
Althusser's Spinozism: A Philosophy for the Future?

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1 Reading Capital

The 'second' Spinoza-Renaissance generally refers to 1960s France, where a small group of scholars—Gueroult,¹ Matheron,² and Deleuze³ among them—advanced a new image of Spinoza that broke with the then still widely dominant one developed by Hegel and his students and commentators. More attentive reconstructions of this period include Althusser among the Parisian musketeers of Spinozism, if only as a marginal reference. In fact, any effort to identify a text of Althusser's specifically on Spinoza must surely end in disappointment. The works published in his lifetime include only a handful of brief references to Spinoza—none longer than a paragraph. And neither his extensive posthumous work nor his archived writings contain texts dedicated to Spinoza.⁴ An entirely different task was occupying Althusser's time in the sixties: the theoretical renewal of Marxism. It is his later recollection of this task that contains his now famous confession of Spinozism:

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- 1 Martial Gueroult, *Spinoza. I. Dieu (Ethique, I)* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1969); Martial Gueroult, *Spinoza. II. L'âme (Ethique, II)* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne 1974).
 - 2 Alexandre Matheron, *Individu et communauté chez Spinoza* (Paris: Édition de Minuit, 1969).
 - 3 Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* (Paris: Édition de Minuit, 1969).
 - 4 An exception here is a 1985 work: Louis Althusser, "L'unique tradition matérialiste I Spinoza," *Lignes* 8 (1993):72–119. URL: <https://epdf.tips/lunique-tradition-materialiste.html>. Also relevant are several notes of Althusser's from the end of the 1960s preserved in the IMEC archives bearing the shelf mark ALT2. A32-01.10 - 13 and the *Fiches de Lecture* preserved with the shelf mark ALT2. A60-08 -09, probably dating from the 1950s. In the last few years, three doctoral dissertations have been devoted to Althusser's reading of Spinoza: Juan Domingo Sánchez Estop, *Spinoza dans Althusser. présence et effets du spinozisme dans l'oeuvre de Louis Althusser*, PhD thesis defended at the Université Libre de Bruxelles on 02-14-2020; Esteban Dominguez, *De una pasión fuerte y comprometedora. Estudio sobre los orígenes del spinozismo de Louis Althusser*, PhD thesis defended at the Universidad Nacional de Quilmes on 06-02-2021; and Jean Matthys, *Althusser et Spinoza. Genèse et enjeux d'une éti-co-politique de la théorie*, PhD thesis defended at the Université catholique de Louvain, 09-08-2021.

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“If we were not structuralists, we can now confess why [...] we were guilty of an equally powerful and compromising passion: we were *Spinozists*.”⁵ The ‘we’ here refers to the authors of *Reading Capital*, some of whom are among the most prominent contemporary Spinoza scholars—think only of Balibar and Macherey. But the ‘we’ also proved to be prescriptive, functioning as a kind of injunction to Spinozism heeded by successive generations of Althusserians, including first-rate commentators like Moreau,⁶ Tosel,⁷ Albiac⁸ and Montag.⁹ This ‘Althusserian’ Spinozism differs significantly from the Spinozism of Gueroult, Matheron, and Deleuze. It is a Spinozism put into practice well before it is announced, one that can be understood only after a close analysis of Althusser’s and his students’ rereading of Marx. Direct references to Spinoza are extremely rare and often elliptical. Yet they are also of key strategic importance, for they point to the theoretical innovations Althusser himself develops. These can be summed up in the following three points: a new concept of causality, a critique of a theory of knowledge grounded in the concepts of ‘Origin,’ ‘Subject,’ and ‘Right,’ and, finally, an account of the imagination as the ‘opacity of the immediate’ (fully developed only in *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*). Consequently, the theoretical innovations that Althusser developed, but attributed to Spinoza, provide an entirely new image of Spinozism.

