

NAZI-FASCISM AND
ANAL REPRESSION

FROM *THE BODY AND REVOLUTION IN MARX:*
DEATH, THE DEVIL, AND ANALITY

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Even though Carlo Emilio Gadda admits that fascism arrived “after capital’s financial backing,”¹ he nonetheless offers a historically inaccurate assessment of fascism’s emergence: he interprets fascism as a *return to Eros in its unconscious and animalesque forms* and Eros’s subjugation of *the Logos’s motives*, while, in reality, *Eros* is, in this case, strictly governed by the repressive *Logos* of advanced capitalism.

Following Freud, Adorno rightly emphasizes that during the process of Nazi-Fascist *massification*, “those who become submerged in masses are not primitive men,” even if they “display primitive attitudes contradictory to their normal rational behavior;”² therefore “as a rebellion against civilization, fascism is not simply the reoccurrence of the

1. Carlo Emilio Gadda, *Eros e Priapo: da furore a cenere* (Milano: Garzanti, 1967), 17-18. [All translations of Gadda are mine as there exists no English translation of *Eros and Priapus: From Fury to Ashes*.—Trans.]

2. Theodor Adorno, “Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda,” in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (New York: Continuum, 1982), 122.

3. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 122.

archaic but its reproduction in and by civilization itself."³

This *reproduction* has one of its *deep* reasons in the *hypnotic* relationship between the *masses* and the *leader* (here one might recall Thomas Mann's *Mario and the Magician*), so that this suggestive leader, this

hypnotist awakens in the subject a portion of his archaic heritage which had also made him compliant towards his parents and which had experienced an individual re-animation in his relation to his father; what is thus awakened is the idea of a paramount and dangerous personality, towards whom only a passive-masochistic attitude is possible.⁴

4. Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVIII (1920-1922)*, 127.

With this last text of Freud, the *erotic connection* that ties *leader* (master) to *herd* (servants) through *hypnotic* suggestion, reveals itself as a relation that dialectically places its docile herd in a passive *homosexual*, and obviously an *alienated*, situation because it insists on the *phallicism* of the leader.

This is an aspect that also emerges in Gadda's text which, also for its captivating style, is second only to Reich's *Mass Psychol-*

ogy of *Fascism* in its investigation of the *phenomenology of the depths* of fascism, and very effectively evokes its basic vertical-phallic hierarchy.

In Gadda's own words, Mussolini "came to believe [. . .] that he was the only erect genital available in the piazza, the only thinking brain capable of howling from the balcony."⁵ "He was, after all, the dominant generating organ—the phallus: primary, proprietary, paternal."⁶ Thus, the fascistized masses are *profoundly* structured by a scotomization of the *feminine* and of the alienated *anal*, lured as they are by the alienation of the *penile*, which appears as *phallic*, in the *magician* that controls the masses: "At the time everything was male and Martial: even the tits of your wet nurse, and the ovaries and the Fallopian tubes, and the vagina and the vulva. The virile vulva of the Italian woman."⁷

Through the conflictual *return of the repressed*, the fascist phallic absolutization has its own *other* in alienated femininity, since "Mussolini subjugates his crowd by way of its feminine aspect, its feminine flesh."⁸ Moreover, it has its *truth* in alienated *anal* eroticism, since "something vulvaceous" is "always sutured into the praise or in the

5. Gadda, *Eros e Priapo*, 60.

6. Gadda, *Eros e Priapo*, 73.

7. Gadda, *Eros e Priapo*, 73.

8. Gadda, *Eros e Priapo*, 86.

denial that men make to their morals and corporals.”⁹

9. Gadda, *Eros e Priapo*, 89.

Mussolini’s *phallic* authority could not have imagined that there are passive female tendencies even among men, since in fascist society “even the men have ovaries and a uterus, they are more uterine and more ovarian than the women.”¹⁰

10. Gadda, *Eros e Priapo*, 126.

Thus, fascist phallicism is inextricably connected and dialectically opposed to alienated homosexuality in the *animalesque* form of the servile adoration of the phallus.

Even today there is the risk of a *deep-seated* (and, perhaps, *unconscious*) fascism.

