variants of a single *empiricist economic humanism*, there is no particular disagreement between them on the subject of the approach to the state but merely on the content of economic policies.

The same instrumentalist conception of the state also prevails in the way in which the contemporary neoliberal phase of capitalism is interpreted in the radical Keynesian bibliography. The manageable *state-instrument* has passed into the hands of the newly-strengthened class of *rentiers* (or *financiers*), i.e. wealthy people who get

<sup>13</sup> The “dilemma” in question may assume a variety of forms, but the analysis that follows will be necessarily confined to the plane of generalities. The basic argument is borrowed from the text of Poulantzas (2000: 129) and will be appropriately adapted to the needs of the present text.

<sup>14</sup> The general post-Keynesian logic on state intervention is a direct reflection of the general presuppositions of Keynesian economic anthropology, as expounded in the preceding section. The remarks by Arestis (1996: 128: emphasis added) are characteristic: “advanced capitalist economies are inherently cyclical and unstable. Left to themselves, they cannot achieve and maintain full-employment of resources. These economies are also marred by inequalities in the distribution of market power and, therefore, income and wealth. Unfettered market forces, rather than reducing, tend to exacerbate these instabilities and disparities. Forces of cumulative causation are very much operative (...). These instabilities are attributed to the behaviour of private investment as a result of volatile expectations and unpredictable business moods. *There is, thus, enormous potential and need for governments to initiate, pursue and implement economic policies*”. Also see Henry 2001, Arestis & Sawyer 1998.

most of their incomes from owning financial assets, rather than working or from owning productive assets (factories, natural resources). This group of rentiers, it is argued, has gained political power, pushed for financial liberalization around the globe, and benefited handsomely from it, thereby enhancing their political power even more. Some versions of the argument suggest that it is the *international* rentiers – the big banks and insurance companies in the rich countries – that are the prime movers. Others maintain that these groups have linked up in close alliance with rentiers in developing countries (for more see Epstein & Power 2003). It seems reasonable, therefore, for a “dear” money policy, “sound” finance and market freedom to be favoured primarily by banks, rentiers and other financial groups, subject to the constraint that they do not become victims of financial crises (Smithin 1996).

There is no time either to touch upon even the most basic aspects of the voluminous relevant bibliography. We might however focus on a general outlook that entirely overlooks the specific *institutional materiality* of the state. The state remains an instrument in the hands of the “oligarchy” of rentiers while the ultimate desideratum for of Keynesians is alternative utilization of the instrument in question for the benefit of the many (that is to say the workers and the industrialists of good will).

### 7.2 The state as “subject” (institutionalist approach)

In contrast to the preceding problematic, the proponents of institutionalism and those who are influenced by similar arguments propose the logic of a “*state-subject*”, whose *autonomy* is seen as absolute. This is a well-entrenched conception which originates with Hegel and is reiterated by Weber (Poulantzas 2000: 129). The autonomy of the state is reducible to the special power it is supposed to possess and the vehicles of this power in the *bureaucracy* and the *political elite*. Indicative – and evidently of abiding relevance to this specific current of thought – is the related analysis of Galbraith (1975), who declares from the outset that “only the innocent reformer and the obtuse conservative imagine the state to be an instrument of change apart from the interests and aspirations of those who comprise it” (*ibid.*: 372).

In Galbraith’s analysis every economic period or phase of capitalism is characterised by a specific historical relationship between the *state machine* and the *large enterprise*. Not only the relationship between these two institutions but also the internal structure of each is subject to change. Indeed it is precisely the latter that determines the specific form of the relationship, preparing the ground for the benefit of the interests – invariably common – of the state and the enterprise. It is within this framework that Galbraith’s argument unfolds. The transition from the *entrepreneurial corporation* to a differently structured enterprise, the *mature corporation*, foreshadows a new relationship with the state (*ibid.*: 298-303). In the mature corporation, the decisions are the product not of individuals but of groups and specifically of a new bureaucratic administrative body he calls the *technostructure*. For a number of reasons the interests of the technostructure, which has decision-making power within the enterprise, *coincide* with those of the interventionist state<sup>15</sup>:

<sup>15</sup> To be more specific: “we have seen that the technostructure of the mature corporation neither deploys the resources nor has the incentive for purchase of political power. At the same time it has become much more dependent on the state. The entrepreneurial corporation, from public resources to favourable tariffs to tax concessions, had much to get from the state. And from adverse regulation and higher taxation it had a considerable amount to lose. But, apart from the provision of law and order which on occasion it supplied to itself, it was not deeply dependent on the government. (...) At each

“at each point the government has goals with which the technostucture can identify itself” (*ibid.*: 309). This coincidence was later to be transformed, in the era of neo-liberalism, into a *coalescence* of interests between the big corporations and the state, in terms of which, to cite a more recent reformulation by Galbraith (1988: 375, emphasis added): “in the United States as also in Canada, Britain, and elsewhere, conservative governments have brought a *conjunction* of state and corporate power that I did not envisage twenty years ago”. But even in this new phase the state retains its own specific constellation of interests, which are linked to those of the big corporations. It cannot be understood as being merely as a tool or instrument of the latter.

If we distance ourselves somewhat from the terms of Galbraith’s analysis it becomes comprehensible that within the more general problematic of institutionalism there are certain difficulties involved in singling out a specific parcel of economic policies, as occurs in the neoclassical and post-Keynesian model. The general conception of institutionalism is able to incorporate a variety of theoretical and normative opinions, so that “any attempt to define institutionalism in terms of policy outputs would run into severe difficulties” (Hodgson 2000: 320). In reality what emerges from the current of institutionalism is more a generalized *logic of reform*, which “offers the real possibility of *human emancipation* through *structural transformation*” by transforming “real social structures in order to facilitate alternative opportunities” (Lawson 1997: 277).

### 7.3 The state as strategic field and not as monolithic bloc (Marxian approach)

Though it is not unknown for conceptions like those above to make their appearance within Marxian thought, it should be noted that *in principle* they are incompatible with the core of the Marxian analysis as articulated in the present paper.

Social classes *do not exist except insofar as there is struggle between them, not independently of it*. The concept of *relations of production* involves a *distributive process* which, dividing “people” into classes, simultaneously constitutes them as social *subjects*. Classes *are born out of the antagonism inherent in this distributive process*. This *relational* conception of *power* has significant consequences for the manner in which *social institutions*, and specifically the *state*, are defined within the rubric of Marxian analysis.

*On the one hand*, the power of the capitalist state must be approached in terms of the objective (political) interests of capital. Within this framework the state plays a *central organizational role*, representing and organizing the long-term political interest of the bourgeois class, politically unifying its various class fractions, all of which occupy positions – albeit *unequally* – on the terrain of political domination (Poulantzas 2000: 127-9).

*On the other hand*, the capitalist state is not merely an instrument in the hands of the power bloc but has its own specific autonomy. The state always retains a *relative autonomy* vis à vis one or the other fraction of the power bloc for the sake of securing the general interest of the bourgeois class under the hegemony of one of its fractions (Poulantzas, *ibid.*). Nevertheless, the state does not organize the political

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point the government has goals with which the technostucture can identify itself. (...) The state is strongly concerned with the stability of the economy. And with its expansion or growth. And with education. And with technical and scientific advance. And, most notably, with the national defence. These are *the* national goals (...). All have their counterpart in the needs and goals of the technostucture” (Galbraith 1975: 308, 309)

unity of the power bloc *from without*. The contradiction within the ruling classes and fractions, the balance of forces within the power bloc, all exist as *contradictory relations which are enmeshed within the state* (*ibid.*: 133), with the result that the state always appears in a specific form that is the outcome of the *material condensation of the social relationship of forces* (*ibid.*: 128). Thus, the state's autonomy in no way negates its status as centre for the exercise of political power on the part of capital. *Secondly*, it does not enjoy autonomy from the fractions of the power bloc but rather becomes the result of what takes place within the state (*ibid.*: 135).

Understanding the state as the material condensation of a relationship of forces means that we must also understand it as a *strategic field* and a point of intersection for various power strategies (*ibid.*: 136). Thus, unlike in the instrumental conception, class contradictions are not taken as something external to the state. And unlike in the conception of the state-subject, the contradictions within the state cease to be external to the class struggle. This position leads us directly to *four basic conclusions*.