In *The Object of Capital*, a cornerstone of twentieth-century Marxism, Althusser assigns Spinoza a significant place in the history of philosophy: “Spinoza’s philosophy marks a theoretical revolution without precedent in the history of philosophy, and likely the greatest philosophical revolution of all time—so much so that we can consider Spinoza Marx’s only direct philosophical ancestor.”¹⁰ Althusser also draws on this comparison between Spinoza and Marx to explain the suppression of this revolution: “this radical revolution was subjected to enormous historical erasure, and Spinoza’s philosophy encountered the same fate as Marx’s met and continues to meet in some countries: It served as a slanderous insult and an accusation of ‘atheism’.”¹¹ Spinozism runs through modernity like an underground river, and it reappears on the surface—in the Spinoza-Renaissance and in German Idealism, for instance—due to “a misunderstanding.” What does this powerful philosophical revolution consist in? In the final chapter of *The Object of Capital*, “Marx’s Immense Theoretical Revolution,” Althusser defines the fundamental theoretical problem present in a practical state in Marx’s *Capital* in the following way: “what concept or set of concepts will allow us to theorize the way a structure’s elements are determined, the structural relations between these elements, and all the effects of these relations on the efficacy of the structure itself? And, *a fortiori*, what

5 Louis Althusser, “Éléments d’autocritique,” In Louis Althusser, *La Solitude de Machiavel*, ed. by Yves Sintomer (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998), 181.

6 Moreau’s first book especially is a true *abrégé* of Althusser’s Spinozism. Cfr. Pierre-François Moreau, *Spinoza* (Paris: Seuil, 1975).

7 Especially André Tosel, *Spinoza ou le crépuscule de la servitude. Essai sur le “Traité Théologico-Politique,”* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1984).

8 Gabriel Albiac, *La Sinagoga Vacía: Un estudio de las fuentes Marranas del Espinosismo* (Madrid: Hiperión, 1987).

9 Warren Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power: Spinoza and his Contemporaries* (London-New York: Verso Books, 1999).

10 Louis Althusser, “L’objet du Capital,” in Louis Althusser et al., *Lire le Capital*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), 288.

11 *Ibid.*, 288.

concept or set of concepts will allow us to theorize the way a subordinate structure is determined by a dominant one? In other words, how should we define the concept of structural causality?”¹²

Althusser maintains that modern philosophy seems to offer two models to theorize this causality: a mechanistic Cartesian model of transitive and analytic causality (which, however, has difficulty providing an account of the causality of a whole on its parts), and an expressive Leibnizian model that played a central role in Hegel’s philosophy via the syntax of the *pars totalis*. But he also adds: “The only theorist with the unprecedented audacity to delineate this problem and sketch a tentative solution to it was Spinoza. But as we know, history had buried him in the depths of night [*enseveli sous des épaisseurs de nuit*]. It is only through Marx, who, however, did not know him well, that we can begin to catch a glimpse of his trampled-on face.”¹³ Waxing lyrical and interlacing concepts and passion, Althusser establishes a circular movement that gives rise to a ‘new Spinoza:’ it is the problems Marx describes in *Capital* that allow us to grasp, beyond the condemnations and the ‘misunderstandings,’ the solutions Spinoza offers. In other words, only eyes educated by Marx can read and understand Spinoza. Of course, at the heart of Spinoza’s theoretical landscape lies the concept of structural/immanent causality, on which “the effects [are] not external to the structure, nor [are] they an object or an element—a preexistent space on which the structure *would stamp its label*. On the contrary, [...] the structure [is] immanent in its effects, an immanent cause of its effects in the Spinozan sense of the term, [...] *the entire existence of the structure consists in its effects*, that is [...] a structure that is only a particular combination of its effects [it is] nothing other than its effects.”¹⁴

2 Beyond Mechanist and Expressivist Causation

The passages Althusser dedicates to Spinoza in *Reading Capital* are dazzling. They illuminate the night for an instant without, however, following through with a full analysis—with the exception of one brief paragraph in *Éléments d’autocritique (Essays in Self-Criticism)*.¹⁵ It was Althusser’s students who developed these insights in several books: think only of Pierre Macherey’s extraordinary *Hegel or Spinoza*,¹⁶ Pierre-François Moreau’s brief *Spinoza*,¹⁷ Balibar’s work, now collected in *Spinoza Political, The Transindividual*,¹⁸ or Warren Montag’s *Bodies, Masses, Power*.¹⁹

Yet despite the brevity of his remarks, Althusser makes an extremely important claim that sets him apart even from the Spinoza-Renaissance in 1960s France, namely, immanent causation cannot be reduced to either the mechanistic or the expressive model. This point indicates a new path that differs from those taken by the great Spinozist interpretive traditions, as one assigns him to the mechanistic materialism camp while the other, in Hegelian terms, places him at the origin of a

12 Ibid., 401.

13 Ibid., 403.

14 Ibid., 405.

15 Althusser, *Éléments*, 181–189 (§ 4 «Sur Spinoza»).

16 Pierre Macherey, *Hegel ou Spinoza* (Paris: Maspero 1979).

17 Moreau, *Spinoza*.

18 Étienne Balibar, *Spinoza politique: Le transindividuel* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2018).