That risk can even, perhaps, be found in the political parties *draped in red*, which do not repudiate the phallic (bureaucracy) hierarchy nor do they break with the *homogeneity* of alienated society and its INSTITUTIONS. On the contrary, they proclaim to want to be *crutches* for such institutions, to whose continuation these parties contribute the prospects of *compromise* and religiously preach for *sacrifices* from the masses, who are invited to save the assets of capital and to await the *revolution after their death*.¹¹

11. [This is an allusion to the so-called “Historic Compromise,” which the Italian Communist Party (PCI) initiated with the center-right Democratic Christian (DC) party in the mid-1970s in order to gain traction in parliament. The move was widely criticized by youth movements and the extra-parliamentary left, who saw it as antithetical to Communism’s revolutionary goals. —Trans.]

Even the people who would declare themselves to be democratic and antifascist

(and maybe subjectively and politically they are) retain a *phallic paternalism*, which makes for a relentless *spy*. Therefore, they belong to *deep fascism*, next to the fascisticized masses (males and females equalized in their *passivity* in front of the *leader*) who,

not finding real motives; that is, values; that is, other contents, which would serve the flag, which would be the motive and the value of their being, [...] attach themselves to the first word or to the first image that occurs in their brain: which is almost always the name and the image of a dipstick. I mean a dipstick *déguisé*; a dipstick *travestito*; a disguised and cross-dressed dipstick; a *sublimated* dipstick in the Homeland of Dipstick, in the Dipstick of the Holy Family, in the Dipstick of the Integrity of the Race [...], in Italy's Immortal Dipstick Destinies [...], in Our Marvelous Dipstick Alpines [...], in the Dipstick-People [...], etc. etc.¹²

12. Gadda, *Eros e Priapo*, 124.

And, we might add, in the Dipstick-Institutions! Diverted *desire* is one of the *deep* wellsprings of Nazi-Fascism:

The libido as sexual energy is the direct investment of masses, of large aggregates, and of social and organic fields. We have difficulty understanding what principles psychoanalysis uses to support its conception of desire, when it maintains that the libido must be de-sexualized or even sublimated in order to proceed to the social investments, and inversely that the libido only re-sexualizes these investments during the course of pathological regression. Unless the assumption of such a conception is still familialism—that is, an assumption holding that sexuality operates only in the family, and must be transformed in order to invest larger aggregates. The truth is that sexuality is everywhere: the way a bureaucrat fondles his records, a judge administers justice, a businessman causes money to circulate; the way the bourgeoisie fucks the proletariat, and so on. And there is no need to resort to metaphors, any more than for the libido to go by way of metamorphoses. Hitler got the fascists sexually aroused. Flags, nations, armies, banks get a lot of people aroused. A revolutionary machine is nothing if it does not acquire at least as much force as these coercive machines have for producing breaks and mobilizing flows.¹³

Certainly the role of Hitler as an individual was negligible, but it remains fundamental inasmuch as it helped crystallize a new form of this totalitarian machine. Hitler can be seen in dreams, in deliriums, in films, in

the contorted behavior of policemen, and even on the leather jackets of some gangs who, without knowing anything about Nazism, reproduce the icons of Hitlerism. [...] The conjunction, in the person of Hitler, of at least four libidinal series, crystallized the mutation of a new desiring machinism in the masses. [...] [Between them] is perhaps the essential point, a racist delirium, a mad, paranoiac energy, which put him in tune with the collective death instinct released from the charnel houses of the First World War. What almost everyone refuses to acknowledge is that the fascist machine, in its Italian and German forms, became a threat to capitalism and Stalinism because the masses invested a fantastic collective death instinct in it. By re-territorializing their desire onto a leader, a people, and a race, the masses abolished, by means of a phantasm of catastrophe, a reality which they detested and which the revolutionaries were either unwilling or unable to encroach upon. For the masses, virility, blood, vital space, and death took the place of a socialism that had too much respect for the dominant

13. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 292-293.

meanings. And yet, fascism was brought back to these same dominant meanings by a sort of intrinsic bad faith, by a false provocation to the absurd and by a whole theater of collective hysteria and debility.¹⁴

14. Felix Guattari, "Everybody Wants to be a Fascist," in *Chaosophy: Texts and Interviews, 1972-1977*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, trans. David L. Sweet, Jarred Becker, Taylor Adkins (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009), 165, 168.

