THE PORTRAIT OF A PHILOSOPHER: LOUIS ALTHUSSER IN HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to reread Louis Althusser in the historical and political context, which is defined by the changing conjuncture, in an effort to prevent the wholesale rejection of the Althusserian theoretical framework. This rereading highlights the politically militant and theoretically distinct character of the Althusserian theoretical framework. Althusser's project is presented as a political intervention rather than a theoretical intervention. For this presentation, several notions are introduced to highlight the political character of the intervention such as "neo-orthodoxy" and "dual identity". Althusser's unique contributions to Marxist philosophy and his efforts to revise his theoretical framework as a result of the several criticisms he faced are also examined in this thesis. Limitations and strengths of the Althusserian problematic and Althusser's theoretical and political legacy are assessed, and its continuing theoretical and political importance is stressed.

Keywords: Louis Althusser, historical and political context, conjuncture, problematic, Marxist philosophy

ÖZ

BİR DÜŞÜNÜRÜN PORTRESİ: TARİHSEL VE POLİTİK BAĞLAMDA LOUIS ALTHUSSER

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Bu tez, değişen konjonktürün belirlediği tarihsel ve politik bağlamda Louis Althusser'i yeniden okumayı ve Althusserci teorik çerçevenin toptan reddedilmesini önlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu yeniden okuma, Althusserci teorik çerçevenin politik olarak militan ve teorik olarak kendine özgün karakterini vurgulamaktadır. Althusser'in projesi teorik bir müdahaleden ziyade politik bir müdahale olarak sunulmaktadır. Bu sunumda, müdahalenin politik karakterini vurgulamak için "neo-ortodoksi" ve "ikili kimlik" gibi çeşitli kavramlar tanıtılmaktadır. Althusser'in Marksist felsefeye özgün katkıları ve karşılaştığı çeşitli eleştiriler sonucunda teorik çerçevesini revize etme çabaları da bu tezde incelenmektedir. Althusserci problematiğin sınırlılıkları ve güçlü yönleri ile Althusser'in teorik ve politik mirası değerlendirilmekte ve devam eden teorik ve politik önemi vurgulanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Louis Althusser, tarihsel ve politik bağlam, konjonktür, problematik, Marksist felsefe

To My Sister

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCP	: Chinese Communist Party
CPC	: Communist Party of China
CPSU	: Communist Party of the Soviet Union
ENS	: École Normale Supérieure
ISA	: Ideological State Apparatus
NTS	: New True Socialism
PCF	: Parti communiste français
UEC	: Union des Étudiants Communistes
USSR	: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Althusser is an influential philosopher who stands out for his theoretical contributions and Leninist political interventions during a period of crisis within the international communist movement, despite being subjected to harsh criticism concerning his theoretical legacy, the political line he followed and transformed, and the unfortunate events in his personal life. The defining and formative element of his theoretical framework is the theoretical intervention he undertook after 1956. While this intervention may appear theoretical, it ultimately corresponds to a political intervention.

The target of this political intervention, carried out through theory, was Khrushchev's secret speech of 1956 and the subsequent political moderation. Various forms of Marxism, which developed in parallel to this political moderation and aimed to conceal or eliminate the theoretical weaknesses of the orthodox Marxist line that had prevailed until then, would primarily draw their theoretical resources from philosophical strands outside of Marxism. The followers of these strands would at times organize politically around and within the French Communist Party (PCF), the representative of Marxist orthodoxy, and at other times choose to remain outside the party or be pushed out. The PCF's changing political line would be the determining factor in these periods. Consequently, while the party’s theoretical and political oscillations sometimes led to political deviations, at other times it served to strengthen orthodoxy.

The PCF was the defining element of the leftist theory and praxis from the 1920s to 1956 and beyond (Lewis, 2005). Althusser, in addition to his identity as a philosopher and academic, was, above all, a member of the PCF. In this context, the

formation of Althusser's theoretical framework and the problematic underlying it were actually closely linked to the PCF policies. As Lenin (1969) argued in *What is to be Done?*, a crucial issue for the communist party is the management and training of militant cadres. The party is a school, and the cadres of each period carry the party's policies at that time. While the quantity of the cadre is essential in some periods, its quality is paramount in others. Based on Lenin's argument and Lewis's work (2005) one may argue that a party intellectual is defined by their identity as a party member rather than their identity as an intellectual and party cadres who were trained in periods when Marxist orthodoxy and quality of cadres were at the forefront are inclined to exhibit a more conservative and orthodox attitude. The periods that the party chose a direction of political moderation and sought alliances in line with its conjunctural political goals are defined by the primacy of cadre quantity over quality. One might claim that the party cadres who were trained in these periods are inclined to have more varied interpretations of Marxism.

Considering Althusser solely as a theorist and philosopher carries the risk of obscuring his theoretical contributions to Marxist literature. Althusser was not only a thinker but also a communist militant, thus possessing a dual identity. The central element that determined Althusser's militant identity was the political preferences of the PCF during the period. Althusser himself explains this dual identity:

> "In 1948, when I was 30, I became a teacher of philosophy and joined the PCF. Philosophy was an interest; I was trying to make it my profession. Politics was a passion; I was trying to become a Communist militant. My interest in philosophy was aroused by materialism and its critical function: for *scientific* knowledge, against all the mystifications of *ideological* 'knowledge'. Against the merely moral denunciation of myths and lies, for their rational and rigorous criticism. My passion for politics was inspired by the revolutionary instinct, intelligence, courage, and heroism of the working class in its struggle for socialism. The War and the long years of captivity had brought me into living contact with workers and peasants, and acquainted me with Communist militants." (Althusser, 1971, pp.11-12)

As Althusser mentioned, the basis of his intervention was the opposition between science and ideology. This dual identity of Althusser pointed to the very political character of his intervention. It is necessary to understand a thinker both through how he defines himself and through the implications of his position within its historical

and political context. In this sense, of course, using Althusser's self-definition from a period of self-criticism is insufficient. Therefore, it is necessary to examine his works during the period of his intervention, such as the "symptomatic reading" that he had used to read Marx in *Reading Capital* (1970). When interpreted this way, one may claim that the theoretical intervention of Althusser was ultimately a political intervention. Althusser's intervention, inspired by Lenin's "concrete analysis of the concrete situation", aimed precisely to eliminate the political influence of the ideological positions he identified.

To this end, he developed the Marxist theory of science, in effect attempting to eliminate various theoretical-political strands he labelled as ideological by severing their ties to the non-Marxist theoretical sources they draw upon. According to this new Marxist theory of science, Marxist science, like other established sciences, is defined as a production process that provides its own criteria of proof and progresses from abstract concepts to concrete ones. This entire process takes place within thought, not in real concrete (Althusser, 1970). Another important feature that makes Marxist science a true science is its foundation in the scientific problematic. Problematic is the central question that makes it possible to ask other questions. It constitutes the nodal point of a theoretical framework, and it defines the theoretical structure. The problematic is revealed through the symptomatic reading. Symptomatic reading is a reading method which reads not only the conscious but also the unconscious of a given text. Rather than focusing on the writer’s intention or her oversight, it reveals the structural vision and non-vision of a text stemming from its problematic. Althusser claims that opposed to the scientific problematic, there exists an ideological problematic, which creates ideological positions in theory and politics. To eradicate these ideological positions, which he generally referred to as the "Hegelian" line (Althusser, 2005), he used the method of symptomatic reading to express Marx's originality (Althusser, 1970). By explaining Marx's distinction from other philosophical strands, he argued that Marx, in fact, revolutionized the history of science and philosophy and, when examined in this context, Marxism constitutes a theoretically unique line.

This theoretical-political intervention was ultimately quite successful, and while it tarnished the reputation of other positions, it brought an unprecedented popularity to

Althusserian Marxism up to 1968 (Mozzachiodi, 2022). The success of Althusser's theoretical-political intervention is described as follows:

> "Their success has been startling. It is no reflection on the very considerable gifts of the author… to observe that he has been lucky in the moment of his emergence. The atmosphere of the Althusserian Latin Quarter is the one in which every self-respecting secondary schoolboy is a Maoist or at least a Castroite, in which Sartre and Henri Lefebvre are ancient monuments and the self-lacerations of the intellectual ex-communists of 1956 as incomprehensible as the 'opportunism' of Waldeck Rochet and Roger Garaudy. A new generation of rebels requires a new version of revolutionary ideology, and M. Althusser is essentially an ideological hard-liner, challenging the political and intellectual softening around him." (Hobsbawm, 1982, p.145)

In fact, one might think that the success of Althusser's intervention is a key point highlighted by Hobsbawm's assessment. Still, the most crucial point here is Althusser's role as an "ideological hardliner". As mentioned earlier, during the period when Althusser was trained as a PCF member and was involved in communist politics, PCF politics were primarily determined by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). While the PCF made policies based on conjunctural analyses, it essentially followed an orthodox line shaped by the CPSU. This orthodoxy, in turn, was determined by the political framework established by Stalin. It was during this period that Althusser learned to engage in politics and trained himself in academia within this historical-political context.

While this issue is highly controversial (Gerratana, 1977), Althusser's theoretical framework would long contain an inclination to avoid a political confrontation with the legacy of Stalinism. Thus, the shadow of Stalinism would always loom over the Althusserian theoretical and political line. Consequently, Althusser would always face the threat of various accusations. Moreover, the PCF's efforts to develop Marxist science through Stalin's texts under directives from the CPSU and the imposed "two sciences" perspective inspired Althusser's theoretical framework based on the science-ideology dichotomy. Furthermore, it is essential to understand that the terminology Althusser employed during his period of self-criticism after 1968 was still defined by the problematic developed during the intervention period (Rancière, 2011).

Althusser was ultimately a product of the conjuncture that emerged after 1956. Viewed within this historical context, he found the theoretical and political responses to the 1956 conjuncture inadequate and took action to fill the theoretical-political gap he identified. The problems he developed during this intervention, in many ways, bore the traces of that historical period and the PCF's political style at the time. However, for the same reason, Althusser and the PCF would be late and inadequate in analysing the situation and providing the appropriate political response during the political uprising that developed in the 1968 period (Lampert, 2014). During this period, Althusser and the PCF were subjected to various criticisms. Among these, Rancière's critique is particularly prominent (Rancière, 2011).

A theorist can be criticized from many perspectives, and these criticisms can be ideological, theoretical, or political, or a combination of these. Similarly, when considered within a historical context, criticism can be levelled against a theorist within his own context, based on the theoretical legacy he left to later generations, or based on the problems created by his political line. In this sense, Althusser has been criticized on almost every point mentioned above and stands out as a particularly controversial figure.

Considering all this, it is doubtful that a new critique or reassessment of Althusser will be an account that has never been previously articulated. Therefore, when it comes to an attempt to provide a critical reading within a historical and political context, as in this thesis, the critique offered by Rancière, a theorist from within the Althusserian camp as a student of Althusser, stands out as the most appropriate example of critique, mainly if evaluated in terms of its success in exposing the inconsistencies and shortcomings of the Althusserian problematic and the theoretical structure built upon it.

When Rancière read Althusser through his theoretical and political shortcomings in the 1968 conjuncture, he saw that Althusser adopted an elitist and orthodox political position. He argued that Althusserian Marxism prevented real politics and, by belittling the political capacity of ordinary people, established a hierarchical relationship between the people and the vanguard. Ultimately, this created a form of

party elitism and continued the traditional line of vanguardism. He further argued that Althusser, along with the science-ideology dichotomy, also described a hierarchical relationship between academics and students, those who participate in the knowledge production process of Marxist science and transmit this emerging knowledge, and those who must submit to academic hierarchies to receive it. Furthermore, according to Rancière, even in the theoretical revisions he undertook in response to these criticisms, Althusser ultimately failed to break free from his previous theoretical framework and politically maintained the political position of the PCF and the orthodoxy represented by it.

Its political consequences led Althusser's students to break away from Althusserian Marxism and the PCF and to attempt to construct their own distinctive political line and theoretical framework (Mozzachiodi, 2022). Within this context, Rancière also asserted the principle of equality and advocated for its application within the academy. He also emphasized the importance of ordinary people, who lack a voice, in politics and proposed a politics of equality (Lampert, 2014).

These criticisms should be read while considering Althusser's dual identity, the political character, and the style of his intervention. Then a new critical reading of his intervention, based on the available literature that also outlines the conjuncture, may claim that Althusser has constructed a political neo-orthodoxy. This new notion developed in an effort to interpret Althusser’s theory as a partial break from orthodoxy while showing its difference with the revisionist line. There are multiple reasons for using the concept of neo-orthodoxy in this thesis. Firstly, Althusser was not content with simply continuing the orthodoxy of the PCF, which was under the influence of the CPSU. Through his intervention, he both criticized the shortcomings he identified within this political line and created a new orthodoxy, politically independent, specific to France, and suited to its political conditions. Secondly, although the science-ideology dichotomy of Althusserian Marxism was inspired by the past Marxist science and "two sciences" discourses of the PCF, which was under the influence of the CPSU and Stalinism, he confronted this line theoretically, if not politically, and developed his own unique definition of science and ideology. In this sense, although Althusser's theoretical framework bore the traces of Stalinism, he

was able to construct his own originality as a result of having come to terms with it theoretically. Thirdly, although Althusser maintained the PCF's party elitism, instrumentalizing similar discourses used during the party's return to orthodoxy, and primarily targeting the PCF's historical political rivals, he did not hesitate to target the PCF itself and constructed a scientific elitism parallel to party elitism. This last point makes it possible to argue that Althusser departed from the policies and ideology produced by the PCF in the past, but that this departure did not constitute an absolute departure, merely a theoretical-political renewal.

In addition to all this, for a reason parallel to the selection of Rancière's example, while it is possible to criticise a theorist from many perspectives, perhaps the most viable way is to conduct a critique of that thinker through the problematic he developed. In this sense, Althusser aimed to create a theoretical framework that eschewed any exceptions when analysing a given situation, and he developed his own problematic for this very purpose. Considered in this context, claiming that Althusser was a continuation of PCF orthodoxy while simultaneously claiming that he was an exception to the political line he maintained signifies a departure from theoretical consistency and compromises the explanatory power of the analysis. In this sense, a theoretical consistency that excludes exceptions is also imperative for a rereading of Althusser in an Althusserian manner. Therefore, neo-orthodoxy is a concept that was introduced and will be frequently employed in the last two chapters to read Althusser within the historical and political context defined by the changing conjuncture.

Historical and political context has been a concept emphasized many times in the section so far. It refers to the conjuncture that formed Althusser’s intervention and determined its political character. The conjuncture, in turn, is defined as “the exact balance of forces, state of overdetermination of the contradictions at any given moment to which political tactics must be applied” (Althusser, 2005, p.250). Rancière's critique is significant both because it is a contemporary critique and because it emphasizes this very context. Althusser's theoretical-political intervention was criticized both in his own time and afterward. Therefore, it was essential to include a thinker who criticized Althusser's theoretical-political shortcomings in the

1968 conjuncture and who was committed to the same problematic at that very time. However, a thinker cannot be evaluated solely by the theoretical contributions of his lifetime and his most productive period; in addition, the theoretical and political legacy he left behind must also be assessed.

Althusser's theoretical and political legacy has been evaluated numerous times. In this sense, it's important to emphasize that the most appropriate assessment of this legacy is provided by Ellen Meiksins Wood, a thinker who has repeatedly insisted on the necessity of reading thinkers within their historical and theoretical contexts. Although her method is not used in this thesis, it is important to include an alternative critical opinion which is based on a different problematic. Therefore, Wood is another theorist who stands out among those who critique Althusser and Althusserian Marxism.

Wood's assessment of Althusser's legacy is grounded in a critique of Althusser's definition of a social formation composed of relatively autonomous instances (Wood, 1998). According to this assessment, Althusser's definition of a relatively autonomous relationship between instances and his accepted conception of history without a subject were taken to their logical conclusion by subsequent thinkers in light of historical and political events, extending first to Eurocommunism and then to post-Marxism, ultimately leading to the wholesale elimination of Marxism and the escape from its fundamental element, class. Wood claims that Althusser's theoretical-political intervention and the resulting Althusserian Marxism led to devastating historical and political consequences that were not considered before. Wood stands out as a theorist whom Althusser would perhaps accuse of confusing the theory of science with the science of history and of historical materialism’s abstract object with the real concrete. Thus, she expresses a view that contrasts with Althusser, and for this reason, she will be presented in this thesis.

As it was implied in the previous section, this thesis aims to reread Althusser within his historical and political context and try to prevent the wholesale rejection of the important theoretical contributions made by Althusser. Historical and political context here refers to all historical and political events that constitute the conjuncture

that determined Althusser's intervention and the theoretical framework that was developed from it. While many different readings of Althusser have been undertaken, this thesis will try to contribute to the existing literature. The central claim of this thesis is that Althusser's philosophical project is not merely a theoretical intervention but, in fact, a political one. The decisive elements of this intervention are the PCF's centrality in the conjuncture and the crisis of the international communist movement after 1956. The aim of this thesis is not merely to conduct historical research, to offer a theoretical assessment, or to undertake a never-before-seen analysis utilizing newly emerged historical or theoretical sources. This thesis aims to reread Althusser's intervention based on several historical and theoretical texts while utilising some of the notions introduced by the Althusserian problematic. In this reading, Althusser's militant identity in addition to his identity as a theorist will be taken to the centre.

This thesis will try to contribute to the literature by focusing on the political aspects of Althusser’s intervention by introducing the concept of neo-orthodoxy and eliminating exceptions in the analysis. This thesis claims that Althusser’s intervention cannot simply be reduced to the political position of the orthodoxy or revisionism. Instead, Althusser’s intervention is interpreted as politically militant and theoretically distinct. Its theoretical distinction is determined by its politically militant character, and the dual identity of Althusser is located in the centre of it. When Althusser's intervention and its theoretical-political consequences are interpreted through the concept of neo-orthodoxy, the relationship between Althusser and the changing conjuncture in which he finds himself will hopefully be better understood. This will prevent a blanket rejection of Althusser's contributions to Marxist theory and politics by criticizing him solely on the political consequences he generated in specific periods or on his theoretical contradictions. Furthermore, another aim is to try to show that, despite constructing and maintaining a neo-orthodox line, Althusser nevertheless managed to engage in self-criticism within the changing conjuncture and, therefore, maintain his relevance.

Another aim is to consider Althusser as a product of his own conjuncture, thus trying to create a new interpretation of the perspective from which he attempted to intervene in this conjuncture. This will also help the reader to consider how a similar

theoretical-political intervention could be implemented in the contemporary conjuncture, and to imagine the structural limits of this potential intervention stemming from the problematic it would develop. For all these reasons, this thesis will essentially be based on a selective literature review of historical and theoretical texts and their critical examination.

The chapters in this thesis are divided by both a thematic and a historical narrative. The first chapter begins in the early 1920s, and the final chapter concludes in the mid-1970s. The purpose of selecting this particular historical interval is to take Althusser's intervention to the centre and understand the conjuncture shaped by this intervention. The aim here is not to examine Althusser's life in detail and produce a biographical text. In line with the main aims of this thesis, it is crucial to understand how Althusser emerged as a product of a previous conjuncture, successfully responded to the next, and established a new Althusserian theoretical-political line. Ultimately, he failed to successfully undergo the necessary transformations in the subsequent conjuncture, leading to his withdrawal from the stage of history. For this very reason, the chapters are divided chronologically into the conjuncture of formation, the conjuncture of intervention, and the new conjuncture. Thematically, this thesis will examine the formation and transformation processes of the PCF and the various forms of French Marxism that developed around it, the reasons for Althusser's intervention and its theoretical structure, and finally, the criticisms levelled against Althusser and his self-criticism. Thus, the relation of determination between the militant identity of Althusser and his theoretical framework will be examined.

The first chapter will examine the historical formation of the elements that constituted the conjuncture in which Althusser’s intervention occurred. This chapter will largely examine the period from the 1920s to the 1956 CPSU Congress. The reading of this period will focus on the PCF and its ideological-political line. In addition, various forms of Marxism in France and the theoretical frameworks they developed will be examined, and the historical context will be presented through a detailed examination of the addressees of Althusser's intervention. This chapter will have two fundamental aims: to explain the specificities of the period in which

Althusser grew up and their relationship to Althusser through the formation of the conjuncture in which Althusser intervened, and to explore the roots of the crisis of the international communist movement, which particularly became evident after the Twentieth Congress, before 1956.

The second chapter will examine the events surrounding the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in 1956, examining the moment when the crisis erupted. This will explain why the crisis of the international communist movement was a "crisis" and examine how it led to Althusser's intervention. The national and international dimensions of this crisis will be examined in detail, as will the conjuncture of the intervention. Subsequently, the theoretical details of Althusser's intervention will be examined and interpreted through the texts *For Marx* (2005) and *Reading Capital* (1971), which constitute his theoretical-political intervention. Furthermore, the fundamental concepts and elements that constitute the theoretical framework arising from this intervention, such as symptomatic reading, the Marxist theory of science and Marxist science of history, the science-ideology dichotomy, social formation, and structural overdetermination, will be defined. The nature of this intervention and its underlying political causes will also be addressed. This chapter will largely cover the theoretical and political events from around 1956 to 1968, with a focus on the political events before and after the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU.

The third chapter will focus on the events of 1968, the criticisms Althusser and the PCF received for their inadequate theoretical and political responses to these events, and the self-criticism Althusser developed based on these criticisms. This chapter will generally cover the period from around 1968 to the second half of the 1970s. Furthermore, this chapter will examine the most significant criticisms levelled against Althusser and explain their significance, thus interweaving the theoretical and political aspects. Additionally, in this chapter, Althusser's theoretical and political legacy will be critically examined through Wood's arguments. Furthermore, Althusser's theoretical and political relationship with the PCF and Stalinism will be examined, bringing the neo-orthodoxy argument to its final conclusion. Finally, the arguments developed in the previous chapters will be brought to their logical conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONJUNCTURE OF ALTHUSSER

2.1. Introduction

To understand Althusser's theoretical intervention, one needs to understand the conjuncture in which he was. To truly understand any philosopher and their goals, one needs to see the context. It can be claimed that starting the inquiry with a focus on conjuncture will be more befitting the topic, in an Althusserian sense. Althusser defines conjuncture as “The central concept of the Marxist science of politics; it denotes the exact balance of forces, state of overdetermination of the contradictions at any given moment to which political tactics must be applied.” (2005, p.250) and he sees the theory of conjuncture as “indispensable to the theory of history” (1970, p.107). Moreover, Sotiris explains that Althusser generated this term from his analysis of Lenin’s political texts and uses this to scrutinize the political practice (2014, p.8).

For this reason, this chapter will be examining the historical events of the early 20th century, which had a profound impact on Althusser, while also exploring his approach to these events. In short, the history and the reason behind this theoretical intervention are the object of inquiry in this part. Another important reason for this inquiry is to understand what constitutes a theoretical intervention and why it should be understood as an intervention. It should also be noted that the intention here is not to conduct historical research but to understand on what basis Althusser has developed his earlier concepts.

Althusser himself explains that his intervention was conducted in a specific conjuncture, and this intervention was, although in the field of philosophy and

theory, explicitly political. It was aimed towards different forms of dogmatism and its critique, as well as Hegelian forms of Marxism, economism, and its humanist basis (1976, pp.168-169). Elliot claims that four elements of the conjuncture have defined the intervention of Althusser, these are "the crisis in the international Communist movement after Stalin; the adjustment of the PCF to de-Stalinisation; the configuration of Marxist theory in the late 1950s and early 1960s; and the disposition of the French intellectual landscape when Althusser came to write." (2006, pp.1-2).

Both this chapter and the following one will cover these four elements of the conjuncture and how they shaped Althusser's thought. Starting with the crisis in the international communist movement and going back from it, this chapter will trace the origins of the conjuncture that gave birth to Althusser in the previous decades of French politics, with a focus on the PCF. It aims to explain the effects of PCF's policies on the political level, thus shaping the conjuncture after the events of 1956, and influencing the thought of Althusser. This will be shown with a focus on PCF's constantly changing political line, which consist of an oscillation between liberal policies and the orthodox line in accordance with both the political needs of the era and the corrections made by the CPSU which laid the ground for the creation of different forms of Marxism including the late-coming critical form that Althusser created.

2.2. Crisis in the International Communist Movement

According to Elliot (2006, pp.2-53), after the death of Joseph Stalin, the international communist movement faced a deep and multi-layered crisis. This crisis, which has emerged mainly after the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR, in which the legacy of the Stalinist regime was denounced and its atrocities condemned, was not only about the disclosure and open critique of the Stalinist cult. This process has also caused a new wave of questioning the basic assumptions of Marxist theory and practice (Khrushchev 1984, pp. 270–271). It was not only this attack on Stalinist cult that affected Althusser, but especially the following split between the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China that influenced Althusser to create his early works like For Marx and Reading Capital, according to Anderson (1980, p.106).

Elliot (2006, pp.2-5) explains that events like the 1956 Hungarian Uprising have shaken the legitimacy and authority of the Soviet Union and communist parties worldwide, thus creating an ideological gap. At this conjuncture, different communist parties and intellectuals have made various comments on the situation and have developed their own distinct understanding of these events. The Hungarian uprising was countered with force by the Soviet Union, and many communist parties have given their support to the CPSU, but some others took a different stance. The Communist Party of China supported CPSU in this response but did not join in the attacks on Stalin and had different opinions on the results of the Twentieth Congress of CPSU, thus keeping a more Stalinist line. But later, CPC seemingly started to change its position to a more moderate line on this matter. But with the events of the Great Leap, the CPC became more critical towards certain right-wing deviations, and while seemingly attacking Tito, the CPC started criticising the CPSU. Even though there were some declarations of unity made by communist parties worldwide, it did not stop the split between these two communist parties. Finally, CPSU answered CPC by referencing Lenin's critique of left-wing deviation. These events have ultimately led CPC to view the de-Stalinization initiated by the 20th Congress as revisionism.

The results of this theoretical split are important since it had practical political implications worldwide. CPSU then started to hold a new position worldwide. This new position advocated a peaceful coexistence with the capitalist powers and focused on building communism in the Soviet Union. CPSU claimed that it would successfully build communism in the country within the following few decades. The party claimed that it would now represent the people as a whole, rather than stressing the class conflict. The importance of the "man" has increased, and it has become a recurring theme in the party. This new position would be understood as humanist communism (CPSU, 1961). As stated before, we will later see the effect that this focus on humanism and stress on human beings as a whole has on Marxist thinkers and Louis Althusser. Just like the critique of de-Stalinization made by CPC declares, "one may oppose dogmatism in the interests of Marxism-Leninism or one may actually oppose Marxism-Leninism in the name of opposing dogmatism" (CPC, 1960), Althusser will declare that humanist-Hegelian current and the empiricist-

positivist line, which are different sides of the same ideological coin, are significant dangers to Marxism and Marx's great scientific revolution (1970).

This period, which CPSU started, would create an impetus towards peaceful competition between great powers. Now, the Soviet Union would continue its struggle against the capitalist world in the sphere of economy, science, and production rather than focusing solely on class struggle. From that point onwards, the USSR tried to best the capitalist world in the space race, tried to prove the superiority of the planned socialist economic system, and tried to produce more and better than the US. USSR would respect the world boundaries and international spheres of influence. This would mean a détente, and this view was understood to be "revisionist" by CPC and some others (Elliot, 2006, pp. 4-7). China disagreed with these developments and saw that the CPSU under Khrushchev was upholding the status quo. CPC believed that this position would hinder the development of the Chinese Revolution and claimed that going down the line shown by CPSU would mean abandoning the struggle for revolution worldwide, as well as leaving the anti-imperialist struggle. They also concluded that Stalin, although not without faults, was ultimately a great Marxist and revolutionary (CPC, 1965). Even after the liquidation of Khrushchev, CPC claimed that CPSU was still following the line of Khrushchev. This would create the famous Eastern Schism in the international communist movement.

The necessary parts of the crisis of the international communist movement and the Sino-Soviet split were explained in this section. To summarise, these events have caused the development of varying opinions on the future of Marxist theory and practice. This international crisis has created an impetus against the stagnation of Marxist thought and prepared the ground for thinkers like Althusser to develop their own novel theoretical frameworks. Althusser's effort to reinterpret Marxism, in the context of this general crisis, can be understood both as a critique of existing dogmas and as an attempt to create a new theoretical basis for Marxism that could respond to current problems.

The parts necessary for a better understanding of the circumstances surrounding Althusser's emergence have been briefly touched upon here. Following this, it is

necessary to step back in time a bit, starting a few decades earlier and following the story up to the point that was mentioned here. The crisis of the international communist movement has multiple layers and is more complex than the summary given here; thus, it will be further examined.

2.3. Developments in the PCF

The repercussions of the crisis in the international arena were also felt within the French Communist Party. For many years, PCF had strictly followed the Moscow line and supported Stalin. However, with the criticism of Stalin, a process of ideological re-evaluation began within the party. This process led to tensions between the party leadership and intellectuals, and to the emergence of different interpretations of Marxism. Gregory Elliott (2006) notes that Althusser played an active role in this process of adjustment and developed his own theoretical interventions in this context.

Lewis (2005, pp.47-48) explains that in the early 1920s, PCF was divided between different strands of Marxism, which included Leninism and Trotskyism. Although some members became Leninists, many of them had contradictory positions and ideas. Thus, the party required a thorough ideological restructuring, and this was followed by a period of ideological purification and Bolshevisation. Party cadres believed that a homogenous Leninist organization was needed to better organize the struggle against the bourgeoisie and survive the upcoming battles against it (1924, pp.65-67). Through the 1920s and early 1930s, the French Party continued this path of ideological purification and consolidation. During the process, PCF would alienate many of its members and its intellectual allies, as well as some others that were sympathetic to the party. This process also included the harsh attacks on some members of diverse opinions and backgrounds and the liquidation of many members who were seen as petite-bourgeois intellectuals, who were seen as opportunists, and allies of the bourgeoisie (Lewis, 2005, p.48).

This early period of PCF and its purification process was named the Front Uni (or Front Unique) era. From the 1920s until the Front Populaire, which would be the

official principle during the late 1930s and the years of German Occupation, the PCF's official guiding principle was Front Unique. It is difficult to describe, and even the party itself did not understand and apply it in a single way. But it can be said that it was mainly composed of three roles that rotated in importance based on the demands of the conjuncture. In accordance with the Bolshevization process, the first one placed a strong emphasis on organizational and ideological purity of the party, which meant a "united front" in this sense. The second was a strategy of engaging with the larger French Left to win elections. So, together with the broader left, they could implement greater changes and gain success in the election. Thus, the Left's "united front" was shown through its offers and concessions to radicals and socialists. The third and last position of the front uni was "exclusive leadership." With this line, the Communist Party of France has criticised the Socialists' program and put forward its own party programme and policies as the only sound ones for the broader French Left, under the pretext of the "unique front" (Adereth, 1984). It should be understood that PCF was not entirely consistent throughout this period; it sometimes alienated its allies while sometimes claiming that it was the sole leader and vanguard of the broader left and appealed to different factions.