*Firstly*, state economic policies should not be regarded as *socially irrational*, that is to say as policies which in order to serve the interests of an “oligarchy of money” (rentiers) enter into a head-on conflict with the common (national) interest or with the interest of the “many”, in this way blocking development and generating underemployment (a conception prevalent in post-Keynesian literature). Determination of state policy and specifically of economic policy should be seen as a *resultant* of the class contradictions that develop within the structure of the state itself (*ibid.*: 133). State policies are thus *socially rational* to the extent that they reflect the existing balance of class forces.

*Secondly*, economic policies correspond – *more or less* – to a certain contradictory unity (of unequal power) within the power bloc. The capitalist state accordingly represents the interests of the power bloc as a whole, promoting, *to various degrees*, of course, economic interests of *all* fractions of the bourgeoisie. In this sense, *even if we accept the entirely dubious hypothesis*<sup>16</sup> that the supposed class fraction of rentiers has acquired hegemony within the power bloc, this does not mean that the fraction of industrial capitalists remains altogether “outside of the game”. Both sides find themselves up against the forces of labour.

*Thirdly*, neoliberal economic policies are not going to be overturned for as long as the present-day social balance of powers remains skewed in favour of capital. Thus the success of whatever *alternative economic* proposals might be made, can be secured only through organization of social struggles. Even in this case however the political power of the capitalist class is not affected as we continue to find ourselves within the same system of class exploitation.

*Fourthly*, the state concentrates not only the relationship of forces between fractions of the power bloc but also the relationship between that bloc and the dominated classes (*ibid.*: 140). The form of any given “social policy” is intertwined with the complexities of the developing class struggle. For as long as it entails real economic concessions imposed on the dominant classes by the struggles of the dominated classes – characteristic examples are the Keynesian-type policies that were implemented in the Western world in the 1950s and 1960s – this “social” policy can in no way draw into question capitalist power structures and certainly cannot be understood as representing some limitation on the political power of the dominant class. The basic motive behind the guarantee of certain economic interest to “the lower orders” (dominated classes) is one of their *political disorganization*. It is indeed

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<sup>16</sup> We will for the moment withhold comment on this issue.

often the most effective way of securing the hegemony of the dominant classes (if the direction taken by the class struggle is not one favourable to capital). Thus the supposed radicalism of Keynesian economic policy proposals in today's neoliberal phase of capitalism not only does not pose any significant danger to capital but can under certain conditions constitute a *predominant* orientation of state economic policy.

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### **Part III: views about heterodoxy and pluralism**

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#### **8. In place of an epilogue: towards a “different” defense of pluralism**

In the foregoing paper we undertook a presentation of the basic heterodox economic currents. Unlike in the *Marxian approach*, both in the *post-Keynesian system* and in the *(old) institutionalist system* the category of the “human” retains a central theoretical role. These two systems of thought represent endeavours to interpret the capitalist economy which certainly do not entail a *fundamental break* with the predominant neo-classical theory.

We will not say any more about the theoretical consequences of such a basic differentiation but will simply confine ourselves to a number of comments to do with the conduct of the discussion on *pluralism*. A variety of viewpoints have been recorded at one time or another, of which we propose to refer to just two, both indicative.

*On the one hand*, we meet with arguments such as that of Colander, Holt and Rosser (2004), in accordance with which *although differences are acknowledged between orthodox and heterodox economics, there can be no arguing that the latter contribute to a better understanding of the economy*<sup>17</sup>. In each concrete period there is no necessary correspondence between the theoretical beliefs of mainstream economists and orthodox economics: “modern mainstream economics is open to new approaches, as long as they are done with a careful understanding of the strengths of the recent orthodox approach and with a modeling methodology acceptable to the mainstream” (*ibid.*: 492). Consequently, the evolution of orthodox economic analysis depends on “that part of mainstream economics that is critical of orthodoxy, and that part of heterodox economics that is taken seriously by the elite of the profession” (*ibid.*). Mainstream and heterodox approaches appear to be for the most part *mutually complementary*, given that both can generate interesting and potentially utilizable ideas.