If Nazi-Fascism is *diverted* desire, one understands how, by way of capital, Nazi-Fascism has not been eliminated by Hitler's suicide, or with Mussolini's execution:

Alongside the fascism of the concentration camps, which continue to exist in numerous countries, new forms of molecular fascism are developing: a slow burning fascism in familialism, in school, in racism, in every kind of ghetto, which advantageously makes up for the crematory ovens. Everywhere the totalitarian machine is in search of proper structures, which is to say, structures capable of adapting desire to the profit economy.

We must abandon, once and for all, the quick and easy formula: "Fascism will not make it again." Fascism has already

“made it,” and it continues to “make it.” It passes through the tightest mesh; it is in constant evolution, to the extent that it shares in a micropolitical economy of desire itself inseparable from the evolution of the productive forces. Fascism seems to come from the outside, but it finds its energy right at the heart of everyone’s desire. [...] Fascism, like desire, is scattered everywhere, in separate bits and pieces, within the whole social realm; it crystallizes in one place or another, depending on the relationships of force. It can be said of fascism that it is all-powerful and, at the same time, ridiculously weak. And whether it is the former or the latter depends on the capacity of collective arrangements, subject-groups, to connect the social libido, on every level, with the whole range of revolutionary machines of desire.¹⁵

15. Guattari, “Everybody Wants to Be a Fascist,” 171.

Certainly *phallicism* was a predominant characteristic of *classic* Nazi-Fascism (Mussolini and Hitler), but it was accompanied by *narcissism* and *sadism*¹⁶ as instruments for coming to power over masses that had been *schizophrenized* by Nazi-Fascism.

16. Gadda, *Eros e Priapo*, 131-146.

17. Gadda, *Eros e Priapo*, 131.

More precisely, *sadian aggressivity*, by Nazi-Fascism “artificially assembled,”¹⁷ by revealing it as the tragic and macroscopic phase of *anal repression*, proves by way of *oral* and *anal* Sadism, the contiguity of its *leader-phalluses* with Hegel’s *cannibalistic* and *destructive master*.

Their longing to experience gratification by way of sucking has changed [in the *regressions* to the oral-Sadistic stage] to a need to *give* by way of the mouth, so that we find in them [...] a constant need to communicate themselves orally to other people. This results in an obstinate urge to talk, connected in most cases with a feeling of overflowing. [...] Their principle relation to other people is effected by the way of oral discharge.¹⁸

18. Karl Abraham, “Oral Erotism and Character Formation,” in *Selected Papers on Psychoanalysis* (London: Karnac Books, 1979), 401.

19. Adorno, “Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda,” 132.

“The leaders are generally oral character types, with a compulsion to speak incessantly and to befool the others.”¹⁹ But the borders between *orality* and *anality* are not—in this regard—really traceable and the *oral discharge* is also configurable as *anal*:

That there are certain connections between anal erotism and speech I had already learnt from Prof. Freud, who told me of a stammerer all whose singularities of speech were to be traced to anal phantasies. Jones too has repeatedly indicated in his writings the displacement of libido from anal activities to phonation. Finally I, too, in an earlier article (“Über obscene Wörter” [“On Obscene Words”]), was able to indicate the connection between musical voice-culture and anal erotism.²⁰

However, the deviated *oral-anal* erotism of charismatic leaders like Hitler or Mussolini obtains this *discharge* by towering over their crowds on their *phallic* pedestals. Here, too, they *also* communicate through their GAZE. “The most frequent pathway along which libidinal excitation is aroused” are “visual impressions.”²¹

To do this mainly requires a *hypnotist*, that asserts that he is in possession of a mysterious power that robs the subject of his own will; or, which is the same thing, the subject believes it of him. [...]

20. Sándor Ferenczi, “Silence is Golden,” in *Further Contributions to the Theory and Technique of Psycho-Analysis* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), 251.

21. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume VII (1901-1905): *A Case of Hysteria, Three Essays on Sexuality, and Other Works*, 156.

The hypnotist, then, is supposed to be in possession of this power; and how does he manifest it? By telling the subject to look him in the eyes; his most typical method of hypnotizing is by his look. But it is precisely the *sight* of the chieftain that is dangerous and unbearable for primitive people, just as later that of the Godhead is for mortals. Even Moses had to act as an intermediary between his people and Jehovah, since the people could not support the sight of God.²²

22. Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 125.

