

Foreword

If all production requires means, and if instruments figure among these means, the production by men and women of their very means of survival seems to make their own bodies into the privileged instrument from which all developed technology, including machines, may be derived. All production is social, according to Marx, and thus the socialization of the body is one with its conversion into a means of production. Historical societies did not immediately socialize the labor-power hidden within the biological body, however; this occurred only in a recent past which is our own. This is a task that capitalism is still accomplishing, as it incorporates the biological body into the social body through the mediation of a third body, *the productive body*, which has gone unnoticed until now because it was objectively fetal and indistinct. But far from drawing the biological body toward a state of socialization in which the social body would contain it as its element, the work of this mediation only results in hypertrophy of the intermediary body and slows down this fusion, or even reverses the tendency toward it insofar as the intended socialization is replaced by a privatization of social functions. If a body is defined by its divisions as much as by its unity, it is not the social division of labor, affecting the social body, which performs objectively identifiable formative and repressive tasks on the biological body. It is technical division, inheriting the divisions of manufacture, which operates on the productive body. This division does not simply fragment the biological body; it tears it apart by separating it from its own powers and turning the powers of its own head, as a concentration and summary of it, against itself. Capital is still driving the migration of productive energies into the capital or *capitulum* of the body, the head, and thereby fully living up to its name.

The hierarchized embedding of these three bodies is therefore

unstable: the mediating part is subjected to a bipolar translation that is also a productive becoming of all its components. Curiously, contemporary epistemology, including that of the social sciences and historical materialism in its best-known forms, has announced the effacement of production in reproduction and declares that all productive structures are therefore reproductive. In the domain of life sciences, for example, Jacob's *The Logic of Life*¹ makes reproduction both the criterion of life and the logically prior phenomenon to which the production of each individual is secondary, a mere cog in a larger machine. The autoproducing and reproductive power of social structures is affirmed in analyses in which the play of the most diverse social functions is assimilated to mechanisms of reproduction, so as to confirm a thesis about the accelerated socialization of the two dominated bodies. Schools, prisons, hospitals, unions and parties, in this argument, would rival the apparatus of the centralized State, all working to more effectively socialize, or, in other words, to more effectively break, the biological body. In reality, the tendency is rather toward the privatization of these organs, toward their integration within the productive body as elements of production, or toward the conversion of human material into productive-form. Thus the productive body's formation is certainly induced, in the biological sense of the term, from above by the social body, once the bourgeoisie has invested it with the essential organs (which also allows us to begin to see that absolute monarchy is a bourgeois form of the State). But subsequently this body takes on an ever-increasing autonomy and importance. It is through this autonomy that it marks its submission to the social body and little by little inherits the latter's powers. And thus it is that reproduction (belonging to the hierarchically dominant body that absorbs the two others) does the work of production. In this light, Marx's analyses of the productive body or organism in Part Four of *Capital*, volume I, need to re-examined, extended, and taken seriously. This will be

our object in Part One of this work.

If the social body must delegate more and more of its powers to the productive body, then similarly the biological body's autonomy is required at the heart of the individualized productive body. In fact, the status of being a mere cogwheel conferred on the former by the latter demands, in many ways, a certain type of separation that we will need to analyze. This separation—which signals the return of life in a dominated form—in turn necessitates the development of a specific discipline that must seek its own problematic autonomy. The psychology that aspires to scientificity therefore comes to fill a space that was, so to speak, *reserved for it* in the ideological realm, but whose fulfillment is implied only by the real conditions of development in the mode of production. The discipline of psychology, considered here as a “symptom” of the point of expansion around which the field of the social sciences organizes itself, therefore constitutes, at its own level, one of the necessary mediations between the productive body and the biological body: the biological body produced as an autonomous body trapped in the workings of the productive body in its machinified representation. It enters the circuit of reproduction as an element of the productive body, itself subordinated to the social body. But because this basic element is irreducible, in a certain manner, to a general discourse on production, its treatment leads to the development of a particular discourse that alone is authorized to effectuate the necessary mediation. On this basis it becomes possible to understand that, as an element of simple reproduction, psychology intervenes on the surface of the social body, but only insofar as its mediation is displaced, for in the last instance it is the social body that directs the fusion of production and reproduction.

At this level, therefore, it becomes a matter—beyond the tears of the humanist objections that spring up everywhere in the “critical” literature of the social sciences, but also with a

suspicion about sharp distinctions of the science/ideology variety, all of whose efforts are dedicated to *thinking* each science's conditions of scientificity (in this instance those of the social sciences)—of reinserting the subject matter of these social sciences (psychology, in this case) back into the heart of the productive circuit in which they assume their characteristic function—notwithstanding the reformist impulses that sometimes haunt them—in the same manner as, but in another register than, the natural sciences. It matters little in this sense whether psychology is an ideology or a science (in fact the problem of science as a superstructure or as an autonomous domain regulated by the laws of thought is considerably changed if, as a productive force, science is localized

in what one calls the infrastructure, in this instance identifiable as the productive body)—and above all it matters little that one hears a constant hue and cry about the completely-autonomous-status-of-the-discipline-that-nonetheless-maintains-close-relations-to-the-other-social-sciences-in-order-to-promote-a-salutary-interdisciplinarity—since its discourse and practices are inscribed within a historical “project” that assigns the psychologist to a space that he only sometimes escapes through the exercise of a “guilty conscience.”

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N.B. Given the limits imposed on us, it goes without saying that we have merely alluded to themes that deserve separate treatment in their own right but that exceed the scope of this study.