In contrast to this viewpoint Lawson (2006) attempts not only to define existent grounding for heterodox thought as a whole but to also to grant it a primacy in terms of its comprehension of reality<sup>18</sup>. The essence of his argument is simple and evidently well thought out. The “sorts of methods on which the mainstream put so much emphasis are just not appropriate for dealing with social material, given the latter’s nature” (*ibid.*: 493). Hence, “modern heterodoxy is, qua heterodoxy, first and foremost an orientation in ontology. It is to be distinguished from the mainstream by its willingness to approach theory and method in a manner informed by available

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<sup>17</sup>Similar views are elaborated by Backhouse 2000.

<sup>18</sup> The same viewpoint, more or less, is also reproduced in the analyses of Hodgson (1999), Chick and Dow (2001).

insights into the nature of social reality” (*ibid.*: 502). This time the status of *complementarity* characterizes only the heterodox approaches. “If ontology can account for the distinctions between the heterodox traditions and the modern mainstream, i.e., if ontological commitments identify post-Keynesians, institutionalists, feminist economists and others as heterodox, it is their particular substantive orientations, concerns and emphases, not answers or principles, that distinguishes the heterodox traditions from each other (...) *each separate heterodox tradition has tended to emphasise various features of social reality regarded as fundamental or of significant interest*” (*ibid.*: 499, 500, emphasis added).

In one way or another, the *logic of complementarity* which apparently characterizes the above two basic approaches presupposes the more general framework of *empiricism*.

Following this train of thought, every school of economic thinking with its specific and proper point of departure, can succeed *more or less*, in bringing to light of knowledge the hidden truths of the real object. It appears that the latter is comprised of *two distinct real parts*, the *essential* and the *inessential*. Thus, the sole function of knowledge is “is to separate, in the object, the two parts which exist in it, the essential and the inessential – by special procedures whose aim is to *eliminate the inessential real* (...) and to leave the knowing subject only the second part of the real which is its essence, itself real” (Althusser 1997: 36). For the *empiricist conception of knowledge*, “the whole of knowledge is thus invested *in the real*, and knowledge never arises except as *a relation inside its real object between the really distinct parts of that real object*” (*ibid.*: 39).

The framework of empiricism is a prerequisite if the abovementioned *logic of complementarity* is to acquire meaning. Every heterodox school in economic thought (to take the version proposed by Lawson) depending on the “special procedures” it uses, can contribute to knowledge of the real object, however complex the latter might be. This is nevertheless a *pluralistic potential* originating in the very structure of the real object. This enables pluralism and the heterodox discourse to appear to make a dramatic contribution to the *advancement of understanding* of social reality.

From the viewpoint of Marxism, however, we should perhaps abandon such an empiricist conception and defend the materialist distinction between the *real object* (which “exists before and after, outside of the spirit and independently of it” (Marx)) and the *object of knowledge*<sup>19</sup>. Without going into the essence of Althusser’s argument, we shall single out two basic conclusions.

*Firstly*, every attempt at interpreting reality should be seen not as an act performed on a real object but as an organized effort to *construct* a meaning. Every *theoretical strategy*, though usually afflicted with deep internal theoretical problems of its own (Hodgson 1999: 80), constitutes a – more or less integrated – *analytical totality* which is internally unified through its own unique *problematic*, in such a way that it is impossible for any *element* or *idea* to be abstracted from it without changing or transforming its meaning<sup>20</sup>. Even the *same theoretical terms* are constituted as *different concepts* within different systems of thought. It is because of this, however, that the principle of *complementarity* and *communication* ceases to apply within the bloc of heterodox pluralism.

*Secondly*, there is nevertheless no necessary implication that the “movement” of heterodox pluralism, as a diversified critique of neoclassical orthodoxy, is vain or

<sup>19</sup> For more on this see Althusser 1969: 182-193, Althusser 1997: 40-6.

<sup>20</sup> Althusser’s positions can be found in Althusser 1969, 1997. For similar expositions also see Foucault 1969.

ineffectual. That is because it functions as a *general framework of acceptance*, making it possible for radical views to be developed inside it which contribute to *exposure* of the class character of the capitalist system of exploitation, in a period when the “suppression” of ideas within the academic community has indeed reached stifling proportions.

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