Children, primitives, the masses, neurotics (the obsessive ones: the *religious*), all, with varying degrees of difference, have an analogous relationship with the GAZE of the father-god-dictator. And this relationship is a particular type of *love relationship*:

From being in love to hypnosis is evidently only a short step. The respects in which the two agree are obvious. There is the same humble subjection, the same compliance, the same absence of criticism, towards the hypnotist as towards the loved object. There is the same sapping of the subject's own initiative; no

one can doubt that the hypnotist has stepped into the place of the ego ideal.²³

23. Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 114.

Like Thomas Mann in *Mario and the Magician*, Norman Brown has also attracted attention to fascism as an erotic-hypnotic alienated relationship established by the GAZE.

“The command to sleep in hypnosis means nothing more nor less than an order to withdraw all interest from the world and to concentrate it upon the person of the hypnotist [who] is based on the natural property of a look. [...] The hypnotist, then, is supposed to be in possession of this power; and how does he manifest it? By telling the subject to look him in the eyes.” [...] Identification with the representative person, whom we “look up to,” takes place through the eye. In psychoanalytic jargon, the super-ego is based on “incorporation through the eye” or “ocular introjection”; it is the sight of a parental figure that becomes a permanent part of us; and that now supervises, watches us. [Remember that the *crowd*, in front of Hitler

and Mussolini's *platform*, can be found *below*, like *a child in front of their father*.] In other words, the super-ego is derived from the primal scene. The primal scene is the original theater; parental coitus is the archetypal show; the original distance is between child and parent. [...] "Theaters and concerts, in fact any performance where there is something to be seen or heard, always stands for parental coitus." It is in the primal scene that we learn to take vicarious pleasure in events of which we are only passive spectators.²⁴

24. Norman O. Brown, *Love's Body*. Reissue of 1966 Edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 122–123. [Here Norman O. Brown includes quotes from Freud, *Group Psychology*, 96, and Géza Róheim, *Animism, Magic, and the Divine King* (New York: A.A. Knopf & Co., 1930), 149.—Trans.]

It is, *à la Brecht*, a *non-alienated theatre* where the tragedy of Nazi-Fascism (and other tragedies as well, ones that are more current, like the millions of "democratic publics" watching-suckling the televisual phallus) is performed. It is a theatre based on the absolutization of the eye (testicle) in addition to the alienation of *critical power*, and therefore where the Oedipal drama can take place.

In a history and a society in which citizens are reduced to spectators, in a purely "theatrical" alienated collective—alas!—Oedipal theatre makes sense. It is a sense

founded on the alienated *eye*: “The spectator is a *voyeur*. The desire to see is the desire to see the genital; and the desire to see is the desire to be one; to become what you behold; to incorporate the penis of another; to devour it through the eye.”²⁵

25. Brown, *Love's Body*, 124.

“Psychologists define hypnosis as the filling of the field of attention by one sense only.”²⁶

26. Brown, *Love's Body*, 121.

“The interplay of all the senses [...], the polymorphism of the senses, polymorphous perversity, active interplay” becomes scotomized and in its place the opposite of polymorphous perversity becomes absolutized, “the abstraction of the visual, obtained by putting to sleep the rest of the life of the body.”²⁷

27. Brown, *Love's Body*, 121.

It all adds up: Oedipus-Mussolini-Hitler are the *gaze*, castrated from the rest of *corporality*; a *pars pro toto* that pretends to be a *totality*. *Polymorphism* is cancelled out by the *phallus*: by mediating castration one enters into the tragedy of the *society of representation*, in which pomp (whether hitlerian, mussolinian, or televisually ‘democratic’) can be summarized like so:

The exhibitionism of the phallic personality (the huge genital, the royal lingam) is fraudulent; an imposture, or imposition on the public; theater. The actor needs the audience to reassure him that he is not castrated: yes, you are the mighty penis; the Emperor's New Clothes. To force the audience to give this reassurance is to castrate, have coitus with, the audience: the phallic personality needs a receptive audience or womb.

Separately, both actor and audience are incomplete, castrated; but together they make up a whole: the desire and pursuit of the whole in the form of the combined object, the parents in coitus.²⁸

28. Brown, *Love's Body*, 125.

And indeed, Nazi-Fascism *represents* itself from a restrictively ideological *familist* perspective.