19 Montag, *Bodies*.

teleological movement through which substance becomes subject—a fully-fledged transcendental structure of reality in Hegel's sense. The new path is not easy to follow, as it requires reading Spinoza not only as a historical figure whose time has forever passed but also as a theorist who is our contemporary—even one who insinuates himself in the fissures of the present to blow them open. I would call this a “philosophy of the future” if this did not evoke much too facile views of a philosophy of history. We can think it a philosophy of the future in that the materiality of Spinoza's text produces new meanings as it comes into contact with Althusser's insights.

In another striking passage of *Is it Simple to Be a Marxist in Philosophy?* that seems to have the Spinoza-Leibniz alternative as its background, Althusser claims that denying the existence of an ‘origin’ (God) is not sufficient to escape metaphysics:

When we deny the radical origin of things in any form whatsoever, we must forge new categories that differ entirely from the classical ones made to theorize the delegations of origin that are essence, cause, and freedom. When we reject the Origin as the central bank of philosophy, we must also reject its currency and put other categories into circulation.²⁰

These remarks are matched in another wonderful passage from a posthumous text entitled (by a redactor) *The Only Materialist Tradition*. The passage lingers over the details of Spinoza's philosophical strategy:

Even Spinoza's philosophical strategy fascinated me. Jacques Derrida has said much about strategy in philosophy and he is perfectly right, as every philosophy is a device for theoretical combat that, within its strategic objectives and offensives, employs texts as strongholds and outposts to invade theoretical landscapes fortified and occupied by the opponent. And Spinoza began with God! He began with God even though (as I believe with all his worst enemies) he was an atheist (like Costa and many other Portuguese Jews of his time). Supreme strategist that he was, he began by overrunning the chief stronghold of his opponent, or rather he settled into it as if he were himself his own opponent, avoiding suspicion of in fact being the stronghold's sworn opponent, and he rearranged the theoretical fortress so as to turn it inside out, as one might turn cannons against their own occupants. [...] Philosophers don't normally proceed in this way: it is always beginning from a certain *exterior* that they brandish the strength of their views, which are destined to overrun the space guarded and protected by preceding views that already occupy it. Militaristically speaking, this revolutionary philosophical strategy recalls the theory of urban guerrilla warfare, the encirclement of cities from the countryside dear to Mao, or certain forms of Machiavelli's military-political strategy (his theory of fortresses especially). I was fascinated by this unrivaled audacity which gave me the idea of the extreme essence of any philosophical strategy—its confessed

20 Louis Althusser, “Est-il simple d'être marxiste en philosophie?,” *La pensée* 183, no. 5 (1975): 3–31. URL: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6204366q/f5.item>.

limit-essence that should never be overstepped. In this way, it reminded me of the thinking of a Machiavelli, who always thinks “in the extremes”, “in the limits”.²¹

Combining the two passages allows us to read Spinoza in an entirely new way. It is not a matter of pigeonholing Spinoza into one of the currents of the Western tradition (atheism, pantheism, naturalism, mechanism, organicism, etc.), and even less a matter of imagining him as a hazy exteriority to this tradition (archaicism and orientalism constitute a fully-fledged interpretive tradition of Spinoza). We must strive to grasp the fiery political strategy lying behind the coolness of the *mos geometricus* and, within the political strategy, the theoretical reworking of the most important concepts of this tradition, which in turn produces ethical-political effects of liberation.

3 The Spinoza-Leibniz Alternative

We saw that lying in the background of Althusser’s passage is a key Spinoza-Leibniz alternative. At issue are two different ways of understanding the part-whole relation (which explain Althusser’s greater insistence on this connection than on the Descartes-Spinoza alternative: At stake here is the Marxist concept of totality). This alternative has vanished from the surface of the philosophical tradition inasmuch as, after Leibniz, Spinoza’s theoretical engagement with the issue was simply attributed to Leibniz (Bertrand Russell provides a paradigm example of this), making Leibniz out to be a crypto-Spinozist.²² The dichotomy is all the more interesting since Althusser himself, flirting with structuralism, came close to a Leibnizian reading of immanent causality by explaining it in terms of a formalizable combinator.²³ Reestablishing the dichotomy and understanding how Spinoza’s denial of a radical origin of things led him down a different path than those of theology and metaphysics allows us to fully grasp the risk of capitulating to this Leibnizian reading, and so to keep our distance from it. In this, of course, we go beyond Althusser, but *with* Althusser.