Lewis (2005, p.49) tells us that in the early years, PCF consisted of diverse opinions, while this was silenced after the Comintern's 1924 Congress and the party's adherence to the decisions of the Third International, although this adherence came late because of some pragmatic political considerations. The party's overly centralist structure and mechanical discipline would receive backlash from some party intellectuals in these years (Caute, 1964, p.89) and would result in their removal from the party. According to Lewis (2005, p.50), one such example was Souvarine, who criticised the party for its mechanical discipline and even decided to publish Trotsky's texts in order to do this. He would later be excommunicated from the party on charges of being petty bourgeois. Many others who agreed with him would leave the party together, and the remaining dissenters were expelled or neutralized by the party. Similarly, some others would be expelled from the party based on their socio-economic backgrounds.

Until 1934, PCF was incoherent in its attitude towards the broader left, including socialists and radicals. "Class against class" would become an important motto and

would be followed by the party in accordance with the Stalinist principles, which saw the contemporary era as a stabilization of capitalism and rise of imperialism, and demanded a distinction between proletarian politics and bourgeois politics. This required a national class struggle against counter-revolutionary forces and other forms of left-wing parties. This did not stop the PCF from addressing the left for building electoral alliances when it was required, which also shows the incoherency of the PCF regarding the French left at the time (Lewis, 2005, pp.49-51). These policies would isolate PCF from its usual electoral base and its allies, and result in alliances in the French left which would exclude PCF. The party would see Socialists and other left as a part of bourgeois politics and finally draw a line between itself and the others, which would result in a politics of hostility between PCF and the left, which included unions and Socialists. This would undermine PCF's claim of being the organizer of the workers' struggle and further damage the party's image (Adereth, 1984, pp.48-49). This process of proletarianization created a homogenous party, both in terms of its policies, theory, and in its member composition, which was mainly the working class. Party ideology was based mainly on Stalinist political principles and a crude form of Marxism, which would refer only to a few basic works of Marx and some late works of Engels, as well as Stalin's view of Leninism. The party would create many pamphlets and catechisms based on this crude Marxism in the front uni era. For PCF, the revolution was made inevitable by the contradictions of capitalism. This, in turn, would require a strict turn to workers and proletarian intellectual members. Any other view was either forced to comply with the dominant homogenous version or was deemed to be opportunistic and purged. This purge included both the left-wing deviations and the right-wing deviations (Lewis, 2005, pp.50-65). This was the Front Uni era of PCF, which lasted until the rise of fascism in the world. The new conjuncture would require a new political position, which would be named Front Populaire.

In the early 1930s, with the world economic crisis, living conditions worsened, and working hours were rising, but monopoly capitalism was still profiting. Based on this, PCF claimed that its policies were correct and only PCF's assessment of the conjuncture was able to predict and understand the economic crisis. With this claim, the party would try to reach a wider audience and start to break its isolation and

marginalisation. Its attacks on Socialists, unions, and other left groups would be justified on this basis (Lewis, 2005, pp.65-66). On top of that, rising fascism in the early 1930s would supplement the discourse of the party against the French left. PCF claimed that Socialists and other left elements were unable to understand the conjuncture; they were a part of bourgeois politics and were ultimately social fascists (Bell & Criddle, 1994, p.69). The party claimed that anyone who was not fully against capitalism or anyone who was not a communist was ultimately fascist. Thus, every non-communist was identified as belonging to the group of fascists (Santamaria, 2002). One can see that at that time, PCF was still mostly operating inside the framework of Front Uni rather than Front Populaire. But this was soon to change.

According to Lewis (2005), in 1934, with national and international developments, it was clear to many that fascism was the main threat, and it was not the same as being non-communist. Fascist leagues were being formed and were starting to operate in France. This would urge PCF to let go of its strict policies and open itself to the French left, thus liberalising itself and striving for alliances with the left. This, in turn, would help PCF become a well-known party and regain its popularity both in terms of its electorate and in terms of its rising membership. These developments resulted in PCF making the assessment that this conjuncture could be a revolutionary one, and the revolution could be a real possibility if the party chooses its moves correctly (Tiersky, 1974, p.72). In 1934, a failed coup that was orchestrated by the fascist leagues would demonstrate to the left the real danger of fascism that was on the rise. It would alarm the left and urge the French left to work together against it (Tiersky, 1974, p.55).

Against the rising fascist threat, PCF then organized mass demonstrations, and these demonstrations would gather the left together, including the Radicals and the Socialists. These events led to the united action against fascism, thus leading the way to the abandonment of the Front Uni framework in favour of the United Front and Front Populaire. This change was also supported by the Soviet Union and Comintern since, according to the Soviet perspective, the rise of fascism in Europe and German fascism in particular would be dangerous to their own existence. This would be

eagerly accepted by PCF since it had sustained a decade-long self-isolation because of the front uni policies, and the party wanted to change this in the context of economic crisis, which was an opportunity to stand together with the French left. In line with these historical events, PCF revised its strict and mechanistic views as well. To maintain its alliance with Socialists and Radicals, strict party policies would loosen and liberalise, in a sense. This loosening would include seeing the political world as a polarisation, which puts fascists and everyone else against each other, rather than the previous position, which saw the world divided between communists and everyone else. This decision resulted in increased membership and historical successes in elections, but PCF declined to participate in the government and chose to advise it from the outside. By doing this, PCF was able to maintain its revolutionary claims and the party of the workers and the vanguard of revolution. The Party would not only become allied to Radicals and Socialists, but it would even support united action with left-Catholics. This would create a change in party discourse and would result in softening of the focus on class struggle and revolution, thus giving way to the discourse of humanism and the claim of struggle for ending the alienation of humanity (Lewis, 2005, pp.67-70).

In later years, during the World War 2 and especially after the war, many other variants humanist Marxism would emerge, and this type of Marxism would increase its prominence in both the intellectual circles and in PCF and even result in the Eastern Schism and the crisis in Communist Internationale after the 20th Congress of CPSU which would find guilty the Stalinist cult of personality as I have explained before. After all these events, the conjuncture would be dominated by and divided between a form of humanist Marxism, which is supported by Marx's early works and Hegelian legacy, and a form of positivism and empiricism, which was supported by an implicit humanist anthropology. These would be the main points of concern for Althusser. Both in For Marx (2005) and Reading Capital (1970), Althusser would attack these different forms of humanism (including Hegelian and empiricist) and would suggest a return to the late Marx for further establishing a scientific Marxism and develop its philosophical foundation, which is already implicit in Marx's later works in which Marx have broken its ties with his previous ideological problematic and established a new position based on his new scientific problematic, as Althusser sees it.

After this newfound popularity and the several alliances that the party had built in the process, came the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939. This came as a surprise for many members and allies since the party's new Front Populaire line supposed that the political world was divided between fascists and anti-fascists, and built alliances and worked in united action against the rising fascism until then. Until 1939, many intellectuals had been appearing in the party, which included Lefebvre and Politzer. The former being an example of a Marxist humanist intellectual, while the latter is an example of a more nuanced follower of Marxist-Leninist principles of the Front Uni line. But with the signing of the non-aggression pact between Fascist Germany and the Soviet Union, the former line would put a distance between the party and itself. The relationship between intellectuals and the party was further severed by the declaration of Stalin's "Precise" or "Short Course" and its formal acceptance in PCF. The party claimed that this text put forward the ultimate truth both for the social sciences and the natural sciences, leaving no room for any humanism and leaving no need for any intellectual contribution and Marxist interpretation, thus reducing the importance of the intellectuals. This position was easily accepted by older members who had been through the Front Uni era, while new members and allies would be in opposition to it (Lewis, 2005, pp.70-74).

According to *Stalin's Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, the methods of dialectical materialism, which is the Marxist philosophy, can be extended to include both the social world and the natural world. This meant that dialectical materialism, as interpreted by Stalin, can explain both worlds and can be the ultimate method for social and natural sciences. Different from the view of Marx and Engels, for Stalin, the dialectical method was not a critical and flexible method that can be interpreted without schematism. For him, it was a schematic set of rules that had the ultimate claim to truth, which is valid both for social and natural sciences. Stalin defined the law of development, which explained all kinds of development based on contradiction and struggle. This also meant that everything was knowable about the world and its laws of development once one starts using the dialectical method. One only needed to accept the dialectical method and test the knowledge it generated in the process by praxis. By referencing Engels, Stalin claimed that once the party was able to understand the dialectical laws of nature and extend them to the social world

and culture, it could find the course to the revolution. (Stalin, 1939, pp.300-315). Accepting the "precise" or the "Short Course", PCF would again find itself in trouble. Lewis notes that the Short Course provided the PCF with a foundational text to codify what it saw as the revolutionary science, an "algebra of revolution." By formally distinguishing Dialectical Materialism as philosophy from Historical Materialism as science, and by simplifying the former into a universally applicable method, both the Comintern and the PCF entrenched several of their most problematic theoretical tendencies for at least the next decade and a half. Among these were a rigid division between so-called authentic communist knowledge and allegedly erroneous bourgeois thought, a flawed conceptualization of both scientific inquiry and historical development, and a reductionist form of economism rooted in a mechanical interpretation of the infrastructure/superstructure model. This framework also reinforced the PCF's self-conception as the sole legitimate representative of the working class and Leninist revolution as the exclusive pathway to socialism. In the context of World War 2 and its aftermath, the party was able to preserve these dogmatic positions and implement policies consistent with them. However, the political and ideological upheavals of 1956, particularly Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the Hungarian uprising, once again exposed the limitations of the PCF's theoretical framework. In this new conjuncture, it became clear that the party's rigid doctrine had begun to undermine the effectiveness of its political practice (2005, p.75).

In later years, Althusser would try to resolve these issues and tendencies both in For Marx (2005) and Reading Capital (1970). He focused on philosophy of science and theory of knowledge; while developing his own understanding of these controversial topics, he decided to return to Marx and build his theories on his understanding of late Marx. Althusser would criticise crude and deterministic Stalinism and even criticise Engels in the process (Althusser, 1970), thus going to the root of the "Short Course". The French Party was sometimes leaning towards schematism, dogmatism, mechanistic discipline which we can understand as Front Uni of the Stalinist course, and sometimes it followed a more flexible ideological line, sometimes including different forms of humanism in it, and extending its hands towards any group and intellectual who were against fascism, this even included alliances with Catholics,

Radicals and Socialists. The oscillation of PCF between these two lines would be echoed in its members and allies and create different effects on the intellectuals of the era. One should remember that Althusser was a product of this conjuncture and its complex structures. As Althusser himself explains in 1975:

> "I would never have written anything were it not for the Twentieth Congress and Khrushchev's critique of Stalinism and the subsequent liberalisation. But I would never have written these books if I had not seen this affair as a bungled destalinisation, a right-wing destalinisation which, instead of analyses, offered us only incantations; which, instead of Marxist concepts, had available only the poverty of bourgeois ideology. My target was therefore clear: these humanist ravings, these feeble dissertations on liberty, labour, or alienation, which were the effects of all this among French Party intellectuals. And my aim was equally clear: to make a start on the first *left-wing* critique of Stalinism, a critique that would make it possible to reflect not only on Khrushchev and Stalin but also on Prague and Lin Piao: that would above all help put some substance back into the revolutionary project here in the West." (Elliot, 2006, p.1)

Althusser saw these events as the reason for his intervention. He thought that the humanist line, which speaks of liberty and the end of alienation, was unable to successfully criticise the Stalinist line and build something out of it. Althusser wanted to include in his critique a whole framework that could explain not only Stalinism but also the events of Prague and the 20th Congress; in short, Althusser wanted to build a theory that could account for the complex relations of the structures at a given time, which we can call the "conjuncture". He would find the basis for this theory in none other than Marx himself. So, one can say that although the conjuncture has created Althusser as a philosopher, in return, Althusser tried to give us a picture of the conjuncture. This is an example of the rigour of Althusser when it comes to understanding the conjuncture.

2.4. The PCF After the War

The 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact had created great contempt in Marxist circles because of the PCF's previous acceptance of the Short Course. These 180-degree turns in political direction had made the PCF less convincing in its claims. This shift in positions has created difficulties for Marxist thinkers in France, especially with the

persecution that the party endured at the hands of the French government as a response to PCF's support for the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. While some Marxist thinkers have accepted the party line and decided to keep quiet, and some of them were disillusioned with the party line and decided not to produce any works, others have raised their voices and were persecuted and silenced by the fascist Vichy regime. This suppression, at times, became the appropriation of the so-called dangerous literature and sometimes even took the form of public book burnings (Kelly, 1982, p.50). This meant that there was no significant intellectual work in the field of Marxist philosophy during the years of World War 2 in France.

Even though the period of World War 2 was not fruitful for Marxism overall, in contrast to this theoretical scarcity and book burnings, Marxism emerged as an important philosophy after the war. It was mainly the PCF, Marxists, and other allies that were organizing the resistance against the occupation and fascist regime. What this meant for many people was that Marxism was the only valid and strong philosophy, and its relevance was on the rise rather than decreasing. It was seen as the only true philosophy. This idea was put forth by the Philosophers' Circle for a long time. But after the war, this view was accepted by many intellectuals of the intelligentsia of France at the time (Lewis, 2005, pp.115-116). In fact, it is no surprise that Althusser himself joined the PCF during these years. In his words, "In 1948, when I was 30, I became a teacher of philosophy and joined the PCF. Philosophy was an interest; I was trying to make it my profession. Politics was a passion; I was trying to become a Communist militant." (Althusser, 1971, p.11). One can see why Althusser was interested in politics at the time, but the question that remains to be answered is why there was a sudden increase in interest in PCF among the general population? Some would say that the Marxism of PCF fits the general inclination towards a taste for violence and violent action of the French intellectuals, which was building up for many years before that point (Judt, 1986, p.178). But as I have claimed before, some others would claim that the real reason for this newfound interest was not the intrinsic inclinations of the French intelligentsia but the real political actions of PCF and its allies. Lewis (2005) notes that, in the aftermath of World War 2, PCF, having played a prominent role in the Resistance, emerged as one of the few political forces widely perceived as both progressive and morally

legitimate. This association with anti-fascist struggle drew many progressive intellectuals and segments of the broader population toward Marxism, which they saw as the ideological foundation that had enabled and justified such resistance. As a result, communism gained significant cultural and political credibility in the immediate postwar period. This identification sparked a surge of interest in Marxist theory, initiating a period of intellectual engagement that would shape French political and philosophical discourse for the next three decades (Lewis, 2005, p.116). The leadership of the PCF as the vanguard of resistance created the result of identification of communism and the PCF with the resistance, which is seen as the only moral power at the time of World War 2. This was not only valid for the general population but also for French intellectual circles. This would give Marxism and PCF in particular, a newfound support and increasing vitality in the coming decades.

A little detour is needed here. One can see how this conjuncture has affected Althusser as well. He says that his "…passion for politics was inspired by the revolutionary instinct, intelligence, courage, and heroism of the working class in its struggle for socialism. The War and the long years of captivity had brought me into living contact with workers and peasants and acquainted me with Communist militants." (Althusser, 1971, p.11). One can see that Althusser, in his new interest in communism, was no exception nor an outlier of the conjuncture. He was one of the children of the era. But another point that needs to be highlighted is that this interest was not for communist ideas in general; it was a very particular interest. Althusser explains this particular focus and says that at that time, "It was politics which decided everything. Not politics in general: Marxist-Leninist politics." (Althusser, 1971, p.11). What this meant is that Althusser was always interested in politics as well as the Marxist philosophy and theory.

This interest in Leninism was not based on his focus on philosophy, in fact it was the opposite, as the philosopher himself says, "Once I had a better understanding of Marxist-Leninist politics, I began to have a passion for philosophy too, for at last I began to understand the great thesis of Marx, Lenin and Gramsci: that philosophy is fundamentally political." (Althusser, 1971, p.12). This means that Althusser was first interested in political practice and class struggle, which meant the resistance against

fascism at that time. In turn, this interest in political practice was the reason for his later focus on Marxist philosophy. One should also keep in mind that Althusser said this in retrospection, after 1968, which is important because I believe that Althusser himself has changed a lot with the ever-changing conjuncture. He should not be thought of as fixed in a single point of the conjuncture; part of understanding the conjuncture and its elements includes acknowledging the complexity of the structures and their relatively autonomous movement in an Althusserian sense. This point is very important, and I will go back to it in the following chapters many times while also diving deeper into the structures and their relations from Althusser's standpoint.

Coming back to the situation after the war, although some would disagree (Khilnani, 1993), it can be said that there were three main forms of Marxism in the following decade of the war (Lewis, 2005, p.116). These are, firstly, the Marxist philosophy of PCF. The second one is a form of Hegelian Marxism. The last form that Marxist philosophy took after the World War 2 is the form of Existential Marxism. I shall explain the Marxism of PCF after the war, and then continue with other forms of Marxism in France after the war.

During the war and the years of resistance, there were almost no Marxist works available, but after the liberation of France, the situation slowly changed. Even though there was still a scarcity of philosophical works, PCF has produced and made available some literature that is more in line with the liberal Marxism of the Front Populaire. But after 1948, with the start of the Cold War, things would change. During that time, party intellectuals went back to working on the materialist dialectic, which was developed by Joseph Stalin. In the fifteen years after the end of the war, the Marxism of the PCF underwent significant changes. Zhdanov and the Cominform would start the process of developing and formalizing the materialist dialectic, and tried to apply it to all spheres of existence, and the PCF would follow this line. Rather than working together with other forms of Marxism, like existential Marxism and Hegelian Marxism, they would develop their own philosophy in competition with these other forms. The latter forms of Marxism did the same and focused on developing their own lines while competing with the others. This would

mean that mostly there were no creative exchanges between them and their efforts, which included many seminars, discussions, publications of books, manuscripts, and journals devoted to promoting their views, but they were all mostly focused on formalizing their own philosophical lines and defending them against others' attacks. PCF would conduct much research and development, and would publish many works in different journals devoted to these efforts. Lewis explains that these journals included "Cahiers de Communisme, La Pensee, and La Nouvelle Critique, as well as in numerous monographs issued by its house press, Editions Sociales" and he also highlights that PCF would create a free university that was focused on theory and philosophy as well as the education of the members and, "party philosophers devoted much time to the development of courses and course materials for its Universite Nouvelle" (2005, p.118).

After the war, PCF started to revert to the line decided by the Short Course of Stalin, which meant a return to the orthodoxy, thus resulting in the abandonment of Front Populaire and its political and ideological gains. This orthodoxy included scientific claims of the ultimate victory of Marxism, as well as an exclusive claim on scientific and epistemological superiority. PCF would see the Soviet Union as the sole victor of the war, as well as the only victorious revolution until that point in history, and this would mean that they would be willing to follow the decisions and strategy of the Soviet Union and Comintern, both in practice and in theory. This view included a framework that sees both world wars as wars between various imperialist states, just as it was in the First World War (Adereth, p.111, 1984), and went as far as contemplating a possible peace deal with the invading Germans (Santamaria, p.265, 2002). Following the orders of the Soviet Union have created a PCF that were constantly and aggressively changing its policies, an example was that, as explained before, PCF supported the non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, which was seen as the government as supporting the Nazis and this would result in banning of the PCF (Adereth, p.51, 1984). The party's support for the non-aggression pact resulted in many of its core cadre resigning, and the party would be left with a core cadre which were exclusively Leninist. Furthermore, banning PCF would cause thousands of its members and supporters to be put in prison (Nugent & Lowe, p.32, 1982).

With the rising persecution and imprisonment of its members, the earlier view that sees both sides of the war as imperialist nations changed as the war progressed and PCF started organizing the resistance and contributing to the struggle against fascism with sabotage actions (Adereth, p.113, 1984). Especially after Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union, the PCF had to differentiate between the bourgeoisie, bankers, industrialists, and occupying Nazi forces and fascist puppet regime in France, thus focusing on the greater evil, which was fascism at the time. With this new distinction, PCF increased its resistance actions, which included assassinations, sabotage, workers' strikes, armed resistance, printing banned material and propaganda texts, etc (Tiersky, 1974, p.114). PCF formed different alliances, organizations and fronts during the years of occupation, this was made possible by a relaxation of its policies and with the new focus on the greater evil, such as its claim that the main focus of the resistance was to attain national liberation against the occupying forces rather than the orthodox idea of international class struggle (Adereth, 1984, p.119). But even though this was the case in PCF's policies regarding the organization of resistance, PCF still made its analyses based on class struggle and would try to dominate its allies and the organizations it had created based on this point (Nugent & Lowe, 1982, p.33). All these developments have created the effect of the rising popularity of PCF, adding to this, PCF was willing to work with the then-banished government that was led by De Gaulle, this willingness would continue even after the end of the war. The de Gaulle government was seen as a legitimate force during the war and after the war by the people, thus giving more legitimacy to the PCF and making the party seem more patriotic. What PCF sow at the time with its resistance efforts and focus on national liberation was reaped after the war as increased popularity and legitimacy among the population (Adereth, 1984, pp.122-124). Party's criticism towards Vichy regime and other actors' collaboration with the regime also meant that people saw PCF and communists as the true vanguard of the resistance (Judt, 1986, p.327), this view was made even stronger since PCF made many sacrifices during the resistance including thousands of its members in a conjuncture in which many other parties worked with the fascist regime and the occupying forces (Bell & Criddle, 1994, p.75). Even though there were some criticism towards the party claiming that PCF did not make use of the conjuncture, which was understood to be suitable for a revolution by some, by

highlighting the importance of class struggle (Adereth, 1984, p.127), it is clear now that actions of PCF and sacrifices of the resistance caused many intellectuals to join its ranks including Louis Althusser.

The events that were explained above are some of the reasons that gave PCF its post-war ideological power. What were the concrete results of these events? PCF increased its membership to a level that was never seen before and became the biggest political party in France after the elections (Nugent & Lowe, 1987, p.137). PCF then joined the government and even had ministers in it. It continued its previous Front Populaire line and proclaimed an alliance between workers and other classes against some ruling class fractions and families (Lewis, 2005, p.121), party leadership at the time even claimed that struggle for democracy was necessary for reaching the ultimate goal of socialism and there could be different ways other than the revolutionary way towards socialism, implicating that some form of democratic socialism may be considered even though it is not specified in what form it would be (Kelly, 1982, p.144). Disagreeing with the next government over overseas territories and issues related to workers' rights, PCF would be left out of government and France would sign the deal that offered them aid by the USA thus aligning with USA in the beginning of the Cold War, which made it impossible for PCF to continue its liberal policies that are more in line with the previous Front Populaire and party's early post-war policy that is underlining some form of nationalism under the National Liberation idea(Lewis, 2005, p.121). This, coinciding with the analysis made by Soviet Union's new leadership that is based on seeing the world as divided into two different camps which are the socialist and the imperialist camps, combined with the call to return to orthodoxy by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union resulted in PCF's return to its old line of strict Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy that is somewhat similar to Front Uni era(Bell & Criddle, 1994, p.78). Although it was similar to the previous era of Front Uni, there were some differences as well. According to Lewis, while the previous era was defined by the marginalisation of communists and a scarcity of communist philosophy under the circumstances of a war that is based on guns and weapons, this new era after the war was marked by communists being a majority and producing many philosophical and scientific works under the circumstances of a new Cold War which is not based on guns but instead

based on warring ideologies (2005, p.122). Lewis notes that, although temporarily set aside in favour of the narrative of “The Unity of International Science” during World War 2 and the PCF’s involvement in the postwar government, the Cold War period witnessed a revival of the party’s commitment to the notion of universal scientific knowledge as articulated in Stalin’s interpretation of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Initially, this revival took a relatively moderate form: the party claimed that Marxist philosophy represented a continuation of scientific inquiry, sharing both its methodological rigor and its focus on concrete, observable realities. However, as geopolitical tensions escalated and Stalin’s cult of personality intensified, the party’s position hardened. By 1949, it had embraced a binary framework, asserting that just as the world was politically divided into opposing blocs, science itself had fractured into two irreconcilable epistemological systems, only one of which, rooted in Marxist-Leninist principles, was believed to grasp objective reality in its true form (2005, p.122).

During and after the Second World War, the Communist Party, for some time, set aside its focus on Marxist-Leninist philosophy as a universal science. But with the onset of the Cold War, this idea regained importance in both party education and theory. Initially, the party presented Marxist philosophy as a scientific approach sharing methods and its object of inquiry with other sciences. However, by 1949, as Cold War tensions and Stalin's personality cult solidified, the party began claiming that science itself was ideologically divided, just as the world was divided into “two camps”, and only Marxist science was able to truly understand reality.

This is important, especially the last part of it. This shift from understanding Marxist philosophy as sharing some features with science to Marxist philosophy being the only way to access the concrete object, thus proclaiming it as a science, as the only science, had its effects on the party intellectuals. These intellectuals included existentialists, Hegelians, and Louis Althusser. Questions of Stalinism and Marxist science would become the main tenet of Althusser’s philosophical works, and “The problem of Stalinism has been ever-present in all Althusser’s theoretical work, perhaps qualified but never marginal.” (Gerratana, 1977, p.111). These different forms of Marxism would later have their own different critiques of Stalinism and

scientism that it brought. The criticisms would intensify especially after the death of Stalin and with the commencement of the 20th Congress of the CPSU. For Althusser, these criticisms remained as the right-wing critique of Stalinism, and there was a need for a new type of critique which would be a left-wing critique of Stalinism (Gerratana, 1977). To be able to rid Marxist philosophy and science of both the excesses of Stalinism and its schematism, and several right-wing deviations, including empiricism based on humanist anthropology and Hegelian essentialism, Althusser would defend the importance of going back to Marx's original works. He focused on the philosophy of science to understand what constitutes a science and what differentiates a science from an ideology. From that point on, Althusser explains the historical process that created Marx and Marxism and identified its epochs. Finally, he was able to explain where Marxist philosophy and science stand in relation to its ideological past and other ideologies and sciences, and the relationship between them (Althusser,1970). By establishing this solid theoretical ground, he managed to create the left-wing critique of Stalinism and several right-wing deviations stemming from Stalinism and de-Stalinisation. I will return to this in the next chapter in more detail.

Returning to the two camps/two sciences debate, this doctrine was upheld until the mid-1950s. Even after its abandonment, communist parties around the world continued to defend the exclusivity of the Marxist science in terms of reaching the true knowledge of the real concrete. Communist science was still believed to be superior to other sciences. Reasons for this superiority were explained by party intellectuals by referring to its connection with praxis. In Marxist science, theory and praxis were working together. Praxis meant the experiences and class struggle of the working class. Since the practices of the working classes were based on the real, concrete object and life itself, the knowledge and theory they produced were ultimately better than the knowledge produced by bourgeois science. In contrast with Marxist proletarian science, bourgeois science was based too much on empiricism. This empiricism was not in any relation with any form of praxis or proletarian experience, which meant that it was less scientific (Lewis, 2005, pp.122-126).

It can be seen here how this connects to Althusser's views on philosophy of science or theory of science. Althusser, although still somewhat inside this framework of

PCF and CPSU, opted for a third way between these two “camps”. He thought that bourgeois science was too empiricist, which meant that it concealed its underlying assumptions, thus ultimately being ideological. But at the same time, the PCF line also had its shortcomings. It was assumed that life itself and praxis were necessary for reaching the real, concrete object and extracting its true knowledge. Although practice was still the main tenet of Marxist science, Marxist science was its own practice, which started with an abstract object in thought and proceeded towards a concrete object of knowledge in thought (Althusser, 1970). There was no direct relation with a concrete object. This new view proposed by Althusser was an intervention against both views and also against different forms of Marxism at the time, which was also clearly stated many times by Althusser himself (Althusser, 2005), which will be explained later.

The view that true knowledge was found in the class struggle of the proletariat, which mixes theory and practice in its actions, was extended to such a level that party leaders and, by extension, leaders of the Soviet Union were seen to be the ultimate applicators of the theory and carriers of the Marxist science. This was possible since the party was the vanguard of the workers, whose experience was a fusion of theory and practice, thus had a superiority as explained before, and the leader was the vanguard of the communist party, and Stalin was the leader of the Soviet Union, which was the vanguard of the Communist Internationale. As a result, this meant for some intellectuals that Stalin was the ultimate embodiment of Marxist science.

Compared to this, bourgeois scientists and politicians were just servants of bourgeois class interests that are methodologically isolated from praxis, which made their science and their practices based on this science inferior. This new view meant that Marxist “science” became a schematic tool for justification of the program of the communist party rather than a tool for analysis. Every aspect of life, be it natural or social, was put through this formula and became a justification for party ideology (Lewis, 2005, pp.125-127). Bourgeoisie was on the wrong side of history, and the laws of dialectic denied them the true knowledge while assuring the ultimate victory of the communist party and the proletariat, “Having mastered the science of

Dialectical Materialism and being certain of its historical role, the problem of revolution became not theoretical but technical; it was just a matter of applying a formula." (Lewis, 2005, p.127).

PCF's Marxism and the political results, roughly until the 20th Congress of the CPSU, can be summarised as above. This new orthodoxy, which is based on "two camps" and "superiority of knowledge", and PCF's policies deriving from it, as well as PCF's previous, more liberal and nationalistic theories and practices, all had effects on the conjuncture and on the other forms of Marxism that were based on the same conjuncture. Now, returning to World War 2 and the intellectual and political scene right after it, I will continue with Hegelian Marxism and how and why it developed, as well as why it was to be criticised by other forms of Marxism and Louis Althusser.

2.5. The Hegelian Form of Marxism in France

Marxist intellectuals before and after World War 2 had been following the politics of PCF closely and were one way or another related to PCF, which meant that PCF's decision to liberalize its stance or return to orthodoxy had created some openings that the Hegelian Marxists could use. During the time of the Front Uni, although there were Hegelian Marxists, they were purged from the party and criticised. But during the Front Populaire era before the war and during the time of the alliances of resistance that included an ideological liberalization and nationalization, which was extended beyond the war until the doctrine of Two Camps was enforced and a call for a return to orthodoxy was made, Hegelian Marxism flourished. Unlike the Front Populaire which happened before the war, the time after World War 2 was also marked by an all-time high popularity for Marxism because of its connections to resistance in the case of PCF, which meant for Hegelian Marxism a chance to make use of the reputation of Marxism in general at the time and use its reputation to make a name for itself, which was not possible in the years before the war. The Hegelian form of Marxism was marked by the works of Auguste Cornu and Henri Lefebvre, which were popularised in the first few years after World War 2. Their works were good examples of the Hegelian form of Marxism and became post-war best-sellers,

and they had lasting effects on the following generations during the ensuing years, especially after the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU (Lewis, 2005, pp.127-128). This point will be further discussed later.