Capital is behind it, jostling Oedipus's marionette.

The tragedy is even more grim with *Nazism*. Alienated *homosexuality* appears in it in three ways: under the guise of the exaltation of militarized Arian homoeroticism,

under the politically motivated process of condemning Röhm's homosexuality with that of the SA (*night of the long knives*), and above all with the *elimination*, in the *Lager*, of non-integrated homosexuality.

In the only *Konzentrationslager* in Auschwitz, where "ten-thousand people were passing through the gas chamber daily and not less than three million people according to the Commandant's own calculation, were killed in this and in other ways,"²⁹ there were certainly prisoners who were uniquely stigmatized, even with special badges, among them "a triangle [...] pink for homosexuals."³⁰

It is certainly not a coincidence that Hess, the *Gauleiter* of Auschwitz, would call the *Lager* (where "dirty" Jews, homosexuals, and antifascists were *eliminated*) the "anus of the world."

The *repression of the anal as dirt and homosexuality* (and by way of an alienated homosexuality, the Nazi one) here touches on repression's most tragic outcome.

Between all of the monuments that commemorate the Nazi-Fascist massacres, why is there not one dedicated *to the homosexual slaughtered by the Nazis*?

29. Lord Russell of Liverpool, *The Scourge of the Swastika: A Short History of Nazi War Crimes*. (London: Greenhill Books, 2002)

30. Lord Russell of Liverpool, *The Scourge of the Swastika: A Short History of Nazi War Crimes*.

Maybe because there is not even one dedicated to the commemoration-execration of the witches' stakes.

Because even now a *deep* bond exists in reality between *current* capitalism and that of *Nazi-Fascism: the repression of anality*.

Neo-fascism's massacres gorily demonstrate this. Was it a coincidence that the same day of the *Brescia Massacre* (eight dead and about a hundred wounded), a message reached local authorities and newspapers from secret neo-fascist associations?³¹ In the name of "Italy of the Caesars and the last of the Caesars," and in defense of the "healthy segment of the people," the message sentenced people defined as "jewish dogs [...] to the final solution [...] for having corrupted the youth, for having had relations with young people replete with homosexuality, detained, used, prostituted, and have made wretched young people use drugs, so as to subject them to their depraved desires."³²

It's obvious that it is not possible to establish a precise link between this document and the perpetrators of the massacre. Yet, it is symptomatic of the reemergence of the mentality of neo-Nazi-Fascism by way of the juxtaposition of Judaism and homosexuality,

31. [Here Parinetto refers to one of a series of the politically motivated massacres that hit Italy in the 1970s (giving the decade its nickname, "Years of Lead") in his hometown of Brescia, also known as the Piazza della Loggia Bombing. The event took place on May 28th 1974 and a neo-fascist terrorist group was thought to be involved; however, the case remained open until 2008.—Trans.]

32. The entire message can be read on page three of *l'Unità*, published on May 29th, 1974.

as well as their condemnation to (!) the infamous Nazi “final solution,” which was consummated in the death camps.

It is symptomatic in the same way that the Italian Social Movement [MSI, *Movimento Sociale Italiano*], by publishing a manifesto in which it rejected any responsibility for the massacre, stigmatized the main suspect for the atrocious attack (whose “confession,” however, has little credibility)³³ by defining him as a “crazy pathological liar, crook, peddler of stolen paintings, homosexual, common delinquent, probably from a communist family and upbringing.”³⁴

The same “concept” is taken up by Giorgio Almirante, for whom “the only self-confessed guilty party for the massacre could not be a member of the MSI because he is a ‘noted pederast,’ and our party is the only one that is truly antihomosexual.”³⁵

Therefore, the neo-fascist party openly claims to *depend on homosexuality*, since it *posits itself on a negation of homosexuality*, and for this same reason recognizes that without negating homosexuality the party wouldn’t exist!

However, it is worth analyzing their cited antihomosexual declarations.

33. On this point see: Achille Lega and Giorgio Santerini, *Strage di Brescia, potere a Roma* (Milano: Mazzotta, 1976).

34. See the poster displayed in Brescia on the occasion of the 1975 regional elections produced by the Italian Social Movement and the National Right [DN, *Destra Nazionale*], signed by Saipem Cassino Roma 1975.