Leibniz’s approach to the question splits being into two levels: the realm of the possible, namely, of non-contradictory essences in the divine intellect, and the realm of the actual, which is an effect of the divine will brought about among all possible worlds and restricted not only by logical impossibility but also by the mystery of impossibility. A possible essence in the divine intellect is constituted by a complete notion, which itself consists in whatever is sufficient to explain all that happens not only to the individual itself but, due to the intra-expressivity of monads, also to the whole world. Thus, once God creates the world—the best among all possible worlds—the complete notion of every individual constitutes the law of the series of a monad’s perceptions (the representation of multiplicity in a unity)—the succession of predicates, i.e., of events, inhering in the subject. The motor of the series is appetite for a successive perception. The world as (well-founded) phenomenon is thus given by the occurrence, within individual monads, of single representations of the world in harmony with one another. This is what makes monads belong to the same world, each of them

21 Althusser, “L’unique tradition matérialiste”, 86–87.

22 Bertrand Russell, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

23 Vittorio Morfino, “Combinación o conjunción: Althusser entre Leibniz y Spinoza,” in *Spinoza Maledictus: Spinoza Treceavo Coloquio*, eds. Ana Leila Jabase *et al.* (Córdoba: Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, 2018), 322–335.

constituting one of infinitely many points of view from which it is possible to observe the moment of creation. The spatiotemporal dimension of reality is constituted by the order of the occurrence of predicates in subjects. All simultaneously compossible predicates or events make up space, and all successively compossible predicates make up time. Finally, mind and body possess the same model of lawful order functioning by means of two different kinds of cause: the former by final causes and the latter by efficient causes. Of course, both are already present *a priori* in the complete notion of the individual in the divine intellect, and both develop along a timeline with a determinate orientation—efficient causes from past to present and final causes from future to present.

The key elements of Leibniz's system are, on a logical level, the concepts of subject, predicate, and the law of the series, and, on a metaphysical level, those of monad, event, and once more the law of the series. The concept of causality that binds these elements together is twofold. On the one hand, we have the expressive causality of a monad that, as a part of the whole, reflects in itself the entire universe (one thing expresses another, according to Leibniz, when there is a constant and regular relation between what can be said of one and what can be said of the other).²⁴ On the other hand, we have the transitive causality of the passage within each individual monad from one element of the series to the successive element.

The easily made error of perspective here, Althusser seems to suggest, is that of supposing that Spinoza merely erases, as if by the stroke of a pen, the radical origin of all things (God) while nevertheless retaining all other elements without any change. This is an understandable error considering that Spinoza employs the words of the tradition while radically redefining their meaning with sustained use of oxymorons (God *or* Nature, essence *or* existence, right *or* power, etc.). Without running through all the details of Spinoza's work in deconstructing and reconstructing these key notions, which in fact mirrors the order of the *mos geometricus*, let's observe its main effects.

First of all, Spinoza's insistence that infinite substance is immanent in the finite eliminates the ontological dualism of possibility and actuality. There is only one reality that can be known in different ways (the three kinds of knowledge). The removal of antecedent possible essences also eliminates the sphere of applicability of the law of non-contradiction. There are no essences—that is, complete concepts of individuals that subsist before their worldly existence. Rather, the essence of an individual emerges after the fact—after the individual already exists—from its power of acting and its ability to enter into relations with other individuals. Moreover, an individual is not a fundamental monad to which modifications inhere, but the perseverance of a relationship that is not closed in on itself, but open through the triple relation (that constitutes every individual) of composition, regulated exchange, and of affecting/being affected. Each individual is at the same time composed of and a component of other individuals, enters into regulated interchanges with other individuals and, finally, traces and is traced by other individuals.²⁵ Change within this theoretical framework cannot occur according to the simple model of successive linear states, following an

24 It is worth noting that the term Althusser uses to define the nature of Leibnizian causation, 'expression,' is also at the heart of Deleuze's first reading of Spinoza in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*—a reading from which Deleuze later distanced himself. It seems to me that Deleuze's exaggeration of the importance of the term 'expression' and its cognates in Spinoza, which occur only a handful of times in the *Ethics*, ends up muddling Spinoza's philosophy with Leibniz's. See Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* (Paris: Édition de Minuit, 1969).