Hegelian Marxists were criticised by PCF on the grounds that their focus was shifting overtly and excessively towards cultural issues and man. This was also true for Existential Marxists, who were also influenced by Hegel and were essentially doing a different variant of Hegelian reading of Marx. But while Existentialists were focused more on the individual man and his alienation and breaking free from this alienation, Hegelians were focused more on the historical transformation processes of the "Geist" and how it developed to give us the "total man" (Lewis, 2005, p.116). Different from Existentialists, works of Hegelian Marxists included an emphasis on the relationship between the society and the consciousness which were explained from a more culture centred and Hegelian historicist perspective, a historicism which was later criticised by Louis Althusser with the claim that Marx's concept of the dialectic process was in fact a complex dialectic with different historical times rather than having a singular history defined only by a fundamental contradiction (Althusser, 1970). What these meant was that their works essentially became a cultural critique and left the instance economy out of the picture, which made Hegelian Marxism similar to the works of the intellectuals associated with the Frankfurt School, and their works may also be likened to the works of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. This was to make them a target for PCF and has resulted in all camps fortifying their fronts against each other rather than being in a positive dialogue with each other (Lewis, 2005, pp.116-117).

One of the two important intellectuals who were identified in the Hegelian Marxist line is Cornu. His work was mainly an attempt to show the theoretical links between Marx's works and the works of Hegel and other German idealists and rationalist thinkers, including Fichte and Schelling. Cornu saw Marx as a continuation of that line and saw him as a part of the German tradition, and claimed that Marx owed most of his theory to Hegel and German tradition. Especially the unity of being and thought, which also meant that Marx and Hegel both strived to understand the totality of the world, and some notions regarding the reality itself such as it being

rational and developing dialectically, which meant that self-emergence of reason was inherent in the dialectical process and it is the cause of this process, which were claimed to be what Marx have taken from Hegel (Cornu, 1957). This is what was assumed by Cornu rather than accepted by Marx himself. Marx's only claim was that he had taken the idealist dialectic from Hegel, which was standing on its head and turned upside down by transforming it into a materialist dialectic (Marx, 1960, p.19). Marx especially saw the reason as a product of the aforementioned process of the dialectic rather than seeing it as the starting point of the process. Marx explains that it is important to understand that the dialectical process starts with the material production process and then proceeds to produce the products, consciousness, and other superstructural elements (Marx & Engels, 1989, p.58). This view of Cornu that Hegelianizes Marx and shows him as a left Hegelian, even though Marx himself had broken away with this line, was later criticised in great detail by Althusser (1970). Some others think that Cornu's attempt to show late Marx as a Hegelian was, in fact, a political move made by the author. Since, at the time of Cornu's writing, many earlier works of Marx were not translated, one may assume that there was a strategic reason behind this theoretical move, which may be to counteract the schematism and orthodoxy of the Stalinist line. On this topic, Lewis (2005) notes that, by concentrating primarily on Marx's writings prior to his theoretical rupture with Feuerbach, Cornu presents a portrayal of Marx as fundamentally aligned with the Left Hegelian tradition. This interpretive choice appears to serve a strategic purpose, particularly in contrast to accounts such as Stalin's, which prioritize a deterministic and scientistic reading of Marx centred on economic structures. Cornu's approach repositions Marx within the realm of philosophical inquiry, specifically concerning the dialectic between being and thought, rather than reducing him to a proto-scientist of historical development. Given the emphasis on Marx's pre-1846 texts, this interpretation is textually supportable, as those writings contain clear engagements with Hegelian themes. Even though Marx's later work, following his turn to materialism and political praxis, marks a significant departure from speculative philosophy, Cornu's framing remains defensible on two grounds. First, it offers a strategic intervention aimed at broadening Marxist discourse beyond the rigid confines of Stalinist dialectical materialism. Second, it is grounded in textual evidence that demonstrates a substantive intellectual continuity between the young

Marx and the Left Hegelians. (Lewis, 2005, p.129) Although there were strategic reasons for highlighting the link between Marx and Hegel, it must be stated that it mostly stayed strategic rather than a rigorous theoretical work.

Similarly, Lefebvre also believed that Marx was ultimately a left Hegelian. Comparing the formal logic with the Hegelian dialectic, Lefebvre explained the superiority of the Hegelian one and claimed that this line exists in Marx's works, even in the later ones, in the form of an inversion which makes the dialectic capable of understanding the real concrete. For Lefebvre, this was possible by borrowing the historical transformation of human consciousness and taking it to a materialist level while also building on the methodology of Hegel. Lefebvre also criticised Leninism's theory of knowledge and its mechanical form, and instead put forward a view that is based on the relationship between man and nature. This critique went to such a level that it implicitly claimed that the material was not prior to the ideal (Kelly, 1982, p.58). Lefebvre thought that although starting with a solid basis, Hegel took the dialectic too far by claiming that it was able to explain everything about the man and the nature, which also meant that the process of knowledge started and ended in thought while Marx did not see dialectic in that way but rather saw it as a method for analysing the real concrete. Even though Lefebvre spoke of the differences between Marx's dialectic and Hegel's dialectic, he also believed that both had the same conclusions, while the former explained the historical becoming of the concrete starting with the thought, the latter remained in thought only (Lewis, 2005, pp.130-132).

Another important part of Hegelian Marxists' works was the concept of alienation. They believed that human beings were separated by force from the products of their labour, and this alienation was emerging in the consciousness of the man. The main object of the critique was to reveal this and to overcome this by reappropriating the lost part of the man. But this analysis mostly left out the aspect of class struggle and was instead understood to be made possible by the analysis and the critique of culture. Thus, the notion of revolution itself was understood to be a cultural process. This made Hegelian Marxists leave the field of political economy and focus on cultural theory and aesthetics, as was explained before. (Lewis, 2005, p.133).

Hegelian Marxists were accepted with open arms during the first few years after the war, and for some time, they were even viewed as official party ideologues until the call for a return to orthodoxy was made with the start of the Cold War. Then talking and writing about Hegel became unacceptable and raised too many questions in PCF, and Hegelian Marxists were viewed as potential traitors to the cause (Kelly, 1982, p.82). Pressured by the PCF, Hegelian Marxists were forced to leave their original theoretical position and admit their mistakes while analysing Marx's works and associating his philosophy with the left form of Hegel. Some would criticise their own early works, while others abandoned their works on Marx and Hegel and instead focused on cultural and literary criticism, but these criticisms remained based implicitly on the Hegelianized version of Marx (Lewis, 2005, p.135).

To summarize, the Hegelian form of Marxism in France was in relationship with the PCF, its popularity and its policies as well as the positions favoured by the communist internationale. Hegelian views had already existed before the war, but gained popularity in conjunction with the rise of Marxist philosophy in France in general. Hegelian Marxism was based on the view that Marx's philosophy was the continuation and correction of the left-Hegelian philosophy. The philosophical framework that intellectuals like Lefebvre and Cornu have developed was ultimately based on ideal/thought rather than the material/concrete, since it supposed that Marxist dialectic was the inversion of the Hegelian dialectic (Althusser, 1970), and thus had political implications such as rejecting the Leninist formula for revolution and reframing it as a process based on analysis and the critique of culture. Even though they were popular, Hegelian Marxism fell out of favour and was repressed by the communist party with the start of the Cold War, and returned to the orthodoxy and the acceptance of the "Two Camps" principle both in theory and political practice. Even though this was the case, Hegelian form of Marxism in France and beyond was to remain as an undercurrent for many years to come and would influence the following generations of Marxist intellectuals, until they would resurface with newfound force after the events of 1956 and the ensuing process of de-Stalinization in the international communist movement commenced by the secret speech made by the Nikita Khruschev, the leader of the Soviet Union at the time of

the 20th Congress of the CPSU, and then they were to be the target of a philosopher who was also a child of the same conjuncture, namely Louis Althusser.

2.6. Existentialist Form of Marxism in France

Similar to Hegelian Marxism, Existentialist Marxism was also influenced by Hegel. The main difference was that while Hegelian Marxists studied Hegel's dialectic in comparison with Marx's dialectic and claimed that there was a continuation, Existentialists mainly focused on the experiences of the individual. To be able to understand where existentialism came from, one should look at its philosophical predecessors and their sources of inspiration because this line of Marxism did not appear out of thin air. Although there are claims that Hegelianism did not have any roots in French academia and intelligentsia (Poster, 1975), some others claim that there was a uniquely French form of Hegelianism before the war, such as the Philosophies group. This line of French Hegelianism was made possible by two important scholars who have been giving lectures and publishing articles on Hegel, especially focusing on Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit in 30s, they were Kojève and Hyppolite (Baugh, 2003).

Their aim was to attack the established French academia, which was mostly Kantian and which was advocating for some form of moral idealism. These two thinkers, although having similarities with previous Hegelian line of the Philosophies Group on the topic of development of reason in history, were ultimately different since their work was not about understanding the social totality through a historical dialectical development but rather about understanding the development of the individual consciousness and its experiences and understanding the dialectic movement based on it. This was because of their chosen sources, which include some parts of the Phenomenology of Spirit on self-consciousness. This meant that their works advocated the idea that Hegel was above all, "a phenomenologist of individual experience rather than a dialectical logician or a chronicler of the development of the absolute spirit through its self-alienation" (Lewis, 2005, p.137). Kojève believed that the main tenet of the development of consciousness was the clash of the will of the Lord with the will of the slave. Their clash was based on the slave's recognition of

itself, its self-consciousness, through the relationship of bondage and the recognition it demanded from the other. Kojève explains that this is the basis of the dialectic, and this dialectic explains history, which is based on constant violence and clash between the Lord and the slave, that is ultimately a struggle of the individual to be free as a part of a society that is also ultimately free. Thus, the consciousness of the individual will realise itself as free from the relationship of bondage (Kojève, 1969, pp. 15-29).

Hyppolite also worked on the topic of individual consciousness and its self-realization, similar to Kojève. Just like him, Hyppolite worked on the individuals' struggle to get recognition, which is an essential aspect of the Hegelian dialectic, but his studies were mostly on the issue of alienation, which is based on the unhappy consciousness described by Hegel. It was explained with the term "unhappy consciousness" because self-consciousness was constituted through others, and this entailed a recognition from the others, which meant that the individual would be alienated from society and would finally accept that there is something bigger in the world that it is unable to negate. What this meant for Hyppolite is that consciousness brings with it the alienation and the alienated individual thus labelled as "unhappy consciousness", furthermore this situation was inherent in the societies of the West, which was, Hyppolite claimed, a temporary situation since alienation could be overcome with developments in the sphere of culture (Poster, 1975, pp.26-27).

It was clear that both thinkers were influenced by the French Marxism while doing their own readings of Hegel, which meant that they also made use of Marxism's post-war reputation and made a name for themselves, which also meant that a few years later, they would also face pressures from the PCF because of the idealist deviations in their philosophy and their affiliations with Hegelian Marxism, which was previously summarised, and the Existentialist form of Marxism in France, which includes thinkers such as Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and Camus. Being able to publish their works even during the years of the war, these philosophers became very famous and attracted great indignation from the communist intellectuals and the PCF. Influenced by the works of Kojève and Hyppolite, their starting point was also Hegel's Phenomenology, but they chose to focus on the individual experience rather than the historical dialectic of consciousness. Existentialists understood the

individual to be a subject defined by their ontological split, which was not rooted in Kojève and Hyppolite, but rather in philosophers such as Heidegger and Husserl, from whom they got their inspiration. Sartre and Merleau-Ponty's early works were based on the works of these German phenomenologists and French Hegelians, and their later works were to be a fusion of their early works and Marxism (Lewis, 2005, pp.138-139).

Sartre is clear about the philosophical roots of his works, which are based on Husserl, Heidegger, and, not surprisingly, Hegel, even though there are moments where he criticises and changes them (Chiodi, 1976, pp.8-32). Especially when it comes to the concepts such as primacy of being and his views regarding the nature of consciousness, as well as the imperative to make phenomenological description, the inspiration is clear and openly stated (Sartre, 1966, pp.315-340). Sartre subscribes to the line set by Husserl on denying to accept the ontological dualisms such as nature and appearance and explains that these sorts of dualisms are embarrassments for the philosophy and to avoid this embarrassment, he highlights that true reality is the reality as it appears in the consciousness of the humans (Sartre, 1966, pp.3-5). Sartre focuses on beings as appearances, and from that point on, he tries to find a way to uncover the relationship between humans and the world and claims that the only way to uncover this is to ask questions. These questions that we ask ourselves would reveal that we, in fact, don't have the answers, but this questioning may show the non-being in being to us. This sort of inquiry is not a part of the being but rather a part of the man, which also means that our own being contains a lack, and humans are the ones who give meaning to this nothingness (Sartre, 1966, p.46). Negation is inherent to the man's awareness of himself and what is not himself; thus, negation is inherent to individual consciousness. From this point, Sartre puts forward the notions of the not conscious and non-lacking "in itself" and constantly negating and relating "for itself" which is conscious (Sartre, 1966, p.173). What this ability of the self to negate means for Sartre is that humans always have choices, and they are "radically free" (Sartre, 1966, p.567). Sartre believes that one unsuccessfully tries to become a god by overcoming the self and uniting the "in itself" and "for itself" (Sartre, 1966, p.764). While the for-itself tries to create itself and negate the past and fails at this endeavour, this gives us the unhappy consciousness. Sartre believes that

consciousness and radical freedom are ontological given with unhappy consequences in its experiences, and the dialectic will never lead to a synthesis, which is where he differs from Hegel (Lewis, 2005, pp.141-142).

Merleau-Ponty agrees with many of Sartre's ontological assumptions and methodology, but thinks differently when it comes to some of the conclusions drawn from these assumptions. He believes that by choosing, man transcends, and this also means a "historical transcendence of a specific situation in the world" for Merleau-Ponty (Lewis, 2005, p.142). He also believes that there is a contingency at play that gives the actions of humans their meaning. While the humans are trying to establish their freedom, contingency is also there as the context that determines the choices that humans make (Cooper, 1979, p.17). Contingency is added to the picture, and from that point on, Merleau-Ponty rejects the separation of the "in itself" and "for itself" and the man from the others. He believed that there was a "space in between" the "in itself" and "for itself" which is "the intersubjective space of perception and the body" (Poster,1975, p.147). He thus "recognizes that the body is the locus of sensations which allow the for-itself to operate in the world," and "Subjectivity… is an intersubjective, dialectical process and not just an ontological given" (Lewis, 2005, p.142).

Unlike Sartre, he also believed that the choices we make have results which affect our following choices, because the choosing makes the chooser commit to a specific understanding of itself and its relation to the others, thus making us not fully free but also not fully determined (Cooper, 1979, p.20).

After World War 2 ended, the works of the Existentialists became very popular both nationally and internationally. Their works were studied and discussed in academia, in gazettes, and even in mainstream media, which claimed that existentialism was the ultimate philosophy that truly reflects the contemporary era. This made the PCF and communist intellectuals furious, and they would harshly criticise Existentialists since they believed that it was Marxist orthodoxy that was the superior philosophy of the post-war era. Lewis explains the direction of the critique; Communist critics contended that existentialism, at its core, was a bourgeois philosophy that ultimately

reflected the ideological framework of the bourgeoisie. In their view, this was the only plausible explanation for the central claims of thinkers like Sartre, that the individual possesses absolute freedom, exists in a state of alienation from their community, and acts without historical significance. Such assertions, they argued, were fundamentally disconnected from the lived experience of the working class, for whom "freedom" often means choosing between exploitation and destitution, and whose sense of purpose is grounded in collective struggle to overcome alienation. From this perspective, existentialism appeared as a rebranded version of classical liberalism, cloaked in radical language but ultimately complicit in maintaining the status quo. Consequently, Communist critics concluded that existentialist philosophy functioned as an ideological justification for existing social conditions, aligning implicitly with the interests of the Gaullist state rather than challenging them. (Lewis, 2005, p.143)

Even though there was a hostility between communists and Existentialists, surprisingly, Existentialists would accept Marxist philosophy into their thoughts. Especially in the case of Merleau-Ponty, after the war ended, some claim that even before the end of the war, he was convinced that Marxism and revolutionary struggle were the fundamental requirements for humans to be free, and this was the only viable option for history to progress. Furthermore, this was being made possible by the USSR, which was the vanguard of the revolution. After the 1950s, Sartre became frustrated with the bourgeois state and would also embrace Marxist philosophy and politics as the only way to procure a way for the self-realization of individuals and guarantee their sphere of freedom (Lewis, 2005, pp.143-144). In the early years after the war, based on the dual nature of human beings, Sartre claimed that the time of Marxism was over and that the existentialism he described was rather based on humanism (Sartre, 1948).

In contrast with this, during the same years, Merleau-Ponty was starting to borrow some concepts from the Marxist philosophy while also criticising Marxism for its determinism, which was to change soon with his acceptance that freedom of the individual and the choices that humans made were dependent on the concrete socio-economic conditions (Merleau-Ponty, 2013).

Merleau-Ponty would later move even further towards Marxist ideas and would publish many works that fuse existentialism with Marxism, and his form of existentialism would become a variant of Marxism. This move into Marxism was made possible with his works on Marx's early works, which meant that he would leave out Marx's works that are based on economics. With this new theoretical basis, he would write critiques of liberalism and attack liberal idealism by comparing and contrasting it with the concrete situation arising out of real history. Kruks explains that Merleau-Ponty understood history as a dialectical progress which was based on the changes of structures; thus, he understood it as "the dialectical process in which general structures emerge." (Kruks, 1981, p.50). This meant that Marxism was for him a tool used for critique by the vanguard in a given contingency which would show the working class the way for achieving liberation, and after that point, the choice was given to the individual worker and it was up to the individual worker to decide whether to act on it (Kruks, 1981, p.51). Of course, this framework left out the economic structures and economic laws that Marxism described. He would both criticize liberal democracies and the Soviet Union by claiming that both systems are based on violence, while in the former, it was hidden, in the latter, it is official and clear (Merleau-Ponty, 1969, p.180). He believed that both liberal and communist politics were to be criticised because they both prevented humans from seeing that it was their own choices and actions which was to bring them closer to liberation. But at the same time, he continued to advocate for his own version of Marxism because he believed that it was the ultimate tool for the critique, which would show the possible actions and choices to humans and would put them on a path towards the recognition that they desired (Merleau-Ponty, 1969, pp.111-112).

In later years, he would still defend the dialectic of consciousness but would be disappointed with Marxism and communism with the ensuing Cold War politics, such as the actions of the USSR and the war in Korea, and he would change his mind about the liberatory aspect of Marxism. He would criticise Marxism in the West by claiming that Marxist philosophy was separated from its subject, and at some point, he came to the conclusion that this separation was, in fact, auspicious since a political revolution was not really a good idea to advance the history of humanity (Cooper, 1979, p.132).

While Marleau-Ponty was returning to his pre-Marxist position, Sartre was venturing into the territory of Marxism. This was caused by the failure of his political and moral aims, which included a hopeless political adventure for Sartre. National political events, such as the increasing persecution of communist politicians with the Cold War policies, also affected Sartre (Adereth, 1984, pp.151-152). Combined with the wars in the far east, Sartre was convinced that one needed to choose between the communist camp and the capitalist camp since the East and the newborn communist states in the East were the target of imperialism by the Western capitalist countries (Archard, 1980, pp.65-72).

Thus, Sartre tried to mix his existentialism with a Marxist perspective. Sartre's new works reflected this, he accepted that end of the alienation and achievement of true freedom was based on the general social and political situation and the process of the end of alienation was working differently for the bourgeoisie and the proletariat while for the former the system was already good, for the latter the existing situation made rejecting capitalism an imperative. This meant that a revolution was now seen by Sartre as a necessity if one wishes to end the alienation and this made the organization in the communist party a requirement since individual workers were too isolated to be able to work together and choose to liberate themselves and overcome the alienation, they needed the mind and action of the vanguard party (Poster, 1975, pp.167-170). These ideas were very well received by PCF at the time.

Existentialists would take an interest in Marxism on and off for many years until the events of 1956 and the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Based on Hegelian ideas but going beyond that and establishing their very own French existentialism, they would assimilate Marxist themes into their work when the conjuncture and especially the actions of PCF and the international communist movement made it possible. They would remain a form of humanist idealism and were one of the main targets of Althusser's critique after the events of 1956.

2.7. Conclusion

Althusser would attack not only the existentialist and Hegelian strands of Marxism, but he would also criticise the PCF and the politics of the Soviet Union and the

CPSU. He wanted to clear Marxist philosophy of the deviations he had identified with his intervention. I have explained the political scene in France before and after the war and have summarised the crisis in the international communist movement as well as the situation of the intelligentsia and PCF before and after the war until the 20th Congress of the Soviet Union. These were some of the important elements of the conjuncture that have affected Althusser and ultimately resulted in the creation of his original works, and culminated in the intervention he has made. In the next chapter, I will be summarising the events after 1956 and the secret speech of Nikita Khruschev and reactions to it. I will continue with Althusser's analysis of the concrete situation, both at the level of politics and its reverberations in Marxist philosophy. I will be explaining how this situation necessitated an intervention by Louis Althusser and how this intervention has resulted in Althusser's version of Marxism, which has shaken the intellectual scene.

CHAPTER 3

ALTHUSSER'S INTERVENTION

3.1. Introduction

The first chapter focused on exploring the formation process -in other words, the past- of the four historical elements that defined Althusser, as mentioned earlier, and, in essence, reading Althusser from an earlier conjuncture. This reading is conducted specifically through the influences and consequences of the PCF and its policies. The PCF's importance here is paramount, as the most decisive factor in the political landscape of both the pre-war and post-war conjunctures is PCF politics and the political-intellectual Marxist milieu it shaped. Indeed, Althusser intervenes precisely in this emerging environment.

This chapter revolves around the following argument: Althusser essentially follows the orthodox line of the PCF, but he also finds it inadequate and reductionist, and consequently, too ideological. Althusser's fundamental concern is that this overly conservative and Stalinist orthodoxy, in light of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its aftermath, has been under attack by Humanist and Hegelian forms of Marxism, and other ideologies that have long been gaining ground, primarily due to PCF policies in the past and other factors of the political instance. Due to its theoretically flawed and inadequate structure, the orthodoxy has been unable to withstand this attack and has surrendered.

As noted in the previous section, the CPSU and the PCF, which followed its ideological-political line, constantly oscillated between a liberal Marxist and an orthodox line, leading to both "left-wing" and right-wing deviations. Althusser himself was affected by this constantly oscillating political-ideological structure. In

one sense, he was born into it and influenced by it, while in another, he recognized the dangers it posed and sought ways to escape it.

The rise of the right-wing critique of the traditional line to such a degree that it became mainstream during this period actually compelled Althusser to offer a left-wing critique of Stalinism. While this critique may appear to be directed against Stalinism and the PCF, at the same time, and perhaps even more importantly, the aim of Althusser's intervention was to construct a consistent and systematic critique of the idealist, speculative, humanist, and Hegelian Marxist forms that surrounded and permeated the Marxism of the period, as well as ideological scientific forms such as empiricism, rationalism, and positivism.

The effort to systematically and consistently carry out this critique led Althusser to transform established concepts, borrow new concepts from different traditions, and develop his own. He treated the various deviations that had permeated the Marxism of his time not as deviations but as ideological forms. He strove to ensure that the concepts employed by Marxism were explanatory and consistent, refusing to accept exceptional definitions such as "deviation." To clarify the differences between Marxism and Hegelian forms and to reveal the points where Marxism differed from other sciences, he studied the philosophy of science and proposed the distinction between science and ideology. He returned to the roots of Marxism and divided Marx's thought into periods, opting for a scientific "symptomatic" reading of this. He rejected claims that the theories of Marx and Hegel were similar, preferring to focus on their differences.

In all this, as befitted a PCF ideologue and communist militant, he built the pillars of his theory on the foundation of Marxist orthodoxy. During the crisis of the international communist movement after 1956 and the subsequent Sino-Soviet split, he carried Mao's influence while insisting on Leninism, expressing his commitment to orthodoxy when necessary. This would later lead to difficulties within his own party and a clash with the humanist, Hegelian ideology popular at the time. Despite all this, he would continue to reflect on the philosophy of Marxism and strive to elevate Marxism to the level of the sciences.

However, as a negative consequence of these same theoretical endeavors, by 1968 he would opt for inactivity, exhibit an elitist stance in academia, and his overly orthodox stance, which heavily bore the traces of the period in which his own thought emerged, would lead to harsh criticism, even from his own students, after 1968, for being too theoretical and elitist. The divisions and crises that had their foundations laid in the period beginning in the 1920s and continuing until the post-war period manifested themselves after 1956, creating the conjuncture in which Althusser formed and intervened. This period would continue, in flux, until 1968, and after that, a new era would dawn. Whether Althusser, subjected to harsh criticism along with the changing conjuncture, was able to adapt his own theory to suit it will be the subject of the next chapter. This chapter will examine the period between 1956 and 1968, the period during which Althusser was most theoretically active and most productive, leading to his greatest recognition. In other words, it will examine Althusser's intervention.

3.2. Before and After the Twentieth Congress

Congresses of the Soviet Union were important events throughout the history of the Soviet Union since they usually signalled important changes in policies and principles. Since CPSU was the leader of the international communist movement, a congress meant a new political path for communist parties around the world, which included the PCF. For example, content of the Eighteenth Congress of the CPSU in 1939 hinted towards a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany in the light of Western capitalist powers' policy of appeasement towards Germany, this was both a threat directed at the Western powers and a policy alignment as a measure against an existential threat against the sole existing proletarian dictatorship (Kenney, 1956, p.764).

The Eighteenth Congress also directed new objectives to the communist parties around the world. In PCF's case, this meant that PCF would see fascism as a variant of capitalism rather than an extraordinary form that requires a united front. But this also changed as Nazi Germany broke the non-aggression pact and attacked the Soviet Union, as explained in the previous chapter. It needs to be highlighted that the results and consequences of the Congress were relevant not only for the Soviet Union but

also for the other communist parties, including the PCF. Congress not only affected the path forward for communist countries but also directed the relations between the communist parties, relations between real socialist countries and the capitalist powers as well as creating pressure for changing the tenets of the ideology of the Soviet state and allied states, deciding on the fate of neutral nations and also decisions related to intricacies of the planned economy and the party organization. The congress itself did not decide on all these issues, but it did shed light on the decisions taken within the internal structure of the Politburo while also shedding light on the prospects of the future political line and power struggles inside the Party (Kenney, 1956, p.764).

Convened in February 1956, the Twentieth Congress of the Communist CPSU was a turning point in the political and ideological development of the USSR. The Congress provided a strategic chance to redefine doctrine, rethink leadership, and express a softer stance on the international scene, even though it did not overthrow the Soviet Union's totalitarian structure. This evolution was described as "calculated moderation" by Kenney (1956), meaning that the Congress was a planned recalibration intended to maintain elite authority while separating from the excesses of Stalinism. A conscious effort to reinterpret Soviet legitimacy through rhetorical reform, historical revisionism, and practical diplomacy is evident in the congress's procedures, speeches, and private sessions.

The Congress's outspoken rejection of Stalin's legacy was its most important historical contribution. Although there were a few allusions to Stalin in the open meetings, the criticisms were clear. Important individuals, including Nikita Khrushchev, Mikhail Suslov, and Anastas Mikoyan, denounced the consequences of Stalin's "cult of personality," which included the suppression of party democracy, historical fabrication, and arbitrary purges (Suslov, 1956). Mikoyan (1956) publicly questioned the validity of Stalin's legacy and demanded that party history be revised. By presenting Stalin's administration as an anomaly incompatible with Leninist ideals, Khrushchev (1956a) placed a strong emphasis on the return of "collective leadership" and intra-party discussion.

Khrushchev's "Secret Speech," which he gave to a secret session on February 24, 1956, cemented the ideological split. The Secret Speech, which was officially titled

“On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences”, condemned Stalin's abuse of power, terror reign, and betrayal of Lenin's orders (Khrushchev, 1956b). Khrushchev characterized Stalin's leadership as being based on fear and explained it with this example: “We never knew when we entered Stalin's presence whether we would come out alive" (Khrushchev, 1956b, p.12). The controlled distribution of the speech, which had been kept secret at first, sparked several violent protests and upheavals both domestically and abroad.

The Congress preserved the core framework of Soviet rule in spite of its rhetorical change. According to Kenney (1956, p.770), although being verbally demoted, the security apparatus remained ingrained in the power system, and the Politburo and Central Committee both remained instruments of elite authority. Stalin's institutions survived despite the condemnation of his actions. The idea of "collective leadership" most likely arose from an internal elite consensus to preserve oligarchic rule while preventing the accumulation of power in one person. A realignment of ideologies and a change of generations were reflected in personnel changes. A move toward military prestige and bureaucratic modernization was indicated by the elevation of Marshal Zhukov and the appointment of younger, technocratic bureaucrats to the positions of Secretariat and Presidium (Kenney, 1956, pp. 771-772). However, power was still distributed in a hierarchical and well-regulated manner.

Ideological orthodoxy was also redefined by the Congress. A more accommodating version of Marxism-Leninism was presented by Khrushchev (1956a), who confirmed that in certain capitalist nations, socialism could be attained by parliamentary means. This revision represented a tactical adjustment to international political circumstances and broke with the Stalinist fixation on revolutionary violence. The conference also acknowledged Yugoslavia's defiance of Soviet orthodoxy and confirmed that many national pathways may be taken throughout the transition to socialism. This break with the Stalinist revolutionary method and acknowledgement of the existence of various national paths towards socialism was to create diplomatic problems with China because of the fears of the CPC elite that Mao’s orthodoxy might be challenged. This point will be further examined later.

The idea of "Peaceful Coexistence" became a major subject in international policy. Although it wasn't completely novel, it received new attention as a key component of Soviet diplomacy. The USSR aimed for mutual respect, trade, and scientific collaboration with both capitalist and socialist countries, Khrushchev (1956a) emphasized. By adopting this stance, the Soviet Union was able to maintain its support for revolutionary forces when it was beneficial while simultaneously projecting an image of stability in global affairs.

The principle of “Peaceful Coexistence” was to cause the diplomatic problems with China to deepen even further. It also deepened the oscillation of the principles of the international communist movement, which was going to affect the PCF as well. Peaceful Coexistence principle, combined with the acceptance of differing variants of socialism as well as the declared cooperation with socialist and capitalist countries without differentiation meant that previously directed policies like return to orthodoxy or Front Uni in PCF’s case were to be understood as abominations and the continuous and increasingly powerful ideological and political oscillations were to create new deviations from the orthodoxy or solidify the already existing divisions in the international communist movement, including the intellectual and political scene in France.