35. Lega and Santerini, *Strage di Brescia*, 93. [Giorgio Almirante was an Italian politician belonging to the National Fascist Party (PNF, *Partito Nazionale Fascista*) in the 30s and 40s before helping to found the MSI in 1946. He served as Secretary General of the MSI from 1969-1987.—Trans.]

In the MSI manifesto homosexuality (associated with *communism* instead of *Judaism*) is associated with *madness*, to *thievery*, to *common delinquency*: it is therefore a *crime*.

I'm not trying to suggest, here, that the context of elaboration of the *message* cited above and that of the MSI's *manifesto* are the *same*. I simply want to emphasize that the *vocabulary* used by both documents registers a profound *homogeneity* of views, which gives rise to a stigmatization of homosexuality that has its direct forefather in the *ideology* that presided over the massacres of the Nazi death camps.

It is no wonder that in a city in which a very bloody massacre comes to fruition under the cover (at least apparently so) of similar *ideologies*, still today homosexuals are often brutally persecuted and beaten, as they say, in their traditional meeting spots (like *Parco del Castello*). Nazi-Fascism, before its political associations, is born in the *depths* of society's own psychological fabric. A society that does not even succeed in being neo-capitalistically *permissive* is necessarily operational within neo-Nazi-Fascism: just look at Pasolini's assassination and all those who, less visible than he, have died without even being recognized by the news.

The germ of fascism can be found wherever homosexuality is persecuted, in whatever manner it may occur; even if the stigmatizer *claims* themselves to be anti-fascist.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Luciano Parinetto (1934-2001) published *The Body and Revolution in Marx: Death, the Devil, and Analogy* in 1977, when both Italian Marxist philosophy and politics were in crisis. It was a moment when the Italian Communist Party (PCI) was under heavy scrutiny by the energy of a growing wave of extra-parliamentary movements on the left. Parinetto preferred to characterize himself as a "marxian," rather than a Marxist or a communist, believing that Marx provides insight not only into the functions of capital, but also the inherent relationality of the human subject. He distanced himself from what was, in his view, the rigidity of dialectical materialism and the consequent masculinist attitudes of many Italian Marxists in those years by working extensively on Marx's philosophy of nature and the human. Prior works include a conceptual exposition of alienation in the German philosophical tradition,

entitled *The Notion of Alienation in Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx* (1968), and a study of Marx and religion, entitled *Neither God nor Capital: Marx, Marxism, Religion* (1976). *The Body and Revolution in Marx* critiques the mechanisms of social and psychic repression built into the orthodoxy of the Italian political left, a repressive architectonics not unlike that of fascism itself.

To understand the target of this critique, one must understand the position of the Italian left at the time of publication. The PCI gained considerable strength during the resistance movement against the Italian Social Republic from 1943 to 1945, and despite not having won an electoral majority in the elections of 1946 and 1948, it was influential in the cultural politics of postwar Italy. Between the late 1940s and the 1970s, Italy underwent a period of dramatic economic development, making it a leading European industrial power, and causing a major shift

in the development of various industries, including automobile, film, and television production. As postwar capitalist modes of production flourished, the PCI held onto its electoral power as the second-largest political party in the country (after the center-right Christian Democrats), and the largest communist party in Western Europe. They maintained this position in government until the end of the 1970s, thus forcing the party to respond to radical cultural and lifestyle shifts as a result of over three decades' worth of economic development. The PCI preached personal austerity as a combative measure to the transformation of Italy's mass culture and the morally dubious capitalist-driven pleasure economies that resulted. In a 1978 interview, the PCI's economic spokesperson, Giorgio Amendola, framed this strategy both as a form of personal

emancipation and morality, and a way to work towards progressive political gains: "We [...] want to push forward certain criteria which are not only economic but also moral, of a working class which does not want to imitate the bourgeoisie but which wants to acquire a new, more collective and more fraternal way of living."ⁱ

Such policy positions were, for Parinetto, a betrayal of the communist promise of true emancipation. The capitalist-driven culture of postwar Italy was dangerous, he thought, not only because it turned workers into consumers, but because it turned the communist party into a religious institution that incorporated bourgeois moral procedures of religious didacticism. In Parinetto's formulation, the PCI had become like the Church preaching