25 Along the lines of Lorenzo Vinciguerra, *Spinoza et les signes. La genèse de l'imagination* (Paris: Vrin, 2005).

immutable law of the series (in the *Ethics*, Spinoza abandons the term ‘series’ that he uses in the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, replacing it with the term *connexio*—interweaving), but must be understood as a complex and stratified relation among durational things.²⁶

Of course, this all hinges on a correct understanding of the nature of modes. If we understand modes via the model of inherence, we must agree with Bayle that we are faced with one of the most bizarre theories the human mind has ever conceived.²⁷ But if we instead take a mode’s being in another way as *reference* to another, as a relational being that cannot be isolated, we will be able to understand its duration in an entirely new way as well.

Similarly, our way of acquiring knowledge can no longer be based on the model of a judgment taking a subject-predicate form but must rather proceed according to a systematic transformation of ideas of the imagination by means of a radical and anti-intuitive use of language made possible by the thesis of the uniqueness of the substance. This is no longer an Aristotelian logic of finite substance but a logic of infinite substance in which, like in Hegel, “Truth is the whole.” However, unlike in Hegel, the whole is not characterized by the simple interiority of a consciousness, but by the structured complexity of an existence that unfolds in the aleatory and material realm of duration, without center or end. Knowledge cannot then be grounded in a judgment that captures the inherence of predicate in subject (an inherence captured by a finite analysis for truths of reason and by an infinite analysis for truths of fact), nor in a representation of object in subject (an idea that animated the impossible dream of a *universal characteristic*), but must rather be grounded in an open system that constructs the object of knowledge through a process of transforming the imagination—based on experience but ultimately against it.

4 From the Concept of Duration to a New Theory of History

Let’s focus now on the concept of duration featured in the theory of modal relationality sketched above. For Spinoza, we cannot speak of a mode’s duration—of its individual rhythm—separately from others, since a thing’s duration cannot be considered a succession of the states of a subject through time. Duration is always a *cum durare*, to use a Lucretian term Spinoza was fond of—a *concurrere*. Within this framework, the term *continuatio* that we find in the definition of duration cannot have the same meaning as it does in Descartes—that is, as a series of discrete and contingent moments sustained and united by divine creation (an entirely different *continuatio* and *concursum*—‘vertical cuts’ made by God). The continuation of duration in Spinoza cannot be understood in terms of a model of linearity and seriality because it is an effect of composition and interchange. Indeed, to rule out any readings of continuation as a kind of continuous creation, Spinoza writes in the fourth postulate of the physical digression that “The human Body, to be preserved, requires a great many other bodies, by which it is, as it were, continually regenerated (*continuo quasi regeneratur*)” (E2post4/G II 102/C I 462). This regeneration does not occur instant to instant, like

26 See Vittorio Morfino, *Il tempo e l’occasione. L’incontro Spinoza Machiavelli* (Milan: LED, 2002), 144–160.

27 “the most monstrous hypothesis imaginable, the most absurd, the most diametrically opposed to evident notions of the mind” Pierre Bayle, “Dictionnaire Historique et Critique,” in Pierre Bayle, *Œuvres diverses*, ed. by Élisabeth Labrousse (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1964–1982), 1073.

divine creation, but is rather an 'as it were' regeneration. In other words, the apparent linearity results from a deeper complex of interchanges and interwoven levels whose name, in Spinoza's system, is precisely the *ordo et connexio rerum*. This means that every duration is composed of durations, that it exists in a web of durations and composes durations at a successive level, even if none can be conceived on the basis of persistence. Persistence, which is always relative, is rather the result of this.

Spinoza's deconstruction of seventeenth century metaphysics and theology, then, goes well beyond eliminating God by the stroke of a pen. The concept of an individual as a relational web compels us to reject all forms of simple temporal continuity (unless conceived as effects of complexity). The temporality defined by Spinoza is complex, plural, stratified—a multiverse. Of course, time is relative in Leibniz as much as in Spinoza, in the sense that it consists in a relation. But whereas in Leibniz the temporal relation (which also constitutes the spatial dimension through the determination of simultaneities) is grounded in a substrate, in Spinoza it has no grounding other than in the infinite composition of durations, from the infinitely small to the infinitely large, and is only considered absolute by the imaginative representation of time as indissolubly tied to the speculative pairing of human subject and divine subject—a cornerstone of the prejudice of final causes.