Rather than being genuine changes in principle, Kenney (1956) notes that these gestures of moderation were intentional (p.782). As seen by its engagement in the Middle East and growing sway in the developing globe, the USSR maintained its broad objectives and clandestine methods. As stated at the congress, "peaceful coexistence" was a more diplomatic rebranding of revolutionary tactics rather than a rejection of global aspiration. The Twentieth Congress was a skilful repackaging of Soviet authority rather than a liberalizing revolution. The leadership established a credible and reformist image by rejecting Stalin's cult and reinterpreting Marxist principles. Kenney (1956) explains that rather than democratizing the USSR, the conference reoriented its ideological instruments to address new challenges both at home and abroad. By moving from orthodoxy to flexibility and from terror to moderation, the dictatorship was able to adjust without ceding authority. By doing this, the Soviet Union gave the world a new picture of political stability and

ideological maturity while still pursuing its fundamental goals in a more covert manner.

However, although the Congress's aim was to reduce tensions in the international arena by pursuing a policy of strategic détente and political moderation, these developments would in fact plunge the international communist movement into crisis. For the Soviet Union was not just any country, and the CPSU was not just any communist party; they were the leaders of the international communist movement and vanguard of the world's first successful communist revolution. Therefore, the international communist movement, organized within a strict hierarchy, would be faced with the dilemma of following in the CPSU's footsteps or breaking away from it. This contradiction and oscillation would manifest and deepen in France in general and in the PCF and its intellectual circle in particular. These developments would later pave the way for the conjuncture that would lead to Althusser's emergence as a philosopher.

Returning to the political developments before and after the Twentieth Congress, although the congress was legally designated as the supreme decision-making authority, this was not the de facto case since it did not really have legislative power. This situation was especially solidified during the years of Stalin's leadership, in which Stalin had transformed the previously annually organized congresses with binding legal powers into rare occurrences, which only solidified and announced the decisions of the leadership and the Politburo. The congress was seen as an indicator for future change and emphasis on new policy. For this reason, the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was watched closely by many international observers who saw the congress as the political indicator that would show the direction of the Party after the death of Stalin, because this congress was the first congress after his death. The Twentieth Congress was seen as even more important because of the many unusual political events that marked the years between 1952 and 1956 such as "the resignation of Georgi M. Malenkov as Premier" and "the ascendancy of First Secretary Nikita S. Khrushchev", "Soviet assent to a peace treaty with Austria" which neutralized the country politically, "Soviet withdrawal from bases" outside the country which included those in China, "the

visits of Khrushchev and Bulganin" to several non-aligned nations in Asia, "reduction of Soviet military forces and military budget" and "the attempted rapprochement with Yugoslavia" (Kenney, 1956, p.764).

While the first two of the political events mentioned above relate to the Soviet Union's domestic politics and power struggles at the time, the other political events are more related to the chain of events that influenced foreign policy and ultimately led to the crisis of the international communist movement defined by the Sino-Soviet split and other political divisions. Therefore, what will be examined first is the first two political events and the broader political process they encompassed up until the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, and also including the Twentieth Congress itself. Other political events that are more related to the crisis of the international communist movement will be examined after this.

Malenkov, a politician who was in the close circle of Stalin, was originally proclaimed in 1952 as the successor of Stalin, which started power struggles and conspiracy between the candidates for the leadership position that included the ten members of the Politburo, after the death of Stalin. The candidates included the leader of the security forces, Beria, the foreign minister, Molotov, Bulganin, and Kaganovich, the political patron of Khruschev until then. Malenkov was the new head of the Council of Ministers and started consolidating power. One of the first decisions was to expel the new members of the Politburo, including Khrushchev. Khrushchev was then sent to work in the Party apparatus and was appointed to different positions in the Party (Tompson, 1995, p.114).

Alliances inside and outside the Politburo were constantly being made and discarded during the power struggles. Khrushchev, who had witnessed the atrocities committed by the leadership during the Stalin era, have used the time of power struggles to conspire with those in the Politburo who were afraid that the harshness of the Stalin era would continue, and also with his knowledge of Politburo politics he conspired with those who were afraid that they would lose their positions. First, collaborating with Malenkov, he was able to defeat Beria by recruiting Beria's trusted allies and making them betray him and execute Beria with claims that he was preparing a military coup against the leadership (Blauvel, 2008, pp.105-120).

Later, Khrushchev continued to rise in ranks and, with the support of his new connections in the Party, by showing the danger of consolidation of power in the hands of the Politburo, he was able to turn the Party apparatus against Malenkov. He was able to do this since he was working at the party and had been appointing the local party secretaries and promoting them to the central committee, thus building his power base slowly but surely (Taubman, 2003, p.259). Although officially the Soviet Union was ruled by the collective leadership under the Politburo, Malenkov was the first among the members of the Politburo. Khruschev used the files he appropriated from security chief Beria after his liquidation to claim that Malenkov was complicit in Stalin's atrocities to discredit Malenkov (Taubman, 2003, pp.260-264).

In the next Supreme Soviet meeting, Malenkov was replaced by Bulganin, and a symbolic position of ministry was given to Malenkov, which was a big surprise at the time for political commentators and observers around the world (Fursenko, 2006, pp.15-17). This event guaranteed that Khrushchev would be the first among the Politburo, thus above the collective leadership, even though it was officially the collective leadership that was ruling the Soviet Union (Tompson, 1995, pp.141-142). In 1955, Khrushchev was already planning the process of de-Stalinization and the critique of the "Cult of Personality" and was planning to make a speech in the Twentieth Congress on this issue, thus aiming to make the issue public. At the same time, Stalin's atrocities were being investigated, and many prisoners in Gulag camps were being released en masse (Taubman, 2003, p.275).

The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU started in these political conditions. Khrushchev was determined to make the speech against Stalin, and he claimed that the elimination and liquidation of the Stalinist cult of personality would help the Party regain the loyalty of the people of the Soviet Union. This was needed since the excesses of Stalinism and atrocities committed during the era had disillusioned the people and made them lose faith in the Party. He was going to make the speech, but with the pressure from the Politburo, he was seemingly persuaded into making a secret speech for Soviet delegates only (Taubman, 2003, pp.276-280).

After the hours-long "Secret Speech", Stalin's image changed significantly. What were deemed as Stalin's crimes and power abuses were exposed, and Stalin's

reputation was tarnished. It was explained that Stalin's harsh physical and political liquidations, caused by his incessant intolerance, included those who were loyal to the Soviet Union and had devastating effects on the Soviet society (The New York Times, 1956). Although the Secret Speech had a wide range of repercussions, it did not significantly alter Soviet society. Later in 1956, the speech contributed to the instability in Poland and the revolution in Hungary. Additionally, in Stalin's homeland of Georgia, his supporters staged four days of riots in June, demanding Khrushchev's resignation and urging that Molotov assume leadership (Taubman, 2003, pp. 286-291).

"The Secret Speech" did not really stay a secret; on the contrary, it was encouraged to be widely circulated in the following days. Although only Soviet delegates were present during the actual delivery, Eastern European representatives heard a recitation the next evening. It was deliberately spoken slowly so that they could take notes. In the first two weeks, copies were being distributed across the Soviet Union, labelled "not for the press" instead of "top secret". Within a month, an official translation was published in Poland, where thousands of additional copies were printed. Not surprisingly, one of the translations quickly reached the West (Taubman, 2003, pp.279-280).

As a result of the secret speech and various other economic policies, a group of Politburo members called the "Anti-Party Group" launched a coup attempt to overthrow Khrushchev, but this attempt was thwarted with the support of Marshal Zhukov. Members of the group were removed from their positions, and those who helped them were deported to various regions (Tompson, 1995, pp. 176-183). Following these events, Bulganin and Zhukov were also purged, and Khrushchev, who took over the highest positions in both military and civilian positions, amassed great political power. Although Khrushchev had become the leading figure, he did not possess the total authority that Stalin once held. (Tompson, 1995, p.189).

Returning to the Twentieth Congress's preceding events related to international relations, it is important to understand that these events and their consequences continued after the Congress until resulting in the Sino-Soviet split, which would

further contribute to the crisis of the international communist movement which have been brewing until then. One of the important political events preceding the Congress was the abandonment of several bases around China, including Port Arthur, which was transferred to Chinese control following a friendship treaty between the Soviet Union and China. The treaty also included an important loan given to China, as well as a promise of military aid (Lüthi, 2010, pp.30-33). Khrushchev sent a group of experts to China to help its development, as well as to make an important technology transfer. Khrushchev also promised the transfer of the bases to China in a diplomatic visit, but this process was jeopardized by further demands made by China (Taubman, 2003, pp.336-337). But in the following years, different opinions on Marxism-Leninism and planned economy have damaged the treaty and put a distance between China and the Soviet Union (Crozier, 2000, pp.142-157).

After Khrushchev came to power in the CPSU, the Soviet Union tried to repair the relations between China and the Soviet Union, and new trade agreements were made with China. During this process, the wrongdoings of Stalin against China were highlighted as a part of the attempted de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union and its changing discourse regarding its past. Even with these attempts, Khrushchev and Mao had different opinions on Marxism-Leninism and Stalin (Lüthi, 2010, pp.39-40).

Khrushchev, as explained before, started the de-Stalinization of the Soviet Union in 1956 with his Secret Speech “On the Cult of Personality and its Consequences”, which denounced Stalin and Stalinism, particularly the Great Purge, purge of the Soviet Armed Forces, and the CPSU. The fact that Khrushchev did not seek the opinion of Mao and the CCP before the speech meant that Mao believed Khrushchev did not care about the consequences of the Secret Speech, which concerned the Chinese leadership, thus leading to a cooling of relations (Taubman, 2003, p.338). As a result of this, Sino-Soviet relations started to deteriorate. Mao perceived the process of de-Stalinization as a threat to the political authority that he had established since the end of the civil war (Zubok, 2007, p.136). Mao had imitated Stalin's leadership style and the practical application of Marxism-Leninism in the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which included many

elements of Stalin's understanding of Leninism. Mao would face issues of ideological credibility and receive blows to his political authority in the context of the process of de-Stalinization. This was also caused by the CPSU's ideological and political change from Stalin's confrontation principle against the Western capitalist powers to Khrushchev's principle of Peaceful Coexistence with the West (Lüthi, 2010, pp.49-50). This would later result in Mao's refusal of the military cooperation attempts made by Khrushchev (Taubman, 2003, p.391).

Ideological divergences between Mao Zedong and Nikita Khrushchev significantly intensified the political mistrust of the Chinese leadership during the formative years of communist China. In the post-Civil War context, Mao exhibited acute sensitivity to ideological deviations that could threaten the cohesion and legitimacy of the CCP. Khrushchev's repudiation of Stalinism, articulated most prominently through his de-Stalinization campaign and the Secret Speech, was perceived by Mao not merely as a historical reassessment but as a direct challenge to the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy upon which the CCP's authority rested. Mao positioned himself within a historical continuity that included Stalin as a foundational figure, and thus Khrushchev's revisionism was viewed as an existential ideological threat. Within Chinese political discourse, Khrushchev became associated with domestic anti-party elements and was increasingly framed as a bourgeois revisionist antithetical to proletarian interests. This ideological framing served to delegitimize the Soviet leadership in the eyes of Chinese party members and bureaucrats and facilitated a broader ideological shift that recast the USSR as ideologically dangerous to Chinese socialism despite shared foundational commitments to Marxism-Leninism. The resulting divergence in ideological interpretation played a critical role in the fragmentation of the Sino-Soviet alliance after the death of Stalin (Lüthi, 2010, pp.48-77).

The Sino-Soviet split was so severe that China did not hesitate to put in jeopardy the offer made by the USSR to give China the blueprints and technology to build the atom bomb and the Nuclear Agreement that was a result of it. As a consequence of the coldness in relations, Khrushchev would later order the destruction of the documents and blueprints related to the construction of the atom bomb that was previously given to China (Zubok, 200, p.137).

Public sentiment in China also shifted in response to Khrushchev's foreign economic policies, which were interpreted as undermining socialist solidarity. While Stalin had absorbed much of the economic cost of the Korean War, Khrushchev reversed this precedent by instituting a repayment scheme requiring the PRC to reimburse the USSR over a period of a few years. This policy was applied during the widespread food crisis in China. This meant that the redirection of food shipments to the Soviet Union was forced during a time of famine, and naturally, this was seen as a betrayal of the internationalist commitments associated with Marxist-Leninist ideology. The political consequences of these decisions were significant. Khrushchev's economic demands were viewed in China not only as exploitative but as indicative of a broader ideological realignment away from the revolutionary principles of the era of Stalin. In the context of China's food problem, Mao strategically constructed Khrushchev as a scapegoat, thereby externalizing blame and reinforcing his own ideological legitimacy (Lüthi, 2010, pp.75-77).

This process explains the way in which shifts in ideological and political principles directly influenced domestic political strategies and intra-bloc alignments before and after the Twentieth Congress, thus leading the international communist movement into a deeper crisis with the addition of the Sino-Soviet split to the already divided international communist movement. Some other elements of this division include the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the uprising in Poland, and the USSR's rapprochement attempt with Yugoslavia.

An important communist leader in Poland died after reading the contents of the Secret Speech, which led to a more liberal domestic political alignment in Poland and also created a similar effect in Hungary. This was followed by a worker strike in Poland, which turned into a riot and was suppressed violently. This event marked the beginning of increased anti-Soviet sentiment and further protests in Poland, which finally resulted in the elections of the Polish Presidium. Victors of the elections were the moderate faction, and the Soviet Union decided to meet them and agreed together to keep the relations between the two countries friendly. This was made possible by the concession given by the Soviet Union that let the moderates keep the power in the Presidium, which led to greater liberalization in Poland as a result (Tompson,1995, pp.166-168).

Getting inspiration from the Polish case, Hungarian protests became a mass uprising, and they were able to put the reformist faction to power in the Hungarian Communist Party. The uprising did not stop, and many people died during the clashes between the Soviet Army and the reformist protesters. After the negotiations between the Hungarian reformists and CPSU leadership, Khrushchev decided to agree to a ceasefire and pulled the Soviet Army out of Hungary (Fursenko, 2006, pp.122-124). This would lead the Hungarian leadership to announce its exit from the Warsaw Pact and declare multi-party elections and neutrality. The Soviet Union did not sit idly and occupied Hungary as a result; clashes between the Soviet Army and Hungarian forces caused thousands of people to die (Fursenko, 2006, pp.120-125). The Soviet Union's incompetence and earlier reluctance in managing the Hungarian issue made it far worse, and the harshness of its ultimate solution provoked serious international reactions (Tompson, 1995, pp.168-170).

Mao Zedong saw the Hungarian Revolution as a serious political threat as it openly questioned Soviet authority and required military repression. The rebellion showed the limits of coercive legitimacy within the socialist bloc in addition to exposing the weakness of Communist Party control in Eastern Europe. The event served as a reminder to Mao of the perils of ideological liberalization and the possibility that internal dissension may turn into a systemic collapse. The CCP reaffirmed its strong Stalinist stance and officially denounced Soviet revisionism in reaction to the political impact of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization drive and the escalating turmoil in Eastern Europe. The CCP's internal power was strengthened by this reaffirmation of traditional Marxist-Leninist philosophy, which also helped to distinguish the Chinese socialist model from the USSR's model. The CCP’s ideological stance in the wake of the Hungarian crisis signalled a deepening division within the international communist movement. While the Soviet leadership sought to distance itself from Stalinist governance, Chinese leaders emphasized continuity with Stalin’s legacy as essential to maintaining revolutionary discipline and state control. This divergence in doctrinal interpretation contributed to the gradual erosion of the "monolithic communism," which means that the uniformity of ideology within the Eastern Bloc was damaged (Lüthi, 2010, pp.62-63).

The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia had a strained relationship that had been broken in 1948 when Stalin decided that ex-partisan Yugoslav leader Tito could not be subjugated by the Soviet Union. Khrushchev made great efforts to fix this relationship. In an attempt to mend diplomatic relations, Khrushchev led a Soviet delegation to Belgrade in 1955. Khrushchev was successful in reducing tensions and restoring a certain level of cordiality between the two countries, thereby reversing the animosity that had characterized bilateral relations since the Stalinist split, despite Tito's overtly combative style and efforts to damage the credibility of the Soviet delegation (Tompson, 1995, pp.145-147). During the time of the crisis in Hungary, Tito's first decision was to support the reformist faction in the Hungarian Presidium, but later, Khrushchev changed his mind and showed him the need for intervention (Tompson, 1995, p.169).

Nevertheless, the Soviet military intervention in Hungary strained Moscow's relations with Belgrade, undermining the diplomatic progress Khrushchev had previously achieved and prompting a prolonged effort to restore bilateral trust. His attempts at reconciliation were complicated by the opposition of China, which strongly disapproved of Yugoslavia's revisionist and reform-oriented model of socialism. Efforts to improve the ties between the USSR and Yugoslavia, therefore, carried the risk of alienating China, placing Khrushchev in a difficult position between competing ideological and strategic priorities within the socialist bloc (Tompson, 1995, p.189).

The national and international political events that preceded the Twentieth Congress and formed the conjuncture from which it emerged, as well as the historical political developments that emerged as a result of the Twentieth Congress or that began before and continued to grow afterward, have been summarized so far. These developments and the Twentieth Congress, of course, not only influenced the domestic politics and international relations of the Soviet Union but also set the course for communist parties in other countries. One of these parties was the PCF. The line followed by the PCF and its policies, as examined in the previous chapter, played a decisive role in the political and ideological atmosphere of France. Therefore, examining the overall picture is insufficient to understand the conjuncture that shaped Althusser. Therefore,

it is necessary to examine the repercussions of the Twentieth Congress and the subsequent crisis of the international communist movement in France.

3.3. Crisis of Marxism in France

The events of 1956, which consisted of Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" in the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU denouncing Stalin, the Polish uprising, the Soviet invasion of Hungary, and the following Sino-Soviet split, produced an important shift in global Marxist thought. These changes sparked an intellectual upheaval and theoretical re-examination in France, where Marxism had long been associated with the power of the Soviet Union and the PCF. The philosophical ramifications of 1956 among the three main schools of French Marxism must be examined since these three forms of Marxism constitute "the configuration of Marxist theory in the late 1950s and early 1960s; and the disposition of the French intellectual landscape when Althusser came to write" (Elliot, 2006, pp.1-2), that are important elements that shaped the thought of Althusser by creating the conjuncture for his theoretical intervention. These French forms of Marxism include Hegelian Marxism, Existential Marxism, and Stalinist orthodoxy of the PCF, as mentioned in the previous chapter. The goal of Althusser's intervention was to reconstitute Marxism on strong scientific and philosophical foundations, free from both humanism and determinism, whereas many other solutions remained stuck inside antiquated theoretical frameworks (Lewis, 2005).

Before 1956, the implicit association of Marxist truth with Soviet political practice was held by almost all of the main currents of French Marxism, including the PCF orthodoxy, Existential Marxism of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, and Hegelian Marxism of Lefebvre and Cornu (Lewis, 2005, pp. 155-156). The USSR was defended as evidence of communism's political and moral superiority over Western capitalism, notwithstanding Stalinist purges, famine, and repression (Merleau-Ponty, 1969). Unquestionably, the Khrushchev speech, which was given in February 1956, was a turning point. For the first time, a Soviet leader recognized the atrocities of Stalin's reign, including his personality cult, the purges, and the numerous people killed in the name of progress (Khrushchev, 1956). The Hungarian Revolution was violently

put down by the Soviet military in November, which further illustrated how authoritarianism persisted in Soviet culture. It became "very difficult, if not impossible, to carry on with the identification between Marxist philosophy, the PCF, and the political program of the Soviet Union" as a result of these events (Lewis, 2005, p. 156).

While some intellectuals, like Sartre, doubled down on speculative syntheses in an effort to reconcile Marxism with phenomenology and existential freedom (Sartre, 2004), some other intellectuals completely abandoned Marxism (Caute, 1964). However, the PCF took years to address the Stalinist legacy and remained mostly unresponsive to the situation. Even early reform initiatives, like Roger Garaudy's adoption of Humanist Marxism, were doctrinally superficial and mediocre (Cranston, 1970, pp.11-13). According to Lewis (2005), these answers fell short of offering a coherent philosophical substitute for Stalinist Marxism. Despite their frequent criticism of the Stalinist doctrine that the PCF promoted, existential and Hegelian Marxists continued to have a strong belief in the Soviet Union as an essential, albeit imperfect, manifestation of socialist advancement (Lewis, 2005, pp.155-158). The inadequacies of the position defended by Existentialist Marxism and Hegelian Marxism were shown by their reactions to the events of 1956, which also marked the beginning of a period of theoretical retreat, revision, or speculative overreach that eventually failed to offer a compelling substitute for either bourgeois liberalism or Stalinism.

Existential Marxists in France, who were already uncomfortable with Stalinism, were faced with a difficult choice. Once, arguing that historical terror might be morally justified if it helped society to a higher moral state (Merleau-Ponty, 1969). The philosophical conflict between necessity and freedom that defined postwar French philosophy was personified by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In *Humanism and Terror* (1969), Merleau-Ponty had argued that violence in revolutionary contexts could be morally justified if it served a dialectical progression toward freedom. His idea of "terror" was a historical justification rather than an ethical endorsement. This meant that revolutionary violence was tragic but still required in light of the postwar world's imperialist circumstances.

This line of thought stemmed from an ambiguous interpretation of history as a morally ordered totality in which future emancipation could relativize individual crimes (Merleau-Ponty, 1969, pp.85-95). But Merleau-Ponty would lose faith after understanding the depths of Stalinist horrors. It would become harder for everyone to deny the facts regarding Stalinism and its excesses, especially after the gulags, show trials, and mass executions were made public. He decided that history could no longer be a source of moral validity after 1956; therefore, he completely gave up on Marxism (Lewis, 2005, p.157). Merleau-Ponty would completely distance himself from political philosophy. He gave up on the Marxist project and resorted to psychoanalysis and phenomenology. The breakdown of existential Marxism's most meticulously stated synthesis of Marxist teleology and individual freedom was caused by his intellectual retreat from politics.

The closest existentialist philosopher to Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, had a different reaction. In contrast to him, Sartre made an effort to reconcile the irreconcilable. By creating a new dialectic that could take into account both the necessity of class struggle and the freedom of human subjectivity, Sartre attempted to recreate Marxism rather than forsake it. Written mostly in reaction to the events of 1956, his famous *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (2004) tried to outline an open-ended, non-dogmatic Marxism in which historical structures developed from the sedimentation of individual projects, or what he referred to as "practical ensembles." According to Sartre (Sartre, 2004, pp.134-140), alienation and reification are contingent effects of the dialectical conflict between subjectivity and totalization rather than inevitable outcomes of social life.

Sartre attempted to reconcile the conflict between historical materialism and existential freedom in this way. However, Lewis (2005) notes that this synthesis attempt was ultimately unsuccessful. Sartre's speculative dialectic did not adequately make use of empirical research, and it was too dependent on a metaphysical conception of freedom, which meant that it lacked both theoretical precision and political traction (pp.157-158). Furthermore, Sartre's moral authority was undermined by his reluctance to address the PCF's institutional complicity or to adopt a firm stance on the events in Hungary. He became more and more detached

from the Party, but he was still reluctant to join the rising number of Marxist dissidents who believed that Soviet communism was a betrayal of Marxist ideals. Therefore, Sartre's *Critique* was a tremendous attempt to reimagine Marxism, but it was unable to offer a clear political position and a coherent methodology. Although his conception of totalization was full of intellectual insights, his version of Marxist theory lacked a solid foundation in social science and political analysis. Few found his hypothetical union of Marxist determinism and existential freedom compelling in his *Critique* (2004). This attempt "to force Marxism and phenomenology together" thus failed both theoretically and politically, as Lewis explains (2005, p. 157).

After 1956, there was also a major reckoning for the Hegelian Marxist tradition, which was most famously represented by Lefebvre and Cornu. Lefebvre had already made a substantial contribution to the resurgence of Marxist thinking in France, especially through his emphasis on alienation and everyday life, but he had long been ostracized inside the PCF because of his cultural and intellectual heterodoxy. Lefebvre had already presented a Hegelian-inspired interpretation of alienation *in Critique of Everyday Life* (1991). This Hegelian interpretation went beyond the economic level to encompass the cultural and ideological frameworks of everyday life. He maintained that capitalism creates a lived experience of estrangement that is incomprehensible to economistic theories of class conflict because it not only exploits labour but also colonizes the spaces and rhythms of everyday life (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 45-62).

Lefebvre stayed within the sphere of party Marxism until the 1960s, notwithstanding his criticism of Stalinism and bureaucratic socialism. But after 1956, he was more explicit in his criticism of the Soviet model, particularly in his later writings that addressed urbanization, space, and ideology. Lefebvre never provided a complete alternative to the party line or a new Marxist framework that might have replaced the flawed Soviet paradigm, however, and Lewis (2005) points out that his theoretical contributions were only partially political (p.158). Even though it lacked the systematic ambition necessary for urgent theoretical reconstruction, his work was inspirational for other philosophers, particularly in the 1968 generation.

By analysing Marx's intellectual progression from idealism to materialism, Auguste Cornu, who was interested in the history of Marx's philosophical development, intended to establish a connection between Hegelian and Marxist philosophy. Cornu, however, disagreed with the need for epistemological rupture that emerged after 1956 since he insisted on continuity between the early and mature Marx. His framework was insufficient when Stalinism fell apart because of his dedication to a historicist interpretation of Marx, a Marx who was still influenced by German idealism. Any interpretation of Marx that did not acknowledge the distinction between ideology and science, between philosophy and theory, ran the risk of repeating the ideological mistakes that initially made Stalinism possible, as Althusser would later claim (Althusser, 2005).

In response to the crisis after the events of 1956, Marxists of the Existential and Hegelian traditions made attempts at renewal, withdrawal, or speculative system-building. However, all were hindered by theoretical frameworks that either failed to critically separate Marxist theory from its ideological appropriations or overemphasized human subjectivity. None of these three forms of French Marxism could convincingly distinguish between Marxist theory and the errors of Stalinist political practice, according to Lewis (2005). This failure created a hole in French Marxist thought that only Althusser's intervention was finally going to fill, which tried to fundamentally restructure Marxism on anti-idealist and anti-humanist grounds, even if it was temporary.

PCF was also affected by the events of 1956, especially since it had been following the directions given by the CPSU closely for many years; it found itself in a difficult situation. PCF so thoroughly aligned itself with the Soviet Union that it frequently acted against its own strategic interests in order to conform to the CPSU’s directives. This strong ideological loyalty extended beyond the party’s leadership, too. Even Marxist intellectuals in academic circles, driven by the belief that the Communist Party remained the only vehicle for achieving a comprehensive revolutionary transformation, were not exempt from this belief (Judt, 1986, p.185).

Between 1930s and 1950s, even the intellectuals that are part of other forms of Marxism supported the Soviet Union even when it entailed the cost of criticising

themselves for Soviet interests or abandoning their own projects and even went as far as defending the atrocities committed by the order of the CPSU during the Stalin era (Lewis, 2005, pp.155-156). Although the Soviet regime was widely associated with political crises and repression, both the French Communist Party and parts of the French intellectual elite continued to view the USSR as a real alternative to Western capitalism. This view was accepted especially during the economic crisis of the 1930s. For them, the Soviet model served as valid evidence of communism's systemic superiority, which in turn was used to assert the philosophical primacy of Marxism over bourgeois thought. These convictions were further solidified by the USSR's victory in World War 2, which was seen as a defeat of reactionary capitalist forces. Even as the Cold War was happening, and despite growing awareness of Soviet repression and the increasing theoretical limitations of "scientific socialism", many French intellectuals persisted in uncritical, pro-Soviet rhetoric while disregarding convincing evidence of systemic abuses which were coming to light (Lewis, 2005, p.156). Another reason for this support was that the only language and discourse available to leftist intellectuals of the time was Leninist. Leninist discourse was learned through the Communist Party, and because the Party was loyal to the Soviet Union, these leftist intellectuals were also pushed to a position that supports it (Khilnani, 1993, pp.44-45).

In 1956, Khrushchev's Secret Speech, which was a disclosure of mass killings carried out under the guise of progress, followed shortly by the Soviet military intervention in Hungary, exposed a deep contradiction between official rhetoric and actual practice. These events severely damaged the long-standing association between Marxist philosophy, the PCF, and the political agenda of the Soviet Union. For many sympathizers on the Left, the revelations served as a final justification for severing ties not only with the Communist Party but also with Marxism as a whole. While some party members attempted to carry on as though nothing had fundamentally changed, particularly those who were among the philosophical community, saw the events of 1956 as a turning point. It prompted critical reassessment of Marxist theory and a deeper interrogation of the assumptions that had historically linked philosophy, party politics, and Soviet practice (Caute, 1964, pp.228-233).

One might call the different post-1956 evaluations of Marxism groundbreaking or revolutionary; most were limited by the theoretical frameworks that those involved had at their disposal. Whether within the PCF, among Existential Marxists, or within Hegelian-Marxist groups, the potential for true theoretical advancement was often restricted. The PCF, heavily rooted in Stalinist orthodoxy and directed by Thorez, who fostered his own cult of personality, was especially lagging in its response, taking nearly four years before the party even began contemplating a reassessment of its views. In the 1960s, publishing outlets linked to the PCF began to cautiously present alternative viewpoints, including Garaudy's works on Humanist Marxism. Nevertheless, his critique of Stalinism remained peripheral within the party and did not embody a dominant or broadly accepted stance (Cranston, 1970, pp.11-13).

Despite their efforts, Garaudy and other theorists within the Communist Party offered only a diluted critique of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, largely limited to a weakened version of Lefebvre's concept of alienation, paired with a more inclusive approach that opened the Party to groups such as Catholics and middle-class professionals. While these revisions were occasionally acknowledged in party rhetoric, they had little to no substantive impact on the party's ideological direction or political practices. During the 1966 Central Committee debates between Althusser and Garaudy, although the party appeared to support Garaudy's humanist position, its official stance remained ambiguous and offered minimal endorsement of either thinker's proposed revisions. Despite public support for Garaudy's Humanism from the Party General Secretary and other senior party figures, the overall outcome of the debate was restrictive in nature. It effectively curtailed further theoretical inquiry and closed the door on continued discussion within the party framework (Goshgarian, 2003, pp.15-16).

Even though there was a growing sense among some party theorists that Stalinism was intellectually bankrupt, many attempted to solve the crisis by embracing a different kind of Marxism, which was Marxist humanism, instead of turning away from ideology. Althusser would later criticize this move as regressive and explained that returning to the "young Marx" and his notion of alienation was a retreat into idealism, rather than a step forward (Althusser, 2005). But for many PCF members,

whose intellectual lives had been shaped by decades of dogmatic orthodoxy, the discovery of Marx's early writings felt like liberation. This was seen as a liberation from Stalinist censorship more than a move toward rigorous philosophical renewal (Lewis, 2005, p.162).

Thus, all three forms of Marxism in France failed to fill the theoretical gap that was created by the events of 1956. Some of the Existentialist Marxists and Hegelian Marxists tried to find a way to transform their versions of Marxism in line with the developments of 1956; some were unable to do so and instead retreated completely from the political scene and philosophy. PCF, at the same time, did not know how to deal with the revelations of the Secret Speech and continued its decades-long pattern of oscillation between orthodoxy and its obverse, liberal politics and theory. This time, it was Marxist Humanism that was on the other side of the coin. Torn between these two perspectives, the Party remained undecided for many years and chose to remain inactive. As a result, cadres seeking to respond to issues of Stalinism and undertake theoretical revisions accordingly would drift toward humanism and Hegelian Marxism. It was under these circumstances, events, and crises that constituted the conjuncture in which Althusser would be compelled to make his political-ideological intervention, revealing a hidden third option to the dilemma-stricken and paralysed French Marxism. Rather than attempting to combine Marx's theory with this or that thinker, he would advocate a return to Marx. For this political-theoretical return to be successful, he would first have to clear the ground for his new theoretical construction by discrediting other forms of Marxism, such as Humanism, Existentialism, and Hegelian Marxism. This needed to be done "For Marx", and with a return to Marx. Only after that point, Althusser would create his own theoretical framework by "Reading Capital".

3.4. The Moment of Intervention

Althusser makes his own analysis of the conjuncture that he is in, explains the necessity of an intervention, and presents the outline of his intervention and the direction it is headed in the future in *For Marx.* Althusser places his theoretical endeavour in the context of post-war France's intellectual and political milieu. Mass

mobilizations, the Cold War, and an ideological dogmatism within PCF that put political demands ahead of philosophy characterized the years after the Resistance. Philosophers were forced to serve as commentators and defenders rather than researchers when Party leaders revived the slogan "bourgeois science, proletarian science" during scandals like the Lysenko affair and treated science as just another ideology (Althusser, 2005, pp. 21-23). According to Althusser, this was not just a result of Stalinism; rather, it was a manifestation of a more serious historical flaw: the French left lacked a sophisticated theoretical heritage. France's most notable intellectual legacy in the socialist tradition came from utopian thinkers and lone exceptions like Jaurès, whereas Germany, Russia, and Italy had produced philosophers and politicians like Engels, Lenin, and Gramsci (Althusser, 2005, pp. 23-24). Few intellectuals sought their future alongside the working class, and even fewer were prepared to construct a Marxist philosophical tradition, as a result of the bourgeoisie's successful assimilation of intellectuals after 1789 and the long-standing dominance of spiritualist and anti-materialist philosophy from Maine de Biran to Bergson (Althusser, 2005, pp. 24-26). After the war, Althusser's generation became engrossed in political struggle, frequently at the expense of consistent theoretical development. Marxist philosophers tried to make Marx acceptable to scholarly audiences in an atmosphere of ideological suspicion by transforming him into the terms of humanism, Husserl, or Hegel (Althusser, 2005, p.27). Disillusionment and this compromise led to a number of declarations of philosophy's "end," including its reduction to a critical conscience of science, its realization in political action, or its supersession by science (Althusser, 2005, pp.28-30). Althusser contends that none of these viewpoints offered a solid basis for Marxist thought.

Although it also exposed the underdevelopment of Marxist theory in France, Althusser claims that the end of Stalinist dogmatism after 1956 created a space for sincere investigation. The crucial task for Althusser at that point was to openly ask the question of the specificity of Marxist philosophy. To do this, it was necessary to pinpoint the "epistemological break" in Marx's thought process, which occurred when he turned from ideological philosophy to scientific theory (Althusser, 2005, pp.30-33). Althusser places this break in 1845 with the *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology*, which established dialectical materialism, a new philosophy, and

historical materialism, the science of history. Early Works (1840-44), Works of the Break (1845), Transitional Works (1845-57), and Mature Works (1857-83) are the four periodizations he suggests (Althusser, 2005, pp.34-35). Althusser believed that locating the break correctly was of utmost importance. Before 1845, Marx's criticism of Hegel was Feuerbachian rather than Marxist, and it was still trapped in the idealist dilemma it was trying to solve (Althusser, 2005, pp.36-37). Ignoring this puts one at risk of confusing Marx's young ideological jargon with his more developed theoretical notions. According to Althusser, a Marxist theory of theoretical formations and their history, a reflexive philosophy that can take Marxism itself as its object, is necessary for a proper reading of Marx. In Marx's writings, such a project is both necessary to separate science from ideology and the process by which Marxist philosophy can be established as a separate and cohesive field of study (Althusser, 2005, pp.37-39).

As mentioned earlier, various forms of Marxism in France were stunned by the 1956 crisis and were unable to react and adapt their theories accordingly, and respond to the demands of the time. Recognizing this, Althusser found a solution in returning to Marx. There were several reasons for this return to Marx. One of these was Marx's growing relevance, especially after the war, and the inadequacy of the readings of Marx that had been conducted prior to that period. A new type of reading of Marx was needed. As a member of the PCF, Althusser was a follower of the PCF's long-standing orthodox position and had experienced the party's periodic liberalizations and relapses into orthodoxy, a process of political and ideological oscillations. He was familiar with the tradition of criticizing the various humanist and Hegelian readings that developed alongside this process, and accordingly, he positioned himself against these various readings. For Althusser, who saw the political elimination of these positions as a necessity, the best way to do this was to instrumentalize philosophy, because, in his own words, he was both a militant and a philosopher (Althusser, 1971). This meant that Althusser intended to make a political intervention through philosophy.

There were several conditions for the successful implementation of this political-theoretical purge. First, it was necessary to sever the connection between Marx and

Hegel, and to sever the relationship between Marxism and humanism. Then, it is necessary to provide a theoretical explanation for this rupture and, based on this, to construct a new theoretical framework. Thus, and for this very reason, Althusser had to elevate Marxism to the level of the sciences and claim that Marxism was an actual science. History, thanks to Marx's theoretical initiatives, had been transformed into a science under the name of historical materialism. This had long been accepted, but Althusser also wanted the theory of science, or theory of theory underlying this science, to be consistently and validly articulated and transformed into a science. This would secure Marxism, or rather, Althusser's interpretation of Marxism, from external attacks. It would also make the Marxist theorists better able to deal with the new unforeseen political and ideological developments in the social formation and understand the new developments without recourse to underdeveloped notions such as “deviations”, thus making Marxists better equipped to analyse the concrete situation in a Leninist sense.

Although he criticized other forms of Marxism for utilizing philosophical sources outside of Marxism, Althusser would also draw on Freud, Spinoza, Bachelard, and sometimes, even at the risk of angering the PCF, would reference Mao during the construction of the scientific foundation of Marxism. Althusser actually claimed to prevent the infiltration of various bourgeois ideologies by returning to Marx, but in reality, he would also draw on various philosophical schools of thought. This means that Althusser was not returning to orthodoxy; he was creating his own orthodoxy, perhaps a more accurate term, a neo-orthodoxy. Althusser would achieve this by offering a left-wing critique of Stalinism.

This emphasis on science and scientificity was not a surprise. Althusser was a member of the PCF, and the PCF had repeatedly emphasized scientificity in its long-standing calls for a return to orthodoxy and had always employed scientific discourse in the process of politically and ideologically purging those who opposed this call. The call for examination of Stalin's *Short Course* and the construction of a Marxist science, the ultimate science, based on this text, was an example of this. Althusser would then try to use a political tool he had witnessed being used many times, against both the PCF's traditional enemies, Hegelian Marxism, Existentialist

Marxism, and humanism, and against the orthodox line, whose dogmatic stance had empowered other currents by being unable to resist their attacks. In other words, this time Althusser would also turn his theoretical weapon against his own party. Or perhaps he would instrumentalize it in attacking his humanist rivals within the PCF, such as Garaudy.

The numerous references to Mao in *For Marx* were no coincidence. In the post-1956 period, making so many references to Mao also meant standing on the orthodox side of the emerging Sino-Soviet split, that is, on the Chinese side. The humanist Marxism that emerged as a result of Khrushchev's Secret Speech was perceived as a threat by the CCP and was subjected to harsh criticisms. The significance of utilizing Mao's theory to this extent in this context was clear. Against this new political-ideological orientation, Althusser was demonstrating his own party's traditional reflexes: a return to orthodoxy. But this time, a new form of orthodoxy, as mentioned earlier. Moreover, in *For Marx*, Althusser would offer harsh criticisms of Marxist humanism without even attempting to conceal his position.

Althusser believed that to distinguish Marx from other philosophical traditions, the method by which Marx was read before needed to be changed. The logic of the new form of reading was essentially to construct a Marxist reading of Marx. This new reading would reveal Marx's theoretical originality and his distinction from other philosophical traditions. Althusser would call his own reading a “symptomatic reading”. The concept of symptom was inherently present in Freud and Marx. The fundamental aim of this reading was to understand Marx's positioning in the history of philosophy and the history of the sciences, not only through his own definitions but also through understanding the logic and structure of the system of thought he established.

When read using previous reading methods, one might think that Marx's fundamental difference from the classical economists before him consisted in seeing what they failed to see and naming what they could not name. However, for Althusser, the issue was not simply the issue of sight and oversight. Intentionally or unintentionally, Marx had presented a theoretical structure unlike those that preceded him. For

Althusser, the thinker's intentionality or consciousness was irrelevant. In fact, the points that the classical economists saw and failed to see were visions and non-visions related to the structure of the theoretical framework they adopted. In other words, the issue wasn't related to these thinkers' theoretical rigor. The problem lay in the fundamental structure that led them to ask all the questions, which connected and determined all the theoretical questions, the nodal point of all the notions and questions. Althusser would name this structure the problematic. This concept was borrowed from Jacques Martin to be able to explain another concept that Althusser also borrowed from Gaston Bachelard, the epistemological break (Althusser, 2005, p.32). A word or concept cannot be meaningfully examined in isolation. Its significance emerges only within the theoretical or ideological framework in which it operates, the problematic. A similar notion can be observed in Foucault's work (2003). Importantly, the problematic should not be confused with a worldview. It does not represent the distilled essence of an individual's or an era's thought, nor can it be extracted from a body of texts through a purely empirical or generalizing reading. Rather, it encompasses both the concepts and problems that are present and those that are absent within a given framework. Accessing it, therefore, requires a symptomatic reading, modelled on the Freudian analyst's interpretation of a patient's speech, which seeks meaning as much in what is unsaid as in what is explicitly stated (Althusser, 2005, pp.253-254). This means that symptomatic reading concerns itself with the unconscious of the text more than its conscious understanding of itself. Althusser believed that symptomatic reading was both the reading method suggested by Marx and the correct way to read Marx as a Marxist.

By using the symptomatic reading method to examine Marx's theoretical corpus, Althusser identified a break between Marx's early and late periods. He argued that in his early period, Marx was still committed to an ideological problematic, but in his late period, he shifted to a scientific problematic. He explained that while his early period was influenced by Hegelian and Feuerbachian problematics, and therefore employed concepts such as alienation, Marx clearly utilized the scientific problematic in his later period, particularly in Capital. He challenged those who interpreted Marx's continued use of some early concepts, particularly during the transitional period and even in his later period, as a commitment to an ideological

problematic and argued that the meanings of these concepts were also changing along with the changing problematic, that is, with the changing theoretical framework. He argued that Marx, in his effort to develop appropriate concepts and terminology, quickly eliminated the terms stemming from this old problematic from his theoretical structure. Althusser called this transition from the ideological problematic to the scientific problematic, the epistemological break.

The term epistemological break, first introduced by Bachelard and later developed in the history of ideas by thinkers such as Canguilhem and Foucault (Althusser, 2005, p. 257), refers to the decisive shift from a pre-scientific mode of thought to a scientific one. This shift entails a complete rupture with the framework and assumptions of pre-scientific, or ideological, notions, replacing them with an entirely new conceptual structure. Althusser adopts this concept to interpret Marx's intellectual development, specifically, his abandonment of the Hegelian and Feuerbachian ideology of his early years and his subsequent creation of the core concepts of dialectical and historical materialism in his later works (Althusser, 2005, p. 249).

By using the concept of the epistemological rupture and based on this concept, claiming that Marx's late period was tied to a scientific problem, Althusser was essentially attempting to discredit various Hegelian interpretations. This intervention served to strengthen his position both in internal political-theoretical debates in the PCF and in his polemics against various interpretations of Marxism in France. On the one hand, he drew strength from traditional Marxist claims about science, and on the other, he challenged the dogmatism of previous Marxist interpretations of science. In this way, he declared war on both traditional interpretations and Stalinist dogmatism, as well as on the alternative Hegelian line. Of course, using the concept of epistemological rupture alone would not be enough. For this theoretical-political intervention to be successful, the philosophical link between Marx and Hegel had to be gradually broken down, and a new theoretical structure developed from it based on the symptomatic reading of Marx.

Althusser explains that there are two important contributions made by Marx: the first was the science of history, which is historical materialism. Historical materialism

was accepted and used by Marxists and intellectuals, as well as revolutionaries such as Lenin. But there was also an underlying Marxist philosophy behind the Marxist science of history, which is dialectical materialism. Althusser believed that all major scientific revolutions brought with them a new philosophy and claimed that the Marxist philosophy was not developed enough. This meant that it was the duty of the intellectuals to develop this underlying philosophy. Historical materialism is the science of history, while dialectical materialism includes the theory of science or a theory of theory within it. Althusser believed that examining what Marxist dialectics was and how it differed from Hegelian dialectics was a crucial endeavour. This theoretical effort would reveal Marx's theoretical originality. At the same time, it was necessary to clarify the meaning of materialism and eliminate its ideological interpretations. Althusser explained that, according to the Marxist theory of science, knowledge was a product of a knowledge production process similar to the production process in the economy described in *Capital*. Similar to the production of material goods, theoretical production also has a raw material, the means of production to process the raw material, and the final product. In the process of knowledge production, raw materials are the previously given concepts that were already developed, not found, and not discovered. Scientific means of production, which include the problematic notions and concepts, would then make it possible to process the already developed concepts, which may still include ideological elements. The resulting products of this theoretical production process are the new scientific concepts and new relations between these concepts, which are based on the new scientific problematic.

Althusser named these three necessary elements of the knowledge production process as the Generalities 1,2, and 3 (Althusser, 2005). He later adds an important note to this process and explains that the whole process takes place in thought. This means that the scientific process was a process happening in thought, starting from the abstract in thought and ending with the concrete in thought. From this point, Althusser explains that other methods, such as the empiricist method, claim to start from the real concrete and move towards the abstraction, or claim to extract knowledge from the real concrete. He believed that this was an ideological understanding of the object of science and mixed the means of scientific production

with the object of science. This was one of the main differences between the Marxist theory of science and other methods. The originality of Marxist theory was based on its peculiar object of science.

Ideology, on the other hand, refers to the lived relationship between individuals and their world, or to a reflective expression of that relationship, such as a philosophy, which remains largely unconscious, for Althusser. Its distinction from science does not lie in being false, as it can be internally coherent and logically structured, such as theology, but in the predominance of practical-social functions over theoretical ones, or over the pursuit of knowledge. In historical terms, ideology exists prior to the science that emerges through an epistemological break with it. Nevertheless, it continues to coexist with science as a constitutive element of every social formation, persisting even under socialism and communism (Althusser, 2005, p.252).

For Althusser, the whole theoretical production process was a closed circuit, which is proved by itself. Althusser claimed that Marxist science was proven by itself, similar to all other developed sciences, thus claiming that it was as valid as any other developed science (Althusser, 1970, p.52). By "developed science," Althusser meant a science that was able to purge all or most of the ideological concepts within it and develop a scientific problematic, thus referencing the epistemological break. Althusser warned that clinging to Hegelian notions while reading Marx brought with it the risk of crossing back the line dividing ideology and science and returning to the pre-scientific form of Marxism. Hegelian forms of Marxism were, in fact, based on Marx's works, which belong to the early ideological era of Marx and still used notions belonging to the ideological pre-history of Marxism. These are grave errors that may lead back to Marxism into its pre-historical territories, according to Althusser.

One of the errors was to understand Marxist dialectics as the inversion of the Hegelian dialectic. While the movement starts from an idea and continues towards the real in Hegelian dialectic, Hegelian Marxists, based on several works of Marx and Engels, claimed that the Marxist dialectic was defined by the inversion of this movement. This meant a movement from the real concrete to the abstraction.

Althusser criticised this argument and claimed that empiricism and Hegelian dialectic were the opposite sides of the same coin. Another underlying point contained within this argument, according to Althusser, was that the only difference between the Hegelian dialectic and the Marxist dialectic was the direction of the movement. One of Althusser's main points of critique was to discredit this argument. Critique of this argument was based on the difference in the structure of the dialectic.

Althusser explains that the Hegelian view of social totality is based on the basic contradiction and transformation of the idea. The transformation of the idea based on the basic contradiction is then reflected in the social totality. The notion of social totality thus describes a totality that consists of elements which are the reflections, the phenomena of the idea that is defined by the same basic contradiction. They are defined by their essence, which is the reflection of the idea. This process of transformation based on the contradiction is what changes the social totality in a linear history, a history created by the basic contradiction and understood as a reflection of the transformations of the idea, which means a teleological linear history, which works by the basic time based on a basic contradiction.

Althusser claims that when read with the method of symptomatic reading, what one finds hidden in Marx's texts is the specific complex structure of the social formation. He explained that historical materialism worked on the social formation, which consists of a specific complex structure. For Althusser, social formation consists of different instances. These instances are the ideological instance, the political instance, and the economic instance. These instances are structures and practices based on their own peculiar production processes. Similar to the theoretical production process, they have their own raw materials, means of production, and products. The relationship between these instances is explained by the notion of relative autonomy. Since Marxist totality is understood as the social formation, rather than analysing the movement reflected in the totality, one needs to analyse the instances and their relations. These instances are analysed as different elements that do not mirror each other's development but rather have their own development processes with different histories. Althusser notes that "We think the relations establishing and articulating these different practices one with another by thinking

their degree of independence and their type of ‘relative’ autonomy, which are themselves fixed by their type of dependence with respect to the practice which is ‘determinant in the last instance’: economic practice.” (Althusser, 1970, pp.51-52).

In Hegelian thought, the concept of totality assumes the existence of an original, primary essence that underlies and gives rise to historical appearances through a process of externalization; it is therefore conceived as a structure organized around a central core. By contrast, the Marxist conception of totality cannot be separated from the specific elements that compose it, since each element’s existence depends on the others. As a result, it lacks a fixed centre, possessing instead a dominant element and a determination “in the last instance,” making it a decentred structure (Althusser, 2005, p.255).

In the Marxist conception, totality is neither a unified whole in which each element is simply the manifestation of an underlying essence, as in Hegelianism, nor a system in which certain elements function merely as secondary effects of a single determining factor, as in economism or mechanism. Instead, the elements of a social formation are asymmetrically related yet retain a degree of autonomy, which generates contradictions. Among these elements, one holds a position of dominance, and the economic base “determines in the last instance” which element assumes that role. This is what Althusser describes as a structure in dominance (Althusser, 2005, p.255).

The dominant element, however, is not permanently fixed; its position shifts depending on the overdetermination of contradictions and their uneven development. The concept of uneven development was borrowed from Mao. Althusser believed that several important notions were being developed during the political practice, but there was a need to develop them beyond political struggle to be able to create the Marxist philosophy. He believed that this would help them create a coherent and durable Marxist framework (Althusser, 2005). While the overdetermination is ultimately determined by the economy “in the last instance,” Althusser stresses that this phrase does not refer to an absolute moment, past or future, when the economy alone dictates the entire structure. Rather, “the last instance never comes, the structure

is always the co-presence of all its elements and their relations of dominance and subordination - it is an ever-pre-given structure" (Althusser, 1970, p. 319).

It should be noted that Freud employed the term overdetermination to refer, among other things, to the way dream-thoughts are represented through images that either condense multiple thoughts into a single figure or shift psychic energy from a powerful thought to seemingly insignificant images, a process he called displacement. Althusser adapts this concept to explain how the contradictions within each practice of a social formation influence the formation as a whole, and how this totality, in turn, acts back upon each individual practice and contradiction. This reciprocal dynamic shapes the configuration of dominance and subordination, as well as the presence of antagonistic or non-antagonistic relations, within a structure of dominance at any particular historical moment. More specifically, a contradiction is said to be overdetermined when it reflects the conditions of its existence within the broader complex whole, conditions shaped by the interplay with other contradictions, thus revealing its uneven development (Althusser, 2005, pp.252-253).

Althusser explained that "time" was a theoretical notion and not a word of common-sense knowledge. Thus, one needed to show the difference between the Marxist and Hegelian definitions of "time". The complex structure, which consists of relatively autonomous instances, implies a different historical time with the Hegelian dialectic. While the Hegelian dialectic assumed a linear history of the totality based on the simple contradiction, thus offering a simple history, Althusser's notion of overdetermination shows that every relatively autonomous instance has its own history. Althusser used this point to show the difference between Hegelian understanding of time and the Marxist understanding of time. Althusser also disputes historicism, the idea that history is a continuous, expressive totality whose unfolding can be understood through the teleological logic of human self-realisation. Historicist readings, influenced by Hegelian Marxism, interpret history as the expression of a single principle or essence, whether "human nature," "class consciousness," or the Hegelian "spirit" (Althusser, 1970).

Against this, Althusser argues that Marx's mature theory recognises the complex structured whole of a social formation, constituted by multiple relatively autonomous

levels that do not develop according to a single, linear logic. Historical change, therefore, results from the uneven development and overdetermined contradictions among these structures, not from the realisation of an essence (Althusser, 2005). As Geras notes, Althusser treats historicism as an ideological form of knowledge because it projects onto history a subject such as “Man” or “the proletariat” that guides its development (Geras, 1972). Instead, history has no subject and no goal in the teleological sense (Althusser, 2005). This position allows Althusser to reject both economism, which reduces all historical change to the economy, and humanist teleology.

Althusser claimed that, by embracing certain reductions, the historicist approach tends to strip theoretical practice of its distinctiveness, merging it with ideological, political, and economic practices, and ultimately subsuming them all into a single, undifferentiated category of “historical practice” or praxis. In this view, the history of knowledge loses its relative autonomy and becomes inseparable from the singular “real history” of the social totality. Within such a framework, Marxism is no longer understood as a specific scientific practice developing within its own domain, but rather as “the direct product…of the activity and experience of the masses” (Althusser, 1970, p.134), that is, of their political and ideological practices, or as the proletariat’s class consciousness. Althusser considers this a leftist position, politically inclined to endorse spontaneism, and theoretically prone to explaining the content and development of science solely in terms of class struggle, thereby casting Marxism as a “proletarian science” directly opposed to and in conflict with “bourgeois science” (Geras, 1972, pp.73-74). Althusser believed that one should not equate the science of Marxism with the ideology of the proletariat. Althusser also rejects spontaneism in line with “Kautsky's and Lenin's thesis that Marxist theory is produced by a specific theoretical practice, outside the proletariat, and that Marxist theory must be 'imported' into the proletariat” (Althusser, 1970, p.141). Althusser also explains that it is very important to differentiate between historical and dialectical materialism. An important outcome of the historicist reading of Marxism is that, by stripping theoretical practice of its distinct character, it undermines the very foundation of Marxist philosophy, the discipline that studies theoretical practice itself. In this perspective, the crucial distinction between dialectical materialism (the

theory of science) and historical materialism (the science of social formations) disappears. Instead, dialectical materialism is subsumed into historical materialism, which is treated as a self-sufficient, all-encompassing theory of history. For Althusser, this collapse of categories erases an important theoretical separation (Geras, 1972, p.74).

3.5. Conclusion

The previous chapter addressed the historical formation of the conjuncture in which Althusser intervened. This chapter explored the conjuncture in which Althusser intervened and its various elements. In this period, defined by the crisis of the International Communist Movement after 1956, forms of Marxism in France were largely inadequate in responding to the crisis, and this paved the way for Althusser's intervention. Althusser, a member of the PCF at the time of this theoretical-political intervention, was a follower of the traditional line inherited from the past and was disturbed by the ideological-political softening around him. In this sense, he criticized the dogmatism, historicism, reductionism, and economism of PCF orthodoxy while simultaneously attempting to ideologically and politically eliminate the PCF's traditional rivals.

This purge would be carried out in a philosophical and scientific form. For Althusser, who claimed to be both a philosopher and a PCF militant, this was the most logical course of action (Althusser, 1971). He would argue that the various forms of Marxism he criticized were ideological and that a return to Marxist science and philosophy was necessary. He would then proceed through the discourse of scientificity, launching a rigorous theoretical attack that would deprive the targeted schools and thinkers of their theoretical sources. The new theoretical framework he constructed following this theoretical intervention would, by 1968, lead him to find himself within the established orthodoxy, adopting a politically conservative stance, and thus attracting harsh criticism.

To summarise his intervention, Althusser claims that Marx’s theoretical originality and its rupture from previous traditions, especially the Hegelian tradition, is based on

three points. Firstly, with the epistemological rupture, Marx has developed a scientific problematic, thus forming the Marxist science. Secondly, the Marxist theory of science and its object of science differ greatly from others. The scientific process is a knowledge production process with its own theoretical raw materials, means, and products. It starts with the abstract in thought and ends with the concrete in thought, and it is verified by itself. Thirdly, historical materialism is a science of history that analyses social formation and its relatively autonomous instances; it is not a product of the activity of the masses or the proletariat. Historical materialism and proletarian ideology are strictly separated. Furthermore, the instances do not constitute a totality and do not contain an essence that makes them a phenomenon of the Hegelian spirit or idea. They are not based on a basic contradiction but rather marked by several contradictions and complex structural relations determined by the structural overdetermination. Their histories are not singular, but they have differential histories, which are very different from the Hegelian view. These histories are not defined by the activity of experiences of the masses but are understood as the histories of the relatively autonomous instances. What Althusser manages to accomplish with this intervention is to purge the “ideological” elements and show Marx’s theoretical originality while rupturing his theoretical link with the ideological pre-history of Marxism and with the several forms of reading Marx, such as humanism and historicism, which are based on this link.

Another crucial point is that all the points Althusser claimed to be ideological were, in fact, the target of Althusser’s own theoretical-political purge. Adopting a Leninist position, he attempted a similar political purge in a manner similar to Lenin. While purging rivals that were previously targeted by Lenin, such as spontaneism and economism, Althusser also sought to purge the political moderation that emerged after 1956. For him, political actors changed while the theoretical lines remained. It is no coincidence that the target of Althusser's theoretical intervention corresponded to opponents of the PCF's traditional line. But it should be kept in mind that the PCF itself was in a period of political turmoil and transformation, and Althusser was a part of it. Althusser was trying to preserve not the PCF itself, but its traditional ideological line. And for this line to be successfully preserved, it needed renewal. It needed to be theoretically strengthened and purged of its ideological weaknesses.

Conducting a left-wing critique of Stalinism, which attacked the critics of Stalinism rather than Stalinism itself, corresponded to a neo-orthodox position in the wider Left. This would manifest itself in 1968 and the student problem. Althusser would be the target of criticism and would try to change his position in line with the criticism he faced.

CHAPTER 4

THE LEGACY AND THE CRITIQUE OF THE INTERVENTION

4.1. Introduction

After 1956, Althusser maintained a position of neo-orthodoxy by renewing the traditional line. While this position criticized the reductionism, economism, historicism, and dogmatism of the preceding orthodoxy, it simultaneously created a new elitism, theoreticism, and detachment from politics. This new form of orthodoxy was based on the academy and theory rather than the directives of the CPSU and the political line enforced by the PCF elite. The ultimate consequence of this was a conservative and inactive attitude in 1968, particularly in the context of the student problem. This inactivity should be understood as the product of a specific conjuncture in light of the previous chapters, and a wholesale rejection of Althusser's theoretical and political contributions should be avoided.

Therefore, this chapter will examine how Althusser arrived at this position in 1968 and the criticisms he faced as a result. Only by correctly understanding the nature of these criticisms and the changes Althusser made to his theoretical position in response to them can Althusser's contribution to Marxist literature as a philosopher be truly understood.

While the various criticisms levelled against Althusser are highly accurate, Althusser stands out as a philosopher who, when appropriate, recognized his theoretical and political shortcomings and charted a new course to address them. The story of Althusser's intervention shows that it is important to consider a philosopher in their conjuncture, and only within this context, his theoretical contributions can be better understood and utilized.

Starting from Althusser's changing theoretical and political positions regarding the events of 1968 and the student problem, this chapter will inquire into the relationship between Althusser, Stalinism, and PCF, and later it will focus on several criticisms that Althusser has faced regarding his theoretical position. The criticisms that are going to be examined are chosen based mostly on their contemporaneity and theoretical line. It is important to focus primarily on the criticisms coming from the Althusserian camp in order to better understand the Althusserian framework and its theoretical-political deficiencies and theoretical ambiguities. This would also prevent the inclination towards the wholesale rejection of the Althusserian problematic.

Another point that is going to be examined in this chapter is the self-criticism conducted by Althusser himself. As mentioned above, in order to understand Althusser, it is crucial to consider critiques made within the Althusserian problematic. This is why it is also crucial to examine the self-critical texts Althusser wrote during and around the conjuncture of 1968.

Finally, based on all these points, it is important to examine what remains from Althusser, and especially his theoretical intervention, what his legacy is, what contributions he made to Marxist literature, what impact he has had on the creation of the current conjuncture, and how his theoretical framework helps us today in understanding the conjuncture.

4.2. 1968 and Althusser's Revision

The events of May 1968 in France forced Marxist intellectuals to confront the political significance of a mass revolt that began with students and rapidly expanded into the biggest general strike in the history of France. Althusser had become a leading figure in French Marxism, and he was a member of the PCF. He believed that these upheavals exposed some problems in his theoretical framework, such as the tendency to subordinate political practice to theory. He later called this tendency theoreticism. Jacques Rancière was Althusser's student and co-author of *Reading Capital* (1970). Rancière used the events of 1968 and the "student problem" to make a rigorous critique of his teacher. It is important to understand that the "student

problem" is an important point that revealed Althusser's theoreticism and represented Rancière's theoretical break from Althusser (Lampert, 2014, pp. 27-30).

Althusser had attempted to theorize the political role of students even before May 1968. Althusser wrote his 1964 essay The *Student Problem* in the midst of growing unrest in French universities. In this essay, Althusser insisted that students did not constitute a revolutionary class (Althusser, 2011). Althusser believed that students' role was mostly transitional, which meant that they were destined to become part of the petit-bourgeois intelligentsia and that they lacked both the material position and the political force to lead the revolutionary transformation. He also argued that an important task for students was not to disrupt the structures of education but to absorb scientific knowledge through Marxist science conducted under the guidance of professors. What mattered was the quality of the knowledge itself, not the hierarchical form in which it was transmitted (Althusser, 2011; Lampert, 2014, pp. 32-33).

This position revealed the underlying theoreticism of Althusser's works. By making the possession and transmission of scientific Marxist theory the decisive political act, Althusser found himself defending the existing academic hierarchies. Althusser warned that students who were challenging their professors risked alienating their allies in the academy and undermining the very process by which they might acquire the scientific knowledge necessary for the revolution. This position aligned Althusser with the reproduction of the exact educational structures that May 1968 would bring into question (Lampert, 2014, p.33).

When the revolt broke out, Althusser was conspicuously cautious. Students at Nanterre and the Sorbonne initiated occupations and protests, and it quickly spread to workers across France. The PCF leadership dismissed the student movement as petit-bourgeois adventurism while Althusser's own initial silence placed him in uneasy proximity to that line. While attempting to intervene in the conjuncture of the crisis after 1956, Althusser put himself in a position of orthodoxy. This was an orthodoxy based on the primacy of scientific knowledge and hierarchy between the mediators of this knowledge and the students, as well as the positions of the PCF, created by the

previous experiences of the political oscillations. Althusser's theoretical framework was based on the distinction between ideology and science, and he believed that revolutionary knowledge must be imported to the working class by intellectuals similar to Lenin (1969), as mentioned in the previous chapter. This made him unable to grasp the political novelty of the uprising (Lampert, 2014, pp. 29-31).

From Althusser's perspective, the revolt was not yet based on the proletariat, and it was not mediated through Party leadership. For him, this meant that the revolt ultimately remained politically indeterminate and was doomed to fail. In this sense, the events exemplified the dangers of spontaneism he had long warned against, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Although he later accepted the importance of the events of May 1968 in reshaping his thought, his immediate reaction reflected a conservative and defensive position since Althusser refused to see students as political subjects (Lampert, 2014, p.30). This was not a surprise since Althusser was a member of PCF and PCF had attacked its rivals, and even its own members, on the grounds that they were not a part of the working class. This argument was previously used by PCF while purging its members and distancing itself from other forms of Marxism and allies of Marxism in France, as mentioned in the first chapter.

In contrast to the conservative position of Althusser that constituted a neo-orthodoxy during this conjuncture, Rancière believed that the events of 1968 marked a decisive turning point. He thus challenged the political neo-orthodoxy as well as the theoretical framework of Althusser. This criticism is important since it was made inside the Althusserian problematic and conducted with the method of symptomatic reading.

Rancière interpreted the revolt not as a deviation from Marxist science but as an eruption of political truth. For Rancière, ordinary people such as students, workers, and the marginalized were asserting equality through collective struggle (Lampert, 2014, pp. 31-33). The indeterminacy that was identified by Althusser had a different meaning for Rancière. Rancière believed that it exposed the limits of Althusser's structuralist framework (2011).

In his book called *Althusser's Lesson*, Rancière accused Althusser of transposing class struggle onto a philosophical opposition between science and ideology. Thus,

Althusser was ultimately defending the reproduction of the intellectual hierarchies. In this model, professors and theorists were identified as those possessing the necessary scientific knowledge. They were implicitly cast as revolutionary agents while students and workers were put in the position of recipients. But the uprisings of 1968 showed that revolutionary action could emerge without the sanction of theory, which damaged the strict hierarchy between scientific knowledge and political practice (Lampert, 2014, p. 35).

In the years following the revolt, Althusser began to acknowledge the shortcomings of his earlier positions. In *Elements of Self-Criticism* (1976), he admitted that his early work suffered from a theoreticist deviation. What Althusser meant was that he was forgetting the class struggle by overemphasizing theory at the expense of political practice (Althusser, 1976; Lampert, 2014, p.21). Furthermore, he came to see that ideology was not the opposite of the scientific process in the form of an error or false consciousness, but a set of material practices embedded in institutions, including the university. This recognition led to his famous account of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), where he explicitly addressed the role of schools in reproducing class relations (Althusser, 1971). In this new view, schools were understood as a part of the educational ideological apparatus, which diversified the labour power and also taught the working class how to obey the rules of the capitalist system and to respect and reproduce the existing social hierarchies. This new framework was made possible by looking from the perspective of reproduction defined in Marx's *Capital*.

Althusser believed that while understanding the production in the capitalist social formation was important, a more important point was to understand how it continued to produce, thus highlighting the importance of the reproduction of the social relations necessary for the production. This new position did not mean that Althusser changed all of his previous theoretical positions, and it did not mean that Althusser's problematic was changing. But it showed that Althusser understood that he had made a mistake regarding his theoretical analysis and political position regarding the events of 1968, and he was ready to modify his framework based on this realisation (Althusser, 1971).

Other than the new perspective of reproduction and ISAs, which were developed from it, he also modified his views regarding the notion of ideology (Althusser, 1971). He explained that ideology works based on the interpellation, which is a form of ideological hailing. This could happen in the form of a hail made by a policeman, which would be recognised by the addressee. Althusser believed that Ideology's hailing worked in the ideological state apparatuses. Ideological state apparatuses were defined by the practice, and as the one that is hailed, partakes in the practices, it is interpellated. Still, Althusser explains that ideological state apparatuses are contested grounds and hints that it is possible to fight the ideology that is practiced in these apparatuses. Implications of this new argument are that one could potentially combat bourgeois ideologies on the ideological ground. This was also hinted at before in Althusser's Reading Capital when he hesitantly says that one could possibly fight ideology with ideology, but it carries the danger of getting lost in the ideological ground and opens the Marxist scientific problematic to the ideological infiltration of bourgeois ideology (Althusser, 1970).

In *Reading Capital*, Althusser also explains that science is a production process whose product creates the effect of science. He explains that ideology is also a production process whose product creates the effect of ideology. Althusser warns that products of the ideological production process can give the effect of science, while the opposite of this is also possible. This is also a point that is creating ambiguity in the definitions of ideology and science. It also undermines the claim that science is the opposite of ideology (Althusser, 1970). But more importantly, it is a hint towards Althusser's self-criticism and changing position regarding science and ideology in the later conjuncture, which is defined by the events of May 1968. There exist several other ambiguities in Althusser's theoretical framework that he had developed during his theoretical intervention, which are identified by Geras. This will be returned later in this chapter and examined in more detail.

In later interventions such as *Sur une erreur politique* (1972), Althusser also revised his position regarding students. He acknowledged the existence of exploitation and stratification within the university itself. He described auxiliary teachers and precarious students as the proletariat of the education service. Thus, he changed his

previous position regarding the role of the students and the university and located the university firmly within the terrain of class struggle (Lampert, 2014, pp. 37-41). This was an important change from his earlier defensive position regarding the academic hierarchy. It was also a sign that the new conjuncture, which is defined by the events of 1968, had forced him to rethink the political significance of education.

But Rancière believed that Althusser's revisions did not go far enough. Raniere claimed that Althusser's willingness to critique educational hierarchies remained compromised by his continued position within the ENS and the PCF, as well as his reliance on theoretical discourse. Rancière dismissed Althusser's self-criticism as another symptom of theoreticism and claimed that Althusser was treating his earlier political errors as theoretical "blind spots" rather than as embedded in institutional power (Lampert, 2014, pp. 30-31, 43). This criticism is important since it is a criticism based on the Althusserian problematic. It is based on the method of symptomatic reading, but this time, it is directed to Althusser himself in the form of a criticism.

Whereas Althusser believed that the events of May 1968 revealed the need to rethink the material institutions of ideology, Rancière argued that it revealed the limits of all hierarchies of knowledge. He claimed that true politics lay in the assertion of equality by those excluded from the realm of science and theory rather than being based on theory's attempt to recognize them. Thus, the "student problem" became the symbolic ground of their theoretical and political split. It showed that for Althusser, students were politically secondary, and they needed theoretical mediation by the scientists of the Marxist science, which transferred the knowledge that they had produced to the students. But for Rancière, students embodied the capacity of anyone to think and act politically. Rancière would later base his whole theory of pedagogy on this understanding.

This shows that the student revolts served as a nodal point in which the Althusser-Rancière theoretical-political divide was determined. Althusser's earlier conservative neo-orthodox position, which is defined by the defence of academic hierarchy and his suspicion of spontaneism, showed that he was unable to understand the new

conjuncture, which was defined by the events in 1968. Even though he later modified his understanding of ideology and accepted that the class struggle was possible within universities, he still continued his adherence to the theoreticist position, as claimed by Rancière. At the same time, Rancière seized the opportunity created by the events of 1968 as a chance to reject the hierarchies that existed in Althusserian Marxism itself. For Rancière, 1968 showed that political truth emerges not from theory but from the collective assertion of equality. The student problem thus revealed the political positions taken during the events of 1968, and it also constitutes the theoretical aspects of the Althusser-Rancière split. It is important to understand the criticisms made by Rancière to better understand the problems existing in the theoretical position of Althusser and his political stance. For this reason, it is important to understand Rancière's critique of Althusser. This is a point that will be returned to later.

4.3. Althusser, Stalinism and the PCF

An important element of Althusser's theoretical framework developed during his intervention is its relationship to the problem of Stalinism, especially starting with *For Marx* and continuing after it. The problem of Stalinism was never trivial in Althusser's work, but rather it formed the unspoken backdrop against which his philosophy developed. In fact, Althusser's efforts can be read as a continued response to the crisis that happened as a consequence of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the following disorientation within the international communist movement (Gerratana, 1977, p.111). Althusser's intervention, which consists of works such as For Marx and Reading Capital, aimed to overcome Stalinist dogmatism by reopening the path for a Marxist philosophy. Unlike many Marxist intellectuals of the period after 1956 who turned toward the young Marx and humanism, Althusser instead tried to develop Marxism on its own terms. Althusser believed that this could be done by reconstructing the philosophical foundations of Marxism (Althusser, 2005). However, this project slipped into what Althusser himself would later call a "theoreticist deviation," which is self-critically defined as an excessive focus on abstract philosophical construction at the expense of concrete political analysis (Gerratana, 1977, pp.111-112).

This theoreticism manifested itself in Althusser's early focus and tolerance toward Stalin's theoretical legacy. An example of it is in *For Marx*. In this book, Althusser described Stalin's *Foundations of Leninism* as a particularly lucid exposition of Lenin's thought while also acknowledging its pedagogical dryness (Althusser, 2005; Gerratana, 1977, p.112). It is possible to read this as symptomatic of Althusser's avoidance of the real confrontation between Lenin's thought and the Stalinist understanding of Marxism-Leninism. Althusser even attributed a measure of theoretical discernment to Stalin's rejection of the Hegelian "negation of the negation" in *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*. Gerratana sharply criticizes this claim by stressing that Stalin's engagement with philosophy was superficial and dilettantish, but it was also politically consequential (1977, pp.113-114). To regard Stalin as a philosopher in any serious sense carries the risk of obscuring the link between his philosophical dogmatism and his authoritarian political practice.

It was only in Althusser's later writings that Stalinism became a direct object of analysis, such as *Reply to John Lewis* and *Elements of Self-Criticism* (1976). In these works, Althusser introduced the concept of "deviation" to grasp Stalinism. Thus, he situated Stalinism as a return to the economism and humanism of the Second International (Althusser, 1976). But still, Althusser's use of "deviation" moved between Lenin's flexible notion of a correctable tendency and Stalin's rigid definition of mortal opposition to the party line (Gerratana, 1977, pp.115-116). This conceptual ambiguity risked minimising the dangers presented by Stalinism by placing it in the same analytical space as ordinary theoretical errors.

In his preface to Dominique Lecourt's *Lyssenko* (1976), Althusser shifted from "deviation" to "error" as the central category. He then argued that Stalinism was a "colossal error" arising from the non-transparency of class struggle (Althusser, 1977; Gerratana, 1977, p.117). This reframing constituted the basis for a Marxist phenomenology of error that recognized error as a structural element of class struggle rather than merely a failure of will or knowledge. But Gerratana warns that Althusser's reliance on Lenin's view, which claims that failure to analyse an error is worse than the error itself, paradoxically risks diminishing the enormity of Stalinism and shifts the attention to the lack of analysis rather than to Stalinism's catastrophic political consequences (Gerratana, 1977, pp.117-119).

Some claimed that Althusser's confrontation with Stalinism remained incomplete. Althusser correctly abandoned his earlier position of making concessions to Stalin's philosophical "merits" and came to see Stalinist dialectical materialism as a "reactionary caricature" subordinated to political legitimation, but his theoreticism often prevented a total historical reckoning (Gerratana, 1977, pp.119-121). Gerratana claims that a true critique of Stalinism must read it within the contradictions of a changing society rather than resolving it only at the level of concepts.

Even though there are some critics who read Althusser's "left-wing" critique of Stalinism as a failure or as inadequate, what is more important is to understand this critique of Stalinism as an essential element of Althusser's theoretical framework. It is also important to read Althusser's relation with Stalinism in the context of the changing conjuncture, since it was the element that defined the theoretical framework that Althusser created. This means that one needs to understand the relation between Stalinism and Althusser to better understand both the limits and possibilities of Althusser's theoretical practice. It is possible to read Althusser's philosophical interventions not as abstract exercises, but as interventions shaped by the unresolved legacies of Stalinism within the PCF and the international communist movement. This problematic shaped Althusser's positions in the 1960s and 1970s, and it would also define the horizon of his later self-criticisms (Elliot, 2006).

It should be understood that Althusser's confrontation with Stalinism cannot be reduced to a personal rejection or endorsement because it was a structural and political problem that required theoretical clarification. The PCF was deeply entangled in the Stalinist tradition and remained cautious in its responses to both Khrushchev's Secret Speech in 1956 and subsequent waves of critique. In this conjuncture, Althusser believed that problems of Stalinism were not just a matter of abuses or crimes. They were viewed by Althusser as forms of theoretical and political practice that distorted Marxism itself (Elliott, 2006, p.252). For Althusser, the issue was not only political repression but also epistemological deformation. Stalinism was criticised for entrenching economism, teleology, and a dogmatic conception of history. Althusser's early works, such as For Marx and Reading Capital, tried to break with historicism and humanism precisely because these categories had been

reinforced by the Stalinist orthodoxy (Elliot, 2006, p.254). In other words, Althusser's project to create a scientific framework was inseparable from the need to develop a form of Marxism that is not Stalinist. But in this theoretical effort, even though Althusser managed to develop a new form of Marxism and mostly purge the Stalinist orthodoxy, he found himself trapped in a new form of orthodoxy which was defined by the shadow of Stalinism that is mediated through the PCF mixed with the theoreticism of his new position. This was the exact criticism he would face, as mentioned.

When read critically, one of the paradoxes that can be identified in Althusser's position is the contrast between his strategy of theoretical intervention and his symptomatic silence regarding Stalinism. During the critical conjuncture of 1956, Althusser refrained from public denunciations of Stalinism, preferring instead to engage in theoretical reconstruction. His choice of "detour," which meant pursuing theoretical rigor rather than political polemic, was not accidental; it was an intentional strategy. Althusser believed that the best way to combat Stalinist legacies was to clarify Marxism's scientific structure. This would help strip it of teleology and essentialist humanism (Elliot, 2006, pp.256-257). This explains why *Reading Capital* (Althusser, 1970) did not explicitly name Stalinism but implicitly offered the tools for its critique. The concepts of "epistemological break," "theoretical practice," and "overdetermination" undermined the Stalinist framework greatly. While Stalinism reduced contradictions to a linear class struggle governed by historical necessity, Althusser put forward a theoretical framework that explained the complexity and the relative autonomy of levels of social practice (Elliott, 2006, p. 259).

The events of May 1968 exposed the problems of Althusser's theoretical and political positions. He was reluctant to embrace the student movement and was ultimately following the PCF's rigid line, which placed him in a position of relative isolation. It can be said that Althusser's symptomatic silence on Stalinism became increasingly untenable as critiques intensified from within and outside the Party (Elliot, 2006, p.264). Students and younger Marxists demanded explicit political engagement. But Althusser remained committed to a long-term theoretical detour.

It was in this context that Rancière's break with Althusser became significant. Rancière argued that Althusser's refusal to address Stalinism directly betrayed a complicity with authoritarian structures. It can be said that this charge was perhaps overstated, but it still revealed the limitations of Althusser's approach since theoretical intervention itself could not displace Stalinist legacies without organizational and political struggle (Elliott, 2006, pp.267-268). As a result, Althusser started to critically examine his own theories in the 1970s and admitted that his previous writings had placed too much emphasis on theoretical rigour at the expense of political action. Althusser's self-evaluation can be interpreted as a reorganization of his project's priorities rather than a complete abandonment of it. Althusser acknowledged that the failure of intellectuals to publicly challenge Stalinism was one reason it had endured. Instead of challenging it openly, they depended on "detours" that did not challenge the Party (Elliot, 2006, p.272).

In later works, Althusser acknowledged the limitations of his earlier interventions. Texts such as *Essays in Self-Criticism* (Althusser, 1976) show this change in position. Although he acknowledged that it had the risk of reproducing a hierarchical relationship between theory and practice, he explained that his differentiation between science and ideology was essential to departing from historicism. But Stalinism had ultimately flourished on such divisions by elevating an elite Party line above mass movements (Elliott, 2006, p.275). This was revealed in both the PCF's position in 1968 and Althusser's symptomatic silence.

It can be said that Althusser's theoretical development process cannot be understood without the shadow of Stalinism. From his initial silence in 1956, through the theoretical detours of the 1960s, to his later self-criticism in the 1970s, the shadow of Stalinism haunted Althusser's work. But he cannot simply be labelled as an apologist, and he was not simply following the orthodox line. On the contrary, Althusser was a philosopher attempting to invent concepts that could reverse Stalinist distortions of the Marxist theory. But Althusser's reluctance to address the issue of Stalinism directly meant that he was always vulnerable to the charge of complicity.

Some shortcomings in his theoretical and political position can be identified and criticised if one assumes that Althusser's theory has an essence which is revised and

corrupted in the form of a deviation or revised and corrected with a return to the original problematic. But one can also understand it by reading it critically in an Althusserian manner, thus identifying the changing elements of the problematic and its reflection in the political practice as both a conscious and unconscious construction of a neo-orthodoxy.

Althusser's intervention can be claimed to be a form of political engagement through theory, which tried to clarify Marx's mature thought that is defined by the scientific problematic, while adapting to the shifting conjuncture around the period marked by the events of 1968. However, the Stalinist legacy forced him into a defensive position. It was only through his self-critique that he started to accept the insufficiency of theory without political confrontation. But this self-critique was a critique that found its basis in the earlier works of the intervention. Some would claim that Althusser was trying to fix his theory, which is disconnected from the political action, within the terrain of theory, thus continuing its theoreticism (Rancière, 2011). While some others would criticise Althusser based on the historical consequences resulting from its theoretical framework that disrupts the relation between class struggle and Marxist theory, which resulted in the banishment of class, the motor of history, and central pillar of Marxism, from theory and politics (Wood, 1998).

4.4. The Critique of Althusser's Intervention

4.4.1. Context of the Critique

Since it represents the critique made inside the Althusserian problematic, Rancière's critique is crucial for understanding the scope of Althusser's theoretical and political changes. Although Althusser's theoretical framework has been criticized by many thinkers and has undergone changes in the light of various criticisms, this is precisely why this specific criticism stands out. For this reason, it is necessary to examine the historical reasons for the Althusser-Rancière divide within a broader context. This way, as in previous chapters, theoretical developments can be understood within their political context and grounded in the changing conjuncture. Rancière's critique will

be better understood after examining its historical and political context. Therefore, this critique will be examined from its historical context to its theoretical details.

Mozzachiodi notes that, in his later account of Althusser's decline after 1968, Rancière traces the origins of the eventual dissatisfaction with Althusserianism back to Althusser's 1964 essay The *Student Problems* (Mozzachiodi, 2022, p.118). Although it was written during the highly productive phase that produced *For Marx* and *Reading Capital*, this lesser-known piece remained peripheral within the Althusserian theoretical corpus. It was both because of its seemingly limited, context-specific focus and because Althusser himself deliberately left it out of his important publications from that era (Althusser, 1993, p.197). Althusser's main objection to Rancière's critical book, which was published in 1974, was that his critique relied heavily on a text he had already disavowed in 1965.

The essay was intended to curb the activities of the syndicalist student wing of the PCF, the Union des Étudiants Communistes (UEC), and to block their efforts to achieve political and organizational independence from the Party. Rancière argues that what motivated Althusser's unusually polemical intervention was the genuine danger that the UEC's initiatives posed to the very basis of his theoretical project (Althusser, 2011, pp.8-15). After the Algerian War, the UEC redirected its critical and political focus toward the university system. UEC was attempting to address its own immediate context, which is defined by the educational apparatus in which it operated. Interpreted through the point of view of the class struggle, this shift raised questions about the material and social purposes of academic knowledge. It also raised questions about the role of pedagogical relations in reproducing existing social relations of production (Montag, 2015, pp.48-66).

For Rancière and others writing after 1968, Althusser's intervention in *Student Problems* revealed a defensive reflex that, in their view, reappeared in theoretical form within his major works of intervention in 1965. Rancière argued that these writings established the core principles of Althusser's reconstruction of Marxist philosophy, most notably the elevated, quasi-transcendental role assigned to science and to the figure of the theorist. This framework, he suggested, ultimately served to

legitimize the authority of the expert in the university and the intellectual within the party. From this perspective, Althusserianism amounted to a theory of education. Rancière claimed that "every theory of education is committed to preserving the power" that it seeks to reveal (Rancière, 2011).

Althusser defended the indispensability of the organizational structures of the two institutions that secured his own position in the revolutionary struggle in the Party and the university, in *Student Problems*. He justified these hierarchies by portraying them as the result of a necessary technical, rather than social, division of labour. This argument was advanced in the name of preserving the struggle between science and ideology. Althusser claimed that it could only take place by upholding the fundamental "technical" division underpinning the transmission of knowledge, namely. This ultimately meant the preservation of pedagogical inequality (Mozzachiodi, 2022).

Althusser's frequent use of the term "dangerous" to describe the confusion of scientific practice with bourgeois individualism suggests that the legacy of Lysenkoism and the "two sciences" debate was important for Althusser. From this perspective, he maintained that the technical forms of scientific and pedagogical practices under capitalism could not be reduced to a mere reflection of existing social relations of production. While these practices did, in fact, contribute to reproducing those relations, their function was not predetermined to do so. The example of Lysenko revealed to Althusser that politicizing the technical forms of scientific practice on the basis of social or philosophical criteria produced disastrous and unacceptable outcomes (Mozzachiodi, p.120). Based on this, Althusser claimed that the primary site where class power asserts itself over researchers, teachers, and students lies in the character of the knowledge being taught, and this is a knowledge divided by class into two distinct forms: science and ideology (Althusser, 2011).

Rancière and the UEC adhered to the Althusserian perspective until the late 1960s and placed their "spontaneous" student activism secondary to the theoretical primacy of the class struggle. They committed themselves to defending Marxist science against the ideologically corrosive influences present in French academic institutions

(Elliot, 2006, p.171). In the years preceding 1968, the PCF's attempts to control the group reached a peak with the dissolution of the UEC cell at the ENS. Former members such as Rancière, Robert Linhart, and Dominique Lecourt established a splinter Maoist organization as a reaction to the PCF's attempts. Trotskyists under Daniel Bensaid also created a separate group at the Sorbonne in 1967. Balibar and others maintained their collaboration with Althusser into the 1970s and stayed in the PCF for a longer period (Khilnani, 1993, p.108). But until 1968, anti-institutional critique had already become dominant among student activists and the academic left. The new social movements were defined by a focus on power. Principles of decentralization and self-management became their guiding ideals. Althusserian philosophy lost its influence as a result of these events (Mozzachiodi, 2022).

Alongside this institutional shift, the relationship between politics and the university underwent a significant realignment. The student activism of May 1968 reoriented the left's political alliances away from the traditional triad of party, union, and workers, toward a more informal network of coalitions. One important example is the one between university students and workers. These alliances prompted reflection on the connection between struggles in the workplace and those within the university. The theoretical counterpart to this shift emerged in the study of social reproduction. Several works examining how education contributes to the reproduction of the social conditions of material production were being published in the 1970s. Key texts that catalyzed this theoretical focus were Althusser's *Ideology and the State Apparatus* (1971) and Bourdieu and Passeron's *La Reproduction* (1970). The events of 1968 and the state's response to them revealed that the university was deeply entwined with the structures of capital and the state. This meant that the university was functioning as one of the primary sites where these forces intersected (Mozzachiodi, 2022).

After the events of 1968, Althusser changed his views regarding the role of education and developed the ISA framework to explain the educational apparatus. This theoretical change of position was partly caused by his students' views regarding his theoretical position, which was seen as contradictory by the students just before the events of 1968. This contradictory position was caused by his double political position. Firstly, he was seen as a representative of the Party discipline, and secondly,

he was a militant of the Maoist line. Resulting from the criticisms made by Rancière, Debray, and Linhart, Althusser decided to revise his position regarding the function of education. His theoretical revision was seen as contradictory and incoherent by the critics when compared to the works of the intervention. Critics claimed that the new position held by Althusser was even more incoherent than his previous position (Mozzachiodi, pp.121-122).

The theoretical gaps regarding the role of the educational institution became particularly pronounced. Althusser previously viewed the university as occupying a "special situation" that provided it with some protection from state intervention. This enabled teachers and students to pursue their immediate political objectives. Specifically, this involved the demystification of bourgeois ideology through counter-knowledge, allowing the university to perform a relatively constructive political function (Althusser, 2011).

Mozzachiodi (2022, pp.121-122) explains that Althusser maintained in *Ideology and the State Apparatus* (1971) that the educational system was a vital component of the state apparatus and that it was essential to the reproduction of the social and technical stratifications required to sustain the capitalist production process. This perspective holds that the educational institution gave the state the ability to produce ideological subjects by monopolizing the conditions of social acculturation. As a result, it was in a position to maintain prevailing ideologies, standardize behaviour, and differentiate the workforce based on the social discipline and technical know-how needed by capitalist businesses. According to this viewpoint, the university was an arena where the state provided supplemental capital and was immediately integrated into the larger industrial process. Given its complete articulation in Rancière's work, the leftist reaction to Althusser's most recent contribution would point out the ideology essay's continuance of Althusserianism's structural inconsistencies.

4.4.2. The Critique

One of the sharpest and most controversial analyses of Althusser's political and theoretical legacy is Rancière's *Althusser's Lesson* (2011). Rather than merely

disputing Althusser's philosophical ideas, Rancière's critique of his work in this book involves re-inscribing Althusser's ideas within their particular intellectual and political history. Rancière's experience of the May 1968 French student uprisings, which he believed directly conflicted with the tenets of the Marxism he had studied under Althusser, served as the basis for this criticism. The text was written immediately following May 1968 and published in 1974, and it represents a political re-evaluation of the theoretical Marxism that had characterized the French intellectual left during the 1960s as well as a generational split. Rancière had previously studied under Althusser and worked with him on *Reading Capital,* but he was going to sharply criticise his teacher because of this disillusionment. Three interconnected topics are covered in Rancière's critique: Althusser's theory of ideology, his political and theoretical position during the 1968 events, and the wider political consequences of Althusser's structuralist reinterpretation of Marxism. According to Rancière, Althusser's philosophy served as a "philosophy of order" that separated intellectuals from the real struggles of the masses, even though it claimed to be a revolutionary "science" (2011, xix).

Rancière had no interest in offering a personal critique or a straightforward monograph of Althusser's ideas. Instead of this, his objective was to examine the "politics of a system of thought" (2011, xiii). He examined how Althusserianism, which is based on a "theoretico-political intervention" (Rancière, 2011, xiv), used the political events of its era, such as the contemporary workers' and student struggles, to assert the primacy of theory and the Party. Rancière explains that Althusser's work became the dominant view among the new forms of Marxism by calling for a return to Marx's original thought while demonstrating allegiance to the PCF. Rancière's criticism thus functions as a refutation of what he understood to be an intellectual "counter-revolution" (2011, p.129, 154).

Althusser's famous essay, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1971), is central to the critique. Althusser argued that ideology operates through institutions such as schools, churches, and the family. It reproduces capitalist relations of production by interpellating individuals as subjects. Rancière believes that there exists a profoundly elitist and depoliticizing logic in this framework. Althusser

claims that all individuals are “always-already interpellated” into ideology. This means that Althusser reduced political actors to the role of bearers of structures. Thus, he left no room for genuine resistance or emancipatory initiative (Rancière, 2011, pp. 28-30).

For Rancière, this stance is equivalent to a theoretical foreclosure of politics. If ideology is inescapable, then any attempt at revolutionary consciousness is already trapped within the same structures it seeks to contest. Rancière claims that Althusser thus displaces political struggle into the hands of intellectuals. The task of these individuals thus becomes the unveiling of ideology. This gives philosophy and philosophers a privileged and authoritarian role in the revolutionary process. The critique, therefore, extends beyond theoretical concerns to the question of intellectual authority itself. Rancière claims that Althusser’s Marxism hides a new form of vanguardism disguised as structural analysis (Rancière, 2011, pp. 52-54, 69). From Rancière’s analysis and with the relationship between Althusser and Stalinism, this new form of vanguardism can be claimed to be a new form of orthodoxy or a “neo-orthodoxy” in political practice supported by the theoretical framework.

Rancière says that Althusserianism has ultimately repressed the creative and spontaneous actions of the masses despite its focus on "theoretical practice". The Althusserian definition of ideology means a system of representations that subjects individuals to the dominant order, suggested a radical cultural revolution to some, but its political effect was the condemnation of the student uprisings as a "petit-bourgeois movement" that needed to be re-educated by the authority of Science and the Party (Rancière, 2011, xiv).

Althusser's emphasis on a "process without a subject" and the "theoretical anti-humanism" served to diminish the role of human agency and the concrete experiences of people in history (Rancière, 2011, pp.16-21, xx). Rancière says that this created a stark contrast between the theoretical heroism of the philosopher who "discovers" truth through solitary research, and the reality of mass action (2011, p.32, 74).

Rancière's critique of Althusser's theory of ideology is central to the critique. Althusser's view is that the dominated are ignorant of the laws of domination.

Rancière links this view to other theories of "misrecognition" and the "spectacle". He says that this "simplistic view" assigns to the theorist the "exalted task of bringing their science to the blind masses". For Rancière, this presupposes an "inequality of intelligences" and ultimately dissolves into a "pure thought of resentment" that declares the masses are unable to take charge of their own destiny (2011, xvi).

Contrastingly, Rancière's book is founded on the opposite idea of "the capacity of the dominated" and the idea that a capacity common to all can found both the power of thought and the dynamics of emancipation (Rancière, 2011, xvi). He argues that Althusser's theory moves from the domain of Marxism to that of bourgeois sociology by failing to think through the problem of contradiction. It functions as a "screen" to obscure the political fight of a "communist philosopher" against anything that threatens the authority of his Party and his philosophy, particularly the students who contested the authority of knowledge in May 1968 (Rancière, 2011, p.21).

The political importance of this critique became clear during and after May 1968. Althusser remained conspicuously silent while students and workers took to the streets and factories in an unprecedented wave of protest and strikes. Rancière interprets this inaction as symptomatic of Althusser's theoretical framework. Spontaneous uprisings appeared politically insignificant or even misguided to Althusserian Marxism since it viewed ideology as all-encompassing and viewed political practice as dependent on the Party's scientific knowledge (Rancière, 2011, pp. 11-13).

But the events of 1968 revealed precisely the opposite for Rancière. Rancière saw the capacity of ordinary people, such as the workers, students, and marginalized groups, to disrupt structures of domination and to invent new forms of politics. Rancière claimed that Althusser failed to grasp the significance of the events of 1968 and exposed the conservative implications of his thought by dismissing or ignoring the political struggles. Rancière argues that Althusser's retreat to theory reproduced the same paternalism and hierarchy of knowledge that May 1968 had called into question (Rancière, 2011, pp. 47-49).

Rancière's book is titled *Althusser's Lesson* intentionally to highlight this contradiction. Althusser had taught his students to distrust ideology, to avoid humanist illusions, and to ground Marxism in scientific analysis. But according to Rancière, the ultimate lesson of Althusser's thought was that politics belongs to those who speak in the name of science, such as intellectuals, party leaders, and theoreticians. This framework reinforced dependency and hierarchy instead of opening the way for political emancipation (Rancière, 2011, pp. 57-60).

Thus, Rancière believed that Althusser's lesson was a negative one. Althusser revealed how theoretical Marxism could turn into a new form of domination by mistake. This new form of theoretical Marxism excluded the voices of those who struggle. In this sense, Rancière places Althusser alongside what he saw as the broader failures of Marxist parties in the late 1960s. An important example is the PCF since it had distanced itself from the student revolts and prioritized the stability of the Party over revolutionary rupture. Althusser was seen as a part of this inclination, and this view was supported by his loyalty to the PCF orthodoxy in the end.

Rancière's critique of Althusser was not only destructive. It also created the basis of his own theoretical and political direction. Rancière began to emphasize the capacity of "the part of those who have no part" to assert equality and disrupt hierarchical orders by rejecting Althusser's structuralism (Rancière, 1999). This egalitarian turn is already visible in *Althusser's Lesson*. A sign of this is his insistence that politics is not the application of theory by experts. Rancière's definition of politics is instead constituted by the practice of ordinary people asserting their equality against the logic of domination. This break also means a deeper philosophical divergence. While Althusser had tried to defend Marxism as a science distinct from ideology, Rancière dismantled the opposition between science and ideology as politically disabling. Rancière instead redefined politics as an aesthetic and disruptive process that is irreducible to structural reproduction. The critique of Althusser provided the transition from Rancière's early Marxist phase to his later work on politics, aesthetics, and democracy, as well as influencing his pedagogical theory (Rancière, 1991).

Rancière's critique was based on history and politics, and it was to be theoretically influential. Disappointment with Althusser's theoretical and political positions, which are marked by theoreticism and neo-orthodoxy, during the events of 1968, was the starting point for the critique. In a conjuncture in which many young intellectuals and militants faced the limits of the PCF's orthodox line, Rancière dared to go beyond and criticise his own teacher as well. It was received well by many since it was a reflection on the dangers of intellectual authority and the closure of political possibilities by theory. It also showed the necessity of grounding politics in the practices of those excluded from power.

It should be understood that, similar to Althusser, Rancière was a child of the conjuncture, too. While Althusser's most theoretically fruitful and formative years were defined by the conjuncture that is determined by PCF's oscillating policies and the crisis of the international movement after 1956, Rancière's formative years were shaped by the conjuncture that is marked by the events leading up to 1968 and the perceived contradiction between the theoretical position and political position of the Althusserian Marxism. Rancière understood that the Althusserian problematic was unable to analyse and react to the new conjuncture, similar to the PCF line and Hegelian line before. For Rancière, revisions made by Althusser were still in the same problematic, and the problematic was the root of the problem.

In the same spirit as the symptomatic reading that Althusser used to explain Marx's difference from the classical economists before him and his theoretical originality, Rancière realized that Althusser's vision and non-vision, stemming from the problematic he developed, categorically prevented him from understanding 1968 and, although his theoretical framework had been revised, would actually hinder the concrete analysis of the concrete situation in the new conjuncture. Rancière thus turned Althusser's lessons against him in a critique that marked a break with Althusserian Marxism and the Marxism of the PCF. Moreover, this critique was both the sign of a break and the beginning of a new and distinct path for Marxist theory, which would be based on the politics of equality rather than the primacy of the theory.

4.5. Legacy of the Intervention

Althusser's intervention and the new framework that arose out of it are criticised by many. Some criticised it on the grounds of its theoreticism, and some criticised its implicit idealism (Geras, 1972). While some claimed that it prevented political action (Rancière,2011), others believed that the conception of history without subject was a costly mistake (Thompson, 1995). Some even claimed that Althusser misunderstood Hegel and was too quick to label every view that included the subject as Hegelian, thus bundling his theoretical enemies in a reductionist manner (Zizek, 2009). His theoretical and political legacy was debated and is still being debated today.

It would be pointless to examine all critiques here, as the aim of this thesis is not to chart all critiques, but to examine the formation and evolution of the Althusserian problematic resulting from Althusser's theoretical-political intervention, within a conjunctural context, and to understand the shifting political positions it has created. Precisely for this reason, the previous section focused on Rancière's critique to explain the general conjuncture. Here, it is crucial to consider the political and theoretical consequences of Althusser's intervention. Therefore, in line with the purpose of this thesis, it is necessary to proceed through the critique of a thinker who has always emphasized the importance of understanding theory within its historical and political context. This person, of course, is none other than Ellen Wood.

In order to better understand that the changing conjuncture is not limited to France and French politics, as was shown in the previous chapter, and to better grasp the transformation of the problematic arising from Althusser's intervention and the theoretical-political effects it created, it is important to look at the broader picture, of which the story told up to this point is only a part. The broader picture is best painted in Ellen Wood's text *The Retreat from Class* (1998).

Wood explains the causes and development of the era of Marxist defeatism, which is revealed by the retreat from class into various sorts of Marxism, such as post-Marxism and even into post-modernism. Similar to the true socialism in the era of Marx, in the late 80s into the 90s, the new true socialism has reached its destination

according to Wood. This destination is the full retreat from class and the objective of a classless society of socialism. Her inquiries into history and background of the retreat from class shows us that with the missing of the opportunity of revolution and with constant electoral defeats, the left has started to question its theory, politics, and even Marxism itself. This was exacerbated by the Stalinist determinism and nihilism, as well as the policies of the welfare states in Europe, which have pacified and disorganized the working class and incorporated it into its ideological hegemony. Its seemingly neutral nature has absorbed the working-class militancy as well as the left-wing intellectuals and thus created the necessary consent for this integration. This was combined with the fraction splits in the socialist left, such as the Sino-Soviet split, as well as the dissolution of the "real socialism". These would result in a Western Maoism and later in Eurocommunism. Even though workers' strikes and worker militancy continued well into the 1980s, these would be ignored or would be understood in terms of the ideological ground that was laid by Thatcherism and defeatism. Wood thus tries to explain the way in which the left has retreated from the central position given to the working class as the motor of history and tries to trace its ideological theoretical cues through history and through the ideas of different philosophers and thinkers, including Althusser and Althusserian Marxism.

The new true socialism (NTS) is the main line that Wood argues against. Its main logic is based on the view that Marx's expectations about the working class creating a revolutionary movement were not realized. This view stems from a misunderstanding of Marx, who thinks that since Marxism is technological determinist and its prophecy did not come true, this means that Marx was wrong. This means that there is no necessary correspondence between economy and politics. Economic interests cannot translate themselves into the political and ideological, and there is a relation of relative autonomy and even independence between them. This would also mean that the working class has no interest in socialism. This last point also means that by creating the necessary discourse, one can construct a popular socialist movement from any group in society by motivating them politically and ideologically, since it is independent from the economic relations and classes. Class interests are seen as material goals, and as stated above, these are not inherent for any class, but the objectives of socialism are universal objectives of humanity. These

discourses can potentially address different social groups without considering their different material conditions.

Another point that is criticised is the view that socialist struggle and movement can be understood as democratic struggles that are uniting against the different versions of inequality and domination, thus socialism can be replaced with radical democracy. This position implies that socialism can be created as a continuation of the liberal democracy. The class, which was in the centre of socialism as the primary agent, is displaced, and both anything and nothing could be put in its place. This means that the working class does not have any priority or privilege. This means that any group of people or, according to some other view, some form of people that are more universalist and rational can be more inclined towards the universalistic project of socialism.

Wood follows the roots of this line to Althusserianism, and from there to Poulantzas. This theoretical line is then followed through Western Maoism, Eurocommunism and Laclau as well as Hindness and Hirst. Wood explains that Marxism was increasingly associated with the struggle for power and thus turned more towards the electoral politics and electoral strategies rather than focusing on the class struggle. Rather than attacking the mystifications reproduced by capitalism, NTS accepts these mystifications.

Another position that is criticised by Wood is Gorz's position. Gorz explains that socialism is the abolition of work, but the working class cannot abolish work since it is enmeshed in work in a capitalist way. This means that non-workers should be the agents of transformation. This view is criticised by Wood with the claim of it being the inverted form of technologism and fetishism of labour process which focuses of technical work rather than exploitation forms. Althusser's point is criticized with a similar claim as well. It is claimed that Althusser's theoretical framework defines the social formation as comprising of the relatively autonomous instances. This is identified as the cause of the separation of Marxist theory with political praxis. Since the subject is pushed out of Marxist theory, the political practice becomes impossible.

This theoretical framework also resulted in “scholastic abstractionism” and “obsessive methodologism” as well as “philosophical idealism” with an obscure language (Wood, 1998). This would later lead to the theoretical and political shift towards Eurocommunism, which departed from the conflict between classes to the conflict between the popular masses against state capitalism. Thus, it ultimately seeks to establish a true democracy while avoiding conflict between classes. This view sees socialism as a continuation of the bourgeois democracy and defends a cross-class alliance. To be able to purge the economism of traditional Marxism, Althusserian Marxism preferred to read the political and ideological as structures in dominance and ultimately displaced the class and exploitation from the centre of theory. It is claimed that when this view is taken to its conclusions, it results in the Maoist Cultural Revolution thesis.

This Althusserian line is followed through Poulantzas as well. Poulantzas also understood the political as relatively autonomous and was close to Maoism in a sense. He continued and developed Althusser’s post-1968 theoretical framework that is based on the principle of reproduction that defines ISAs and explained the need to attack these apparatuses to make a cultural revolution thus shifting the focus to the cultural and ideological struggle. For Poulantzas, different forms of state were not truly different because of their inherent Bonapartism. This view is labelled as an ultra-left position by Wood. But Poulantzas, a follower of the Althusserian form of Marxism, would soon change his views towards an opposite direction, demonstrating an oscillation similar to Althusser and the PCF line. Liberal democracy which was criticised before and seen as no better than other forms of state, would later be viewed as a viable way of transition to socialism (Poulantzas, 1978).

This path of transitioning to socialism from capitalism would be claimed to be possible based on the relative autonomy of state. Wood (1998) claims that this position regarding the democratic road to socialism and its basis on the liberal democracy was enabled in the first place by Althusserian theoretical tools which made it possible to separate the instances that constitute the social formation. Thus, rather than the traditional Marxist view of state that defines it as an instrument of the bourgeoisie, state was viewed by Poulantzas as a neutral entity in the context of class

struggle. The political instance and the state was seen as the dominant structures since state also intervenes in the economic instance. This point was supported with the argument of Marx's Asian mode of production.

For Poulantzas, exploitation was seen as a part of the economic instance but, since the structure in dominance is the political instance, exploitation is displaced from the centre, thus it no longer reigns supreme. Since the state is viewed as a neutral entity, the class struggle becomes the struggle between the ruling bloc and the popular powers. Poulantzas also worked on the new middle classes and petty bourgeoisie and identified objective barriers between them such as manual workers and mental workers, which prevented the organization, and put forward the inter-class alliance thesis. Working class thus became a minority in this picture. Poulantzas and Eurocommunist theses were putting class barriers within the working class and dividing it while also underestimating the obstacles between different classes. In this way, this line was also underestimating question of the transition to socialism while being overly pessimistic on working class militancy and its revolutionary potential.

These theoretical and political positions held by Poulantzas, which are based on the Althusserian problematic and transferred to the Eurocommunist line was then taken to its extreme logical conclusions by Laclau. Most importantly, politics and class were fully separated and ideology and discourse were understood to be fully autonomous from class. In this framework, only popular discourses could create subjects. For this new radical position, national-popular interpellations were seen as neutral, and nationalism was defended as a result. The struggle for socialism was understood as a part of the democratic struggle and it could only be possible by the way of a popular alliance which is based on a class-neutral ideology. Objective class situation did not matter in this struggle and its organization. According to this new theoretical framework, primary contradiction was not class antagonism, like it was in orthodox Marxism. The notion of people was made primary while class was seen as a secondary aspect. This view also claimed that there existed non-class ideologies which are inherently neutral and could potentially be associated with different class ideologies. Thus, these neutral ideologies became the main arena of the political struggle. These political struggles would then be led by intellectuals and the

discourses that they would construct. The ideologies such as bourgeois democratic ideology could be universal discourses, which meant that they can be used and can be gathered around. This meant that working class was purged forever and the notion of "people" took its place, while socialism is disposed of in favour of radical democracy. Implication of this was that there were no material interests but only discursive ideas and there was no history but only contingencies and conjunctures, a similar theoretical position was taken by Althusser in his later years (Wood, 1998).

This new framework implicated that the history was randomized and finally, everything became a discourse. Wood claimed that this formulation was a result of Althusserian Marxism and Poulantzas' line which continued it. This position was made possible after the line of Althusserian Marxism was combined with the perceived technological determinism of Marx which was a failure, a point of misunderstanding in the first place. A false dualism between full determinism and full contingency was inherent in Althusser and structuralism according to Wood.

Hirst's and Hindness' theories, continuing this line opened by Althusserian framework, rejected all causality as well as the mode of production, based on this false dualism, without necessary historical evidence to back it up, according to Wood (1998). "Class interests" were seen as ideological constructions, and they believed that it must be created by actions of socialists since it does not objectively exist outside the representation and discourse. Socialism was just another political ideology according to this view. Politics too, similar to the case of history, became randomised and contingent. Wood claimed that a form of inverted technologism existed in these views which saw the mode of production as the technique of production, a technical process that is separate from the relations and exploitation. Another example for non-correspondence is made by Gareth Jones who analysed the Chartism and found that there is non-correspondence between their arguments and the conditions of the social group and thus declare the autonomy of Chartism. He uses this limited example to make generalizations and continued the line existent in the previous views.

Wood criticised the Althusserian Marxism and the resulting forms of Marxism and post-Marxism that are based on Althusserian Marxism. Wood believed that the class

is the central agent and primary mover in society. The seemingly non-correspondent instances were just a result of a mistaken reading of Marx. Wood claimed that politics cannot always mirror the economic relations since there are some barriers before organization, but these are not absolute objective categories. Instead, they are simply obstacles that one needs to overcome in order to organise. She also explained the importance of keeping the exploitation in the picture, and believed that social relations should not be separated from the productive forces. She warned against view that mistakes the liberal democracy and its ideological hegemony to the reality and warned that democracy should not be equated with capitalism. But at the same time, she explained, one must remember that separation of the economic and the political is a part of the development of capitalism and is the factor that makes capitalism seem like a neutral system and capitalist state as a neutral state. What this proposition meant was that the structure of capitalism itself created the illusion of its instances to be relatively autonomous and/or fully independent.

Wood also reminds that the working class continues to have an important and indispensable role in capitalist mode of production and, as a result of its class position, the working class has an interest in abolishing classes. This is a real possibility as well, since the working class has an advantageous position tied to its role as the producing class which helps it conduct the class struggle. Wood also insisted that history should not be seen as contingent or random. She believed that the best way to understand history is still through the science of historical materialism. She insisted that the primary antagonism is still the class struggle and, ideologies and the state are not class neutral notions, but they only seem neutral as a result of the development of capitalism.

To summarize, according to Wood, Althusserian Marxism, which emerged with Althusser's intervention and the popularization of this line in the 1960s, was based on a flawed reading of Marx. Certain elements of this theoretical framework, such as the history without subject and social formation composed of relatively autonomous instances, posed significant dangers. This theoretical framework obstructed politics and led to the wholesale theoretical elimination of class politics. In the new era ushered in by the changing conjuncture which is defined by the collapse of the

socialist bloc and retreat of the organised class struggle with the rise of neo-liberalism and its theoretical reflection, post-modernism, Althusserian Marxism proved incapable of explaining the concrete situation, and through various different ideological infiltrations, paved the way for a retreat from class and, consequently, from Marxism.

4.6. Conclusion

The third chapter has closely followed the course of Althusser's intervention from the important moments of his intervention in the 1960s to the crisis of 1968 and to his self-criticism that followed the events and the legacy of his theoretical framework. It tried to show the way in which Althusser's adherence to a neo-orthodox stance resulted in a rigorous critique of historicism, humanism, and dogmatism as well as a theoreticist detachment that left him politically immobilized at an important historical conjuncture. His incapacity to understand the 1968 student-worker alliance revealed the limitations of his framework. This also confirmed that Althusserian Marxism reinforced new knowledge hierarchies rather than facilitating their dissolution, for critics like Rancière.

The chapter also explained Althusser's ability to self-critique and make revisions. His theoretical inquiry on ideological state apparatuses, reproduction, and interpellation represented a significant modification and expansion of his problematic. It also showed the political importance of ideology in daily practices. Also, Althusser's association with Stalinism and his symptomatic silence within the PCF exposed the limitations imposed by the conjuncture and the problems with constructing a truly anti-Stalinist Marxism without devolving into another type of orthodoxy.

When one reads the criticisms, one can see that Althusser's intervention was a highly controversial dynamic process. This is particularly revealed by the criticisms made within the Althusserian camp. Wood's reconstruction of the retreat from class and Rancière's break highlight Althusser's framework's limitations and its ongoing relevance when read closely. Althusser's concepts are still essential for comprehending how ideology works materially, how state power reproduces itself

through institutions, and how theory itself can be a kind of political intervention, even though his theoreticism carries the risk of banishing true politics.

One can claim that Althusser's legacy remains ambiguous. Story of Althusser's intervention shows the dangers associated with the reduction of politics to theory and the continuing importance of theory in political struggle at the same time. This chapter stands against the wholesale rejection of Althusser and emphasises the importance of reading Althusser's theoretical intervention in its historical conjuncture. It is important to understand the limitations of this intervention and to understand how it illuminates the conjuncture today. Today the reproduction of capitalist relations is mediated through increasingly complex ideological and institutional forms. This shows that Althusser's focus on the materiality of ideology and his focus on the class struggle in theory is still crucial.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis tried to reread Althusser and his theoretical-political intervention based on the changing conjuncture. It aimed to outline a portrayal of Althusser as a philosopher and a communist militant whose theoretical and political relevance continues to this day. It also tried to highlight the political character of the intervention and examined how the politically militant identity of Althusser has determined his theoretical intervention. With this aim, the first chapter examined the formation of the conjuncture that paved the way for Althusser's intervention and the national and international political events that formed it, focusing on the PCF's political line. This enabled an examination of the PCF's changing policies which have affected both the various forms of Marxism in France and Althusser. This chapter claimed that Althusser was a follower of the PCF orthodoxy, thus setting the scene for the intervention and defining its political character. The second chapter examined the defining political events of the conjuncture in which Althusser's intervention took place and their background. After a detailed account of the conjuncture of the intervention, the scope of Althusser's theoretical intervention was examined, and its political dimensions were explored. Several theoretical and political implications of this theoretical intervention were explained, which was fruitful for the aim of the thesis. It included Althusser’s intervention’s similarity with the PCF’s previous political interventions and touched upon the uniqueness of the political line developed by Althusser. The third chapter examined the inadequacy of the problematic that formed Althusser's intervention and the theoretical framework built upon it, in understanding and responding to the changing conjuncture defined by the events of 1968 as well as the historical and political reasons for it. This inadequacy was identified to be a part of the neo-orthodox political line that was defined before. This political position had some strengths as well as weaknesses.

Althusser's intervention and the theoretical framework which was developed at that time was politically militant and theoretically distinct. It was an answer to the weaknesses of the previous orthodoxy and an attempt to purge the rival Marxist views that challenged it. Thus, it was a product of the conjuncture of formation (1920s-1956) and the conjuncture of intervention (post-1956). Its theoretical problematic was defined by this historical and political context. As a result, it was unable to grasp the changing conjuncture at around 1968 and has received many criticisms. The line of critique that emerged in response to these inadequacies of the Althusserian problematic and its historical development were also explored in the third chapter. Also, the reasons why and how this line abandoned the Althusserian problematic are examined. It was claimed that the departure from the Althusserian theoretical-political line was mainly caused by the structural limitations of the Althusserian problematic and its non-vision regarding the centrality of the political action and its own elitist character. As a result, Althusserian Marxism, even after the attempts it made to self-criticise itself, nevertheless remained unable to renew its theoretical structure in a way that could finally grasp the political situation and successfully make the concrete analysis of the concrete situation. The chapter then examined how and why Althusser's theoretical legacy and its political consequences led to the elimination of the concept of class and class struggle and led to the departure from Marxism. This was analysed together with the political events that unfolded after 1968. Problems inherent in the Althusserian theoretical structure was brought to the extremes and the result was an academic Marxism that disregarded the political movements and the centrality of the class struggle. But, this thesis claims that Althusser's legacy cannot be reduced to the party elitism or academic Marxism. Althusser's theory was determined by the politically militant character and it nevertheless carries the potential to open the way for a renewed understanding of the contemporary conjuncture and the rigour to make the concrete analysis of the concrete situation and intervene in the conjuncture. Thus, it continues to maintain its revolutionary and political potential, ready to be reread and uncovered.

What is revealed in this entire story is that every changing conjuncture leads to the theoretical bankruptcy of some philosophical lines, while at the same time, it leads to the popularization of others. Theoretical forms that can successfully make the

concrete analysis of the concrete situations and actively contribute to contemporary political struggle manage to survive, while views that fail to analyse the conjuncture are doomed to disappear. This isn't the only issue, perhaps the most important conclusion revealed by the process of change and development of the Althusserian problematic is this: a Marxism that distances itself from class politics is doomed to disappear.

However, this doesn't mean that Althusser's intervention has been relegated to the dustbin of history. On the contrary, it can also be interpreted as a sign, highlighting the importance of understanding a thinker in context and reading their theory in light of the changing conjuncture. Because when considered in its historical context, it becomes better understood that many concepts developed by a thinker and the problematic to which those concepts are attached can be useful in many different situations. The crucial point to remember is that no theoretical production or intervention takes place solely on theoretical grounds; it necessarily also manifests a political character. This political intervention, in turn, ultimately takes place within a conjuncture determined by the economy in the last instance.

What inspired this thesis was the various criticisms levelled at Althusser. These criticisms have pointed to problems ranging from his theoretical framework to his political stance and some criticisms have combined both. Some critiques examined not only the conjuncture of the intervention itself but also the destructive theoretical and political consequences it directly and indirectly created in the subsequent historical process. It is true that Althusser's legacy is controversial and ambiguous. But it should also be remembered that many theoretical debates were revolutionised by Althusserian Marxism and its underlying problematic which emerged as a result of Althusser's theoretical and political intervention. The theory of ideology, the theory of the state, the Marxist theory of science, and the subject-structure relation have been radically altered and will never be the same again. The theoretical success of Althusser's intervention has been unquestionable. On the other hand, the intervention was also politically successful. Its success is now perceived as a fact, both in regard to the successful elimination of various forms of Marxism in France from the politics and in terms of the changes it has wrought in the international communist movement.

Wood's critique of Althusser's political and theoretical implications is largely valid. Despite this, Althusser has inspired, and continues to do so, numerous theorists, from Butler to Foucault (Youdell, 2006) and even Zizek (Choi, 2013), through his contributions to interpellation and ideology critique. Although Althusser is frequently criticized for banishing the subject and thus obstructing true politics, all these thinkers who were influenced by the Althusserian problematic succeeded in reconstructing subjectivation and interpellation. They paved the way for political action through their own interpretations. Furthermore, through the theoretical importance he attributed to Lacan and the inspiration he derived from his theories, Althusser provided a compelling example and made accurate predictions about the direction in which future formulations of ideology and subjectivation might proceed. Today, it is possible to see the validity of these predictions in both Butler, Laclau and Zizek (Krips, 2006).

The revolutionary quality Althusser identified in his symptomatic reading of Marx also applies to Althusser himself, so much so that many strands of theory, notably French Marxism and French philosophy, took a completely different path after him. While it is possible to argue that political neo-orthodoxy obstructed his theoretical contributions, a simple conclusion that could be drawn from Althusser's theory of the state and the concept of ideological state apparatuses, developed through a perspective of reproduction, is that there is no escape from ideology. However, another view has taken this theoretical framework to its logical conclusion, pointing to the possibility of mis-interpellation and critical state apparatuses (Sotiris, 2014a). On the other hand, his contributions to state theory have inspired, and continue to do so, many theorists, notably Poulantzas (Gallas, 2017). Although the structural framework he created has been criticized for its rigid structuralism, he has, when appropriate, rejected rigid structuralism through his texts and commentaries, which perceive structure merely as an effect embedded in practice, and opened up space for conjunctural reading (Sotiris, 2014b).

In fact, another aspect of this thesis's critical account of Althusser conducted within the changing conjuncture, is that the reading developed by Althusser is, in fact, a conjunctural reading rather than a structural Marxist one. Precisely for this reason,

the term "structuralist" is almost entirely absent from this thesis. Althusser's effort to develop a conjunctural reading was influenced precisely by Lenin's "concrete analysis of the concrete situation." In this sense, Althusser emphasized that perhaps our greatest chance was Lenin's identity as both a theorist and a militant (2005). Similarly, considering the success of Althusser's theoretical-political intervention, it is possible to argue that a significant part of this success lies in Althusser's dual identity, that is, his being both a philosopher and a militant. Another interpretation that can be made from this perspective is that Althusser's true aim, from the very beginning, was to contribute to the class struggle by developing Marxist science, rather than separating the levels of social formation and severing the link between Marxist science and the class struggle of the proletariat. The concept of neo-orthodoxy, necessary for this very interpretation, also informs this claim. In this sense, it can be argued that this thesis is relatively successful with this aim.

In light of all this, rereading Althusser is crucial from every perspective. One aim of this thesis, to prevent a wholesale rejection of Althusser's theoretical and political contributions, lies in rereading Althusser and, in doing so, contributing to the existing forms of reading. In this sense, this thesis has tried to make its own contribution both to the literature and to this very rereading effort.

On the other hand, this thesis also faces various obstacles and limitations. First of all, in developing the neo-orthodoxy argument, Althusser's relationship with Maoism was not sufficiently emphasized, and the relationship between Althusser and Stalinism was forced to suffice. However, the relationship between Althusser and Maoism is nevertheless implicated both in the historical section and in the explanation of the process of the division of the Althusserian camp into factions. It is important to emphasize that this relationship is a point that should be highlighted in any attempt to reread Althusser.

Another problem the thesis faces is the complexity of the Althusserian concepts and difficulty faced in the effort to utilise them in this rereading. For this reason, conscious of this difficulty and its resulting shortcomings, the reader is provided with a theoretical space within which to conduct their own readings. This thesis mainly

tries to guide the reader and encourage them to conduct their own readings. In this sense, while certain sections may appear disconnected from one another, the connections between them can be better understood when read with inspiration from the symptomatic reading method. Precisely for this reason, the required reading method is often indicated, and the details of the reading are left to the reader. The thesis is aware of its limitations in this sense and ultimately claims to have made a relatively successful contribution to the literature in terms of inspiring future rereadings of Althusser and preventing the wholesale rejection of Althusser's theoretical framework.

It would be advisable for the next reading of Althusser to be more rigorous in defining the concept of "symptom" and, in this context, it might focus more on Lacanian psychoanalysis and the symptomatic reading method, drawing inspiration from the method developed by Zizek in his books *Ticklish Subject* (1999) and *Sublime Object* (2009). It is conceivable that if a symptomatic reading conducted using this method does not relegate the historical and political context to the background, and if the theoretical texts read within this context are examined with greater theoretical rigour, the resulting assessment will be more theoretically and politically accurate. This would better understand and prevent the collective amnesia surrounding Althusser, an amnesia explained by Elliot:

> "In his own country, scene of his *succès de scandale* two decades ago, Althusser is practically a 'dead dog'. Althusserianism, to quote a recent critique of modern French philosophy, 'seems very dated and, like the Beatles' music or Godard's first films, inevitably evokes a recent but vanished past'. Why? Briefly, it is to the settled anti-Marxist consensus among the majority of the French intelligentsia, to the indifference of an embattled PCF (whose 'official philosopher' Althusser never was), and to the understandable demoralisation of the remaining Althusserian Marxists, that we must look for an explanation of the virtual collective amnesia surrounding his work, despite its wide diffusion." (Elliot, 2006, pp. xiii-xiv)

Finally, another claim of this thesis is that Althusser is ultimately the product of a specific historical conjuncture, bearing the traces of the PCF and the academy within which he was embedded. In this sense, it should not be forgotten that these two institutions, which can be considered ideological apparatuses, simultaneously

participated in both ideological and political production. As the product of this very conjuncture, Althusser, due to various theoretical and political tendencies stemming from the previous conjuncture, was unable to sufficiently intervene in the next, and he paid the price in a collective amnesia. Bearing in mind that Althusser defined himself as an academic and a militant, it is even possible to consider that the misfortunes in his personal life were also related to this failure.

One way or another, no theorist can act independently of their own conjuncture, instead, they are determined by it. Therefore, any theoretical-political intervention in the contemporary conjuncture must bear in mind the limitations stemming from the problematic Althusser encountered in the past. Similar limitations will always exist. In this sense, Althusser's theoretical-political intervention serves both as a source of inspiration and as a warning to future generations of academics and militants. For this reason, perhaps the primary duty of any Marxist theorist who intends to intervene in the contemporary conjuncture is to prevent the collective amnesia surrounding Althusser and to take the necessary lessons from him.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Althusser, uluslararası komünist hareketin kriz döneminde teorik katkıları ve Leninist siyasi müdahaleleriyle öne çıkan etkili bir filozoftur. Ancak teorik mirası, izlediği ve dönüştürdüğü siyasi çizgi ve kişisel yaşamındaki talihsiz olaylar nedeniyle sert eleştirilere maruz kalmıştır. Teorik çerçevesinin tanımlayıcı ve biçimlendirici unsuru, 1956'dan sonra gerçekleştirdiği teorik müdahaledir. Bu müdahale teorik görünse de nihayetinde siyasi bir müdahaleye tekabül eder.

Teori üzerinden yürütülen bu siyasi müdahalenin hedefi, Kruşçev'in 1956'daki gizli konuşması ve ardından gelen siyasi yumuşamaydı. Bu siyasi yumuşamaya paralel olarak gelişen ve o zamana kadar egemen olan ortodoks Marksist çizginin teorik zayıflıklarını gizlemeyi veya ortadan kaldırmayı amaçlayan çeşitli Marksizm biçimleri, teorik kaynaklarını öncelikle Marksizm dışındaki felsefi akımlardan alacaktı. Bu akımların takipçileri, zaman zaman Marksist ortodoksinin temsilcisi olan Fransız Komünist Partisi (FKP) etrafında ve içinde siyasi olarak örgütlenecek, bazen de partinin dışında kalmayı veya dışarı itilmeyi seçeceklerdi. FKP'nin değişen siyasi çizgisi bu dönemlerde belirleyici faktör olacaktı. Sonuç olarak, partinin teorik ve siyasi salınımları bazen siyasi sapmalara yol açarken, bazen de ortodoksiyi güçlendirmeye hizmet etti.

Bu tez, Althusser'i tarihsel ve politik bağlamı içinde yeniden okumayı ve Althusser'in önemli teorik katkılarının toptan reddedilmesini önlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Buradaki tarihsel ve politik bağlam, Althusser'in müdahalesini belirleyen konjonktürü ve bundan geliştirilen teorik çerçeveyi oluşturan tüm tarihsel ve politik olayları ifade eder. Althusser hakkında birçok farklı okuma yapılmış olsa da, bu tez mevcut literatüre katkıda bulunmaya çalışacaktır. Bu tezin temel iddiası, Althusser'in felsefi

projesinin yalnızca teorik bir müdahale değil, aslında politik bir müdahale olduğudur. Bu müdahalenin belirleyici unsurları, PCF'nin konjonktürdeki merkezi konumu ve 1956'dan sonra uluslararası komünist hareketin krizidir. Bu tezin amacı yalnızca tarihsel bir araştırma yapmak, teorik bir değerlendirme sunmak veya yeni ortaya çıkan tarihsel veya teorik kaynakları kullanarak daha önce hiç görülmemiş bir analiz yapmak değildir. Bu tez, Althusser'in müdahalesini çeşitli tarihsel ve teorik metinlere dayanarak yeniden okumayı ve Althusserci problematiğin ortaya koyduğu bazı kavramları kullanmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu okumada, Althusser'in teorisyen kimliğinin yanı sıra militan kimliği de merkeze alınacaktır.

Bu tez, neo-ortodoksi kavramını ortaya koyarak ve analizde istisnaları ortadan kaldırarak Althusser'in müdahalesinin politik yönlerine odaklanarak literatüre katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Tez, Althusser'in müdahalesinin basitçe ortodoksinin veya revizyonizmin politik pozisyonuna indirgenemeyeceğini iddia etmektedir. Bunun yerine, Althusser'in müdahalesi politik olarak militan ve teorik olarak özgün olarak yorumlanmaktadır. Teorik özgünlüğü, politik olarak militan karakteri tarafından belirlenir ve Althusser'in ikili kimliği bunun merkezinde yer alır. Althusser'in müdahalesi ve teorik-politik sonuçları neo-ortodoksi kavramı aracılığıyla yorumlandığında, Althusser ile içinde bulunduğu değişen konjonktür arasındaki ilişki daha iyi anlaşılacaktır. Bu, Althusser'in Marksist teori ve politikaya katkılarının, yalnızca belirli dönemlerde yarattığı politik sonuçlar veya teorik çelişkileri üzerinden eleştirilerek toptan reddedilmesini önler. Ayrıca, Althusser'in neo-ortodoks bir çizgiyi inşa edip sürdürmesine karşın, değişen konjonktürde özeleştiri yapmayı başardığını ve dolayısıyla güncelliğini koruduğunu göstermeye çalışmak da bir diğer amaçtır.

Bir diğer amaç da Althusser'i kendi konjonktürünün bir ürünü olarak ele almak ve böylece bu konjonktüre müdahale etmeye çalıştığı bakış açısına dair yeni bir yorum ortaya koymaktır. Bu aynı zamanda okuyucunun benzer bir teorik-politik müdahalenin güncel konjonktürde nasıl uygulanabileceğini düşünmesine ve bu olası müdahalenin, geliştireceği problematikten kaynaklanan yapısal sınırlarını tahayyül etmesine yardımcı olacaktır. Tüm bu nedenlerle, bu tez esasen tarihsel ve teorik metinlerin seçici bir literatür taramasına ve eleştirel incelemesine dayanmaktadır.

PCF, 1920'lerden 1956'ya ve sonrasına kadar sol teori ve pratiğin belirleyici unsuruydu. Althusser, bir filozof ve akademisyen kimliğinin yanı sıra, her şeyden önce FKP'nin bir üyesiydi. Bu bağlamda, Althusser'in teorik çerçevesinin oluşumu ve altında yatan problematik, aslında FKP politikalarıyla yakından bağlantılıydı. Lenin'in de savunduğu gibi, komünist parti için hayati bir konu, militan kadroların yönetimi ve eğitimidir. Parti bir okuldur ve her dönemin kadroları, o dönemdeki parti politikalarını yürütür. Bazı dönemlerde kadroların niceliği önemliyken, bazılarında niteliği çok daha önemlidir. Bir parti aydınının, aydın kimliğinden ziyade parti üyesi kimliğiyle tanımlandığı ve Marksist ortodoksinin ve kadro niteliğinin ön planda olduğu dönemlerde yetişen parti kadrolarının daha muhafazakâr ve ortodoks bir tutum sergilemeye meyilli olduğu ileri sürülebilir. Partinin siyasi ılımlılığı seçtiği ve konjonktürel siyasi hedefleri doğrultusunda ittifaklar aradığı dönemler, kadro niceliğinin niteliğe üstün gelmesiyle tanımlanır. Bu dönemlerde yetişen parti kadrolarının Marksizm'e dair daha çeşitli yorumlara sahip olma eğiliminde olduğu iddia edilebilir. Althusser'i yalnızca bir teorisyen ve filozof olarak ele almak, Marksist literatüre yaptığı teorik katkıları gölgede bırakma riskini taşır. Althusser yalnızca bir düşünür değil, aynı zamanda bir komünist militandı ve dolayısıyla ikili bir kimliğe sahipti. Althusser'in militan kimliğini belirleyen temel unsur, o dönemde FKP'nin siyasi tercihleriydi.

Althusser'in müdahalesinin temeli, bilim ve ideoloji arasındaki karşıtlıktı. Althusser kendisinin bu bağlamda hem bir militan hem de filozof olduğunu iddia etmiştir. Althusser'in bu ikili kimliği tam da müdahalesinin politik karakterine işaret eder. Bir düşünürü hem kendini nasıl tanımladığı hem de tarihsel ve politik bağlam içindeki konumunun imaları üzerinden anlamak gerekir. Bu anlamda, elbette Althusser'in öz tanımını kullanmak yeterli değildir. Bu nedenle müdahalesi dönemindeki çalışmalarını, örneğin Marx'ı okumak için kullandığı "semptomatik okuma"yı incelemek gerekir. Bu şekilde yorumlandığında, Althusser'in teorik müdahalesinin nihayetinde politik bir müdahale olduğu iddia edilebilir. Lenin'in "somut durumun somut analizi"nden ilham alan Althusser'in müdahalesi, tam da tanımladığı ideolojik konumların politik etkisini ortadan kaldırmayı amaçlıyordu.

Bu amaçla, ideolojik olarak nitelendirdiği çeşitli teorik-politik akımları, dayandıkları Marksist olmayan teorik kaynaklarla bağlarını koparark ortadan kaldırmaya çalışan

Marksist bilim teorisini geliştirdi. Bu yeni Marksist bilim teorisine göre, diğer yerleşik bilimler gibi Marksist bilim de kendi kanıt kriterlerini sağlayan ve soyut kavramlardan somut kavramlara doğru ilerleyen bir üretim süreci olarak tanımlanır. Tüm bu süreç gerçek somutlukta değil düşüncede gerçekleşir. Marksist bilimi gerçek bir bilim yapan bir diğer önemli özellik de bilimsel problematikte temellenmesidir. Problematik, başka soruların sorulmasını mümkün kılan merkezi sorudur. Teorik bir çerçevenin düğüm noktasını oluşturur ve teorik yapıyı tanımlar. Problematik, semptomatik okuma yoluyla ortaya çıkarılır. Semptomatik okuma, belirli bir metnin yalnızca bilincini değil, aynı zamanda bilinçdışını da okuyan bir okuma yöntemidir. Bu yöntem yazarın niyetine veya gözden kaçırdığı noktalara odaklanmak yerine metnin problematiğinden kaynaklanan yapısal görüşünü ve göremeyişini ortaya çıkarır. Althusser, bilimsel problematiğin karşısında teori ve politikada ideolojik konumlar yaratan bir ideolojik problematiğin var olduğunu iddia etti. Genellikle Hegelci çizgi olarak adlandırdığı bu ideolojik konumları ortadan kaldırmak için ve Marx'ın özgünlüğünü ifade etmek amacıyla semptomatik okuma yöntemini kullandı. Marx'ın diğer felsefi akımlardan farkını açıklayarak Marx'ın aslında bilim ve felsefe tarihinde devrim yarattığını ve bu bağlamda incelendiğinde Marksizmin teorik olarak özgün bir çizgi oluşturduğunu savundu.

Bu teorik-politik müdahale nihayetinde oldukça başarılı oldu, diğer görüşlerin itibarını zedeledi ve 1968'e kadar Althusserci Marksizme eşi benzeri görülmemiş bir popülerlik kazandırdı. Althusser'in FKP üyesi olarak eğitim gördüğü ve komünist siyasetle uğraştığı dönemde, FKP siyaseti esas olarak Sovyetler Birliği Komünist Partisi (SBKP) tarafından belirleniyordu. FKP, konjonktürel analizlere dayalı politikalar üretirken, esasen SBKP tarafından şekillendirilen ortodoks bir çizgiyi izliyordu. Bu ortodoksi ise Stalin'in kurduğu siyasi çerçeve tarafından belirleniyordu. Althusser'in siyaset yapmayı öğrendiği ve kendini bu tarihsel-politik bağlam içinde akademide yetiştirdiği dönem de işte bu dönemdi.

Bu konu oldukça tartışmalı olsa da Althusser'in teorik çerçevesinin uzun süre Stalinizmin mirasıyla siyasi bir yüzleşmeden kaçınma eğilimi taşıdığı söylenebilir. Dolayısıyla, Stalinizmin gölgesi her zaman Althusserci teorik ve siyasi çizginin üzerinde belirecekti. Sonuç olarak Althusser her zaman çeşitli suçlamalarla karşı

karşıya kalacaktı. Dahası FKP'nin, SBKP'nin direktifleri ve dayatılan "iki bilim" perspektifi altında Stalin'in metinleri aracılığıyla Marksist bilimi geliştirme çabaları, Althusser'in bilim-ideoloji ikiliğine dayanan teorik çerçevesine ilham kaynağı oldu. Ek olarak, Althusser'in 1968'den sonraki özeleştiri döneminde kullandığı terminolojinin halen müdahale döneminde geliştirilen problematik tarafından belirlendiğini unutmamak gerekir.

1956'dan sonra Uluslararası Komünist Hareket'in kriziyle tanımlanan dönemde Fransa'daki Marksizm biçimleri krize yanıt vermede büyük ölçüde yetersiz kaldı ve bu durum Althusser'in müdahalesinin önünü açtı. Bu teorik-politik müdahale sırasında FKP üyesi olan Althusser, geçmişten miras kalan geleneksel çizginin takipçisiydi ve etrafındaki ideolojik-politik yumuşamadan rahatsızdı. Bu bağlamda, PCF ortodoksluğunun dogmatizmini, tarihselciliğini, indirgemeciliğini ve ekonomizmini eleştirirken aynı zamanda FKP'nin geleneksel rakiplerini ideolojik ve politik olarak tasfiye etmeye çalıştı.

Bu tasfiye, felsefi ve bilimsel bir biçimde gerçekleştirildi. Hem filozof hem de FKP militanı olduğunu iddia eden Althusser için bu en mantıklı hareket tarzıydı. Eleştirdiği çeşitli Marksizm biçimlerinin ideolojik olduğunu ve Marksist bilim ve felsefeye dönüşün gerekli olduğunu savundu. Ardından, bilimsellik söylemi üzerinden ilerleyerek hedef alınan okulları ve düşünürleri teorik kaynaklarından mahrum bırakacak sert bir teorik saldırı başlattı. Bu teorik müdahalenin ardından inşa ettiği yeni teorik çerçeve, 1968'de kendisini yerleşik ortodoksinin içinde bulmasına, siyasi olarak muhafazakâr bir duruş benimsemesine ve bundan ötürü sert eleştirilere maruz kalmasına neden oldu.

Althusser, müdahalesini özetlemek gerekirse, Marx'ın teorik özgünlüğünün ve önceki geleneklerden, özellikle de Hegelci gelenekten ayrımının üç temel noktaya dayandığını iddia eder. İlk olarak, Marx epistemolojik kopuşla birlikte bilimsel bir problematik geliştirmiş ve böylece Marksist bilimi oluşturmuştur. İkinci olarak, Marksist bilim teorisi ve onun nesnesi olan bilim, diğerlerinden büyük ölçüde farklıdır. Bilimsel süreç, kendine özgü teorik hammaddeleri, araçları ve ürünleri olan bir bilgi üretim sürecidir. Düşüncedeki soyutla başlar, düşüncedeki somutla biter ve

kendi kendini doğrular. Üçüncü olarak, tarihsel materyalizm, toplumsal oluşumu ve göreli özerk kerteleri analiz eden bir tarih bilimidir. Yani kitlelerin veya proletaryanın faaliyetinin bir ürünü değildir. Tarihsel materyalizm ve proleter ideoloji kesin bir şekilde birbirinden ayrılmıştır. Dahası, kerteler bir bütünlük oluşturmaz ve onları Hegelci ruh veya fikrin bir fenomeni yapan bir öz içermezler. Temel bir çelişkiye değil, yapısal üst belirlenim tarafından belirlenen çeşitli çelişkiler ve karmaşık yapısal ilişkilere dayanırlar. Tarihleri tekil değildir, ancak Hegelci modelden çok farklı olarak birbirlerinden farklı tarihlere sahiptirler. Bu tarihler, kitlelerin deneyimlerinin etkinliğiyle tanımlanmaz, görece özerk kertelerin tarihleri olarak anlaşılır. Althusser'in bu müdahaleyle başardığı şey aslında ideolojik unsurları arındırmak ve Marx'ın teorik özgünlüğünü gösterirken Marksizmin, ideolojik tarih öncesine dayanan hümanizm ve tarihselcilik gibi çeşitli Marx'ı okuma biçimleriyle olan teorik bağını koparmaktır.

Bir diğer önemli nokta ise, Althusser'in ideolojik olduğunu iddia ettiği tüm noktaların aslında kendi teorik-politik tasfiyesinin hedefi olmasıdır. Leninist bir tutum benimseyerek, Lenin'e benzer bir siyasi tasfiye girişiminde bulunmuştur. Althusser, daha önce Lenin tarafından da hedef alınan kendiliğindencilik ve ekonomizm gibi rakiplerini tasfiye ederken, 1956'dan sonra ortaya çıkan siyasi yumuşamayı da tasfiye etmeye çalışmıştır. Ona göre siyasi aktörler değişirken teorik çizgiler aynı kalmıştır. Althusser'in teorik müdahalesinin hedefinin FKP'nin geleneksel çizgisine muhalif olanlarla örtüşmesi tesadüf değildir. Ancak, FKP'nin kendisinin de bir siyasi çalkantı ve dönüşüm döneminde olduğu ve Althusser'in de bunun bir parçası olduğu unutulmamalıdır. Althusser, FKP'nin kendisini değil, geleneksel ideolojik çizgisini korumaya çalışıyordu. Bu çizginin başarıyla korunabilmesi için ise yenilenmesi gerekiyordu. Teorik olarak güçlendirilmesi ve ideolojik zayıflıklarından arındırılması gerekiyordu. Stalinizm'in kendisine değil, Stalinizm'i eleştirenlere saldıran sol bir Stalinizm eleştirisi yürütmek, sol siyasette neo-ortodoks bir tutuma tekabül ediyordu. Bu tutum, 1968'de ve öğrenci sorunu tartışmasında kendini gösterecekti. Althusser, eleştirilerin hedefi olacak ve karşılaştığı eleştirilere göre tutumunu değiştirmeye çalışacaktı.

Althusser, nihayetinde 1956 sonrası ortaya çıkan konjonktürün bir ürünüydü. Bu tarihsel bağlam içinde değerlendirildiğinde, 1956 konjonktürüne verilen teorik ve

politik tepkileri yetersiz bulmuş ve tespit ettiği teorik-politik boşluğu doldurmak için harekete geçmiştir. Bu müdahale sırasında geliştirdiği problematik ise birçok yönden o tarihsel dönemin ve FKP'nin o dönemdeki politik tarzının izlerini taşımaktadır. Ancak aynı nedenle Althusser ve FKP, 1968 döneminde gelişen siyasi ayaklanma sırasında durumu analiz etmede ve uygun siyasi tepkiyi vermekte geç ve yetersiz kalmıştır. Bu dönemde Althusser ve FKP çeşitli eleştirilere maruz kalmıştır. Bunlar arasında Rancière'in eleştirisi özellikle öne çıkmaktadır.

Rancière, Althusser'i 1968 konjonktüründeki teorik ve politik eksiklikleri üzerinden okuduğunda, elitist ve ortodoks bir siyasi duruş benimsediğini gördü. Althusserci Marksizmin gerçek siyaseti engellediğini ve sıradan insanların siyasi kapasitesini küçümseyerek halk ile öncü arasında hiyerarşik bir ilişki kurduğunu savundu. Nihayetinde bu, bir tür parti elitizmi yarattı ve geleneksel öncücülük çizgisini sürdürdü. Ayrıca, Althusser'in bilim-ideoloji ikilemiyle birlikte, akademisyenler ve öğrenciler, yani Marksist bilimin bilgi üretim sürecine katılan ve bu ortaya çıkan bilgiyi aktaranlar ile bu bilgiyi almak için akademik hiyerarşilere boyun eğmek zorunda olanlar arasında da hiyerarşik bir ilişki tanımladığını ileri sürdü. Dahası, Rancière'e göre, bu eleştirilere yanıt olarak yaptığı teorik revizyonlarda bile Althusser, nihayetinde önceki teorik çerçevesinden kopmayı başaramadı ve FKP'nin siyasi duruşunu ve onun temsil ettiği ortodoksiyi siyasi olarak korudu. Bunun siyasi sonuçları Althusser'in öğrencilerini Althusserci Marksizm'den ve FKP'den kopmaya ve kendilerine özgü siyasi çizgi ve teorik çerçeve inşa etmeye yöneltti.

Bu eleştiriler, Althusser'in ikili kimliği, siyasi karakteri ve müdahalesinin üslubu göz önünde bulundurularak okunmalıdır. Ardından, konjonktürü de özetleyen mevcut literatüre dayalı olarak müdahalesinin yeni bir eleştirel okuması, Althusser'in siyasi bir neo-ortodoksi inşa ettiğini iddia edebilir. Bu yeni kavram, Althusser'in teorisini, revizyonist çizgiden farklılığını gösterirken, ortodoksiden kısmi bir kopuş olarak yorumlama çabasıyla geliştirilmiştir. Bu tezde neo-ortodoksi kavramının kullanılmasının birçok nedeni vardır. İlk olarak, Althusser, SBKP'nin etkisi altındaki FKP'nin ortodoksisini basitçe sürdürmekle yetinmemiştir. Müdahalesiyle hem bu siyasi çizgide tespit ettiği eksiklikleri eleştirmiş hem de siyasi olarak bağımsız, Fransa'ya özgü ve siyasi koşullarına uygun yeni bir ortodoksi yaratmıştır. İkinci

olarak, Althusserci Marksizmin bilim-ideoloji ikiliği, SBKP ve Stalinizmin etkisi altındaki FKP'nin geçmiş Marksist bilim ve "iki bilim" söylemlerinden esinlenmiş olsa da bu çizgiye politik olarak olmasa da teorik olarak karşı çıkmış ve kendine özgü bir bilim ve ideoloji tanımı geliştirmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Althusser'in teorik çerçevesi Stalinizmin izlerini taşısa da teorik olarak bu çerçeveyle yüzleşmiş olması sayesinde kendi özgünlüğünü inşa edebilmiştir. Üçüncü olarak, Althusser, FKP'nin parti elitizmini sürdürmüş, partinin ortodoksiye dönüşü sırasında kullanılan benzer söylemleri araçsallaştırmış ve öncelikle FKP'nin tarihsel siyasi rakiplerini hedef almış olsa da, FKP'nin kendisini hedef almaktan çekinmemiş ve parti elitizmine paralel bir bilimsel elitizm inşa etmiştir. Bu son nokta, Althusser'in geçmişte FKP tarafından üretilen politika ve ideolojiden ayrıldığını, ancak bu ayrılışın mutlak bir ayrılış olmadığını, yalnızca teorik-politik bir yenilenme olduğunu ileri sürmeyi mümkün kılıyor.

Tüm bunlara ek olarak, Rancière örneğinin seçilmesine paralel bir nedenle, bir kuramcıyı birçok açıdan eleştirmek mümkün olsa da belki de en geçerli yol, o düşünürü geliştirdiği problematik üzerinden eleştirmektir. Bu anlamda Althusser, verili bir durumu analiz ederken istisnalardan kaçınan bir teorik çerçeve oluşturmayı amaçlamış ve bu amaçla kendi problematiğini geliştirmiştir. Bu bağlamda ele alındığında, Althusser'in FKP ortodoksisinin bir devamı olduğunu iddia ederken aynı zamanda savunduğu siyasi çizginin bir istisnası olduğunu iddia etmek, teorik tutarlılıktan bir sapma anlamına gelir ve analizin açıklayıcı gücünü tehlikeye atar. Bu anlamda, istisnaları dışlayan bir teorik tutarlılık, Althusser'in Althusserci bir üslupla yeniden okunması için de zorunludur.

Althusser'in teorik ve politik mirası birçok kez değerlendirilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, bu mirasın en uygun değerlendirmesinin, düşünürleri tarihsel ve teorik bağlamları içinde okumanın gerekliliği konusunda ısrarla vurgu yapan bir düşünür olan Ellen Meiksins Wood tarafından yapıldığını vurgulamak önemlidir. Bu tezde onun yöntemi kullanılmasa da farklı bir sorunsala dayanan alternatif bir eleştirel görüşün dahil edilmesi açısından önemlidir. Dolayısıyla Wood, Althusser'i ve Althusserci Marksizmi eleştirenler arasında öne çıkan bir diğer kuramcıdır ve bu sebeple de tezde ona yer verilmiştir.

Wood'un Althusser'in mirasına ilişkin değerlendirmesi, Althusser'in görece özerk kertelerden oluşan bir toplumsal formasyon tanımına yönelik bir eleştiriye dayanmaktadır. Bu değerlendirmeye göre, Althusser'in kerteler arasında görece özerk bir ilişki tanımı ve öznesiz tarih anlayışı, sonraki düşünürler tarafından tarihsel ve politik olaylar ışığında mantıksal sonuçlarına ulaştırılmış, önce Euro-komünizme, ardından post-Marksizme kadar uzanmış ve nihayetinde Marksizmin toptan ortadan kaldırılmasına ve temel unsuru olan sınıftan kaçışa yol açmıştır. Wood, Althusser'in teorik-politik müdahalesinin ve bunun sonucunda ortaya çıkan Althusserci Marksizmin bir takım yıkıcı tarihsel ve politik sonuçlara yol açtığını iddia eder. Wood, Althusser'in belki de bilim teorisini tarih bilimiyle ve tarihsel materyalizmin soyut nesnesini gerçek somutla karıştırmakla suçlayacağı bir teorisyen olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Onun bu teze dahil edilmesinin nedeni de budur.

Wood'a göre, Althusser'in müdahalesi ve bu çizginin 1960'larda popülerleşmesiyle ortaya çıkan Althusserci Marksizm, Marx'ın hatalı bir okumasına dayanıyordu. Bu teorik çerçevenin, öznesiz tarih ve görece özerk kertelerden oluşan toplumsal formasyon gibi bazı unsurları önemli tehlikeler taşıyordu. Bu teorik çerçeve siyaseti engellemiş ve sınıf siyasetinin teorik olarak toptan ortadan kaldırılmasına yol açmıştı. Sosyalist bloğun çöküşü ve neo-liberalizmin ve onun teorik yansıması olan post-modernizmin yükselişiyle ve de örgütlü sınıf mücadelesinin gerilemesiyle tanımlanan değişen konjonktür ile başlayan yeni dönemde, Althusserci Marksizm somut durumun somut analizini yapma noktasında aciz kalmış ve çeşitli ideolojik sızmalar yoluyla sınıftan kaçışın ve dolayısıyla Marksizmden çıkışın yolunu açmıştır.

Bu tezde varılan sonuç, her değişen konjonktürün bazı felsefi akımların teorik iflasına yol açarken, aynı zamanda bazılarının popülerleşmesine de yol açtığıdır. Somut durumların somut analizini başarıyla yapabilen ve güncel siyasi mücadeleye aktif olarak katkıda bulunabilen teorik formlar varlığını sürdürürken, konjonktürü analiz edemeyen görüşler yok olmaya mahkûmdur. Sadece bu değil, buna ek olarak belki de Althusserci problematiğin değişim ve gelişim sürecinin ortaya koyduğu en önemli sonuç şudur: Sınıf siyasetinden uzaklaşan bir Marksizm yok olmaya mahkûmdur. Bu, Althusser'in müdahalesinin tarihin çöp tenekesine atıldığı anlamına gelmez. Aksine bu durum, bir düşünürü değişen konjonktürün belirlediği bağlamda

anlamanın önemini vurgulamaktadır. Zira tarihsel bağlamı içinde ele alındığında, bir düşünür tarafından geliştirilen birçok kavramın ve bu kavramların bağlı olduğu problematiğin birçok farklı durumda faydalı olabileceği daha iyi anlaşılır. Unutulmaması gereken önemli nokta, hiçbir teorik üretimin veya müdahalenin yalnızca teorik temeller üzerine kurulmadığı ve aynı zamanda zorunlu olarak siyasi bir nitelik de taşıdığıdır.

Bu tezin ilham kaynağı, Althusser'e yöneltilen çeşitli eleştirilerdi. Bu eleştiriler, teorik çerçevesinden siyasi duruşuna kadar uzanan sorunlara işaret ederken, bazı eleştiriler her ikisini de birleştirdi. Bazı eleştiriler yalnızca müdahalenin konjonktürünü değil, aynı zamanda sonraki tarihsel süreçte doğrudan ve dolaylı olarak yarattığı yıkıcı teorik ve siyasi sonuçları da inceledi. Althusser'in mirasının tartışmalı ve muğlak olduğu doğrudur. Ancak, birçok teorik tartışmanın Althusserci Marksizm ve onun altında yatan ve Althusser'in teorik ve siyasi müdahalesinin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan problematik tarafından kökten değiştirildiği de unutulmamalıdır. Althusser'in müdahalesinin teorik başarısı tartışılmazdı. Öte yandan, müdahale siyasi olarak da başarılıydı. Başarısı artık hem Fransa'da çeşitli Marksizm biçimlerinin siyasetten başarıyla tasfiye edilmiş olması hem de uluslararası komünist harekette yarattığı değişimler açısından bir gerçek olarak algılanıyor.

Wood'un Althusser'in siyasi ve teorik çıkarımlarına yönelik eleştirisi büyük ölçüde geçerlidir. Buna rağmen Althusser, Butler'dan Foucault'ya ve hatta Zizek'e kadar birçok teorisyene, interpelasyon ve ideoloji eleştirisine yaptığı katkılarla ilham vermiş ve ilham vermeye devam etmektedir. Althusser, özneyi dışladığı ve böylece gerçek siyaseti engellediği için sık sık eleştirilse de, Althusserci problematikten etkilenen tüm bu düşünürler, özneleşme ve interpelasyonu yeniden kurgulamayı başardılar ve kendi yorumlarıyla siyasi eylemselliğin yolunu açtılar. Althusser, bu bağlamda makul bir örnek sundu ve ideoloji ve özneleşmenin gelecekteki formülasyonlarının hangi yöne gidebileceği konusunda Lacan'ı ve psikanalizi işaret ederek isabetli öngörülerde bulundu. Bugün, bu öngörülerin geçerliliğini birçok düşünürün eserlerinde görmek mümkündür.

Althusser'in semptomatik Marx okumasında tespit ettiği devrimci nitelik, Althusser'in kendisi için de geçerlidir. Öyle ki, başta Fransız Marksizmi ve Fransız felsefesi olmak üzere birçok teorik ve felsefi akım, ondan sonra bambaşka bir yol izlemiştir. Elbette inşa ettiği siyasi neo-ortodoksinin, teorik katkılarının önüne geçtiği iddia edilebilir. Buna ek olarak Althusser'in devlet teorisinden ve yeniden üretim perspektifiyle geliştirilen ideolojik devlet aygıtları kavramından çıkarılabilecek basit bir sonuç, ideolojiden kaçış olmadığı yönünde bir kanı olabilir. Ancak, başka görüşler bu teorik çerçeveyi mantıksal sonucuna götürerek, mis-interpelasyon ve eleştirel devlet aygıtları olasılığına işaret etmiştir. Althusser'in oluşturduğu yapısal çerçeve katı yapısalcılığı nedeniyle eleştirilse de uygun gördüğü yerlerde, yapıyı yalnızca pratiğe gömülü bir etki olarak algılayan metinleri ve yorumlarıyla katı yapısalcılığı reddetmiş ve konjonktürel okumaya alan açmıştır. Dolayısıyla, geliştirdiği teorik çerçevenin ve bunun altında yatan problematiğin geçerliliği ve teorik kuvveti sürmektedir. Bunun önemli bir nedeni de yeri geldiğinde karşılaştığı farklı teorik ve politik zorluklar karşısında esnemeye ve yeni birer şekil almaya müsait olmalarıdır. İşte tam da bu nedenle Althusser'in teorik katkıları bugün de önemini korumaktadır. Bunu iyi ifade edebilmek için bunun ötesine geçen yeniden okumalar gerçekleştirmek önemlidir. Bu açıdan, bu tez kendine düşen katkıyı yapmaya çalışmış ve de gelecekte yapılacak yeniden okuma girişimlerine önayak olma amacı gütmüştür. Bu anlamda bakıldığında, yeniden okuma çabalarına bir noktada kendi girdisini yaparak literatüre katkı sağlamaya gayret etmiştir.

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