There are no linear series in Spinoza, then, because there are no immaterial atoms to constitute permanence in the infinite succession of events. Instead, all we have are event-effects of a web of relations (the very concept of 'event' must be thought of in a new way within the relationship that Spinoza posits between *individua* and *res singulares*),²⁸ an interweaving of infinite immanent causation and transitive finite causation that shatters the Leibnizian arrow of time that points to an ever-expanding culture in the world (an arrow that provides a model for every successive philosophy of history), making it nothing more than a "human, all too human" representation.

Thus, the initially opaque connection between the structural theory of causation and a theory of history becomes clear. In *Reading Capital*, Althusser claims that Spinoza "was the first in the world to offer both a theory of history and a philosophy of the opacity of the immediate [...] as he discovered that the history of men we find in books is not a text written in the pages of a book, that the truth of history cannot be read from its manifest discourse, since the text of history is not one in which a single voice speaks (the *Logos*), but an inaudible and illegible tracing [*l'inaudible et illisible*

28 Here are the definitions of the two: "By singular things I understand things that are finite and have a determinate existence. And if a number of Individuals so concur in one action that together they are all the cause of one effect, I consider them all, to that extent, as one singular thing" (E2def7, G II 85/C I 447). "When a number of bodies, whether of the same or of different size, are so constrained by other bodies that they lie upon one another, or if they so move, whether with the same degree or different degrees of speed, that they communicate their motions to each other in a certain fixed manner, we shall say that those bodies are united with one another and that they all together compose one body *or* Individual, which is distinguished from the others by this union of bodies" (E2p13def, G II 99–100/C I 460). What jumps out is that, for both singular things and individuals, unity is an effect of plurality. 'Together' [*simul*] underscores the (temporary) temporal dimension of this unity, while the verbs 'concur' [*concurrere*] and 'compose' [*componere*] both indicate the dynamic dimension that necessarily accompanies it. The difference between the two is one of degree and consists in a repetition of this unity-effect in an individual, yielding a permanence that is nonetheless always relative.

notation] of the effects of a structure of structures.”²⁹ It is precisely in the deconstruction of the solidarity between the uniqueness of time, the book and the author that the fundamental Spinozian gesture at the heart of the *Theologico-Political Treatise* lies. This gesture grounds a new theory of history that rejects all forms of theodicy and, ahead of its time, any philosophy of history that, as Marx used to say, “has the supreme virtue of being supra-historical.”³⁰ At the same time, this gesture makes it possible to grasp the material effects of this solidarity in the discipline imposed on bodies through the prescriptions of the “Book.”³¹ Althusser’s Spinoza and its extension thus reveal all their power as instruments to intervene in our own time: a Spinoza whose radical materialism allows him, on the one hand, to not only enter into dialogue with the most significant developments of the natural and social sciences but most of all resist dominant idealistic (ideological) readings of them, and, on the other hand, to reread the Marxist tradition against the grain and, by doing so, renew its power as a theory. This renewal should not be confused with, but rather enter into, dialogue with the Spinozism that emerged from the tradition of Italian *operaismo*, whose origin is that astonishing ‘prison notebook’ that is Antonio Negri’s *The Savage Anomaly*.³²

Translated from the Italian by Leonardo Moauro

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29 Louis Althusser, “Du Capital à la Philosophie de Marx,” in Louis Althusser et al., *Lire le Capital* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), 8.

30 Karl Marx, “À la Rédaction de l’Отечественныя Записки”, in *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe*, Erste Abteilung, Bd. 25 (Berlin: Dietz, 1985), 117.

31 This leads to a further aspect of Althusser’s Spinozism that we have had to leave out for reasons of space: the question of ideology theorized between Spinoza and Freud. See Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” in *Contemporary Critical Theory*, ed. Dan Latimer (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1989), 61–102. This is a theme that Michel Pêcheux explores, referring to Spinoza, in Michel Pêcheux, *Les vérités de La Palice. Linguistique, sémantique, philosophie* (Paris: Maspero, 1975).

32 Antonio Negri, *L’anomalia selvaggia. Saggio su potere e potenza in Baruch Spinoza* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1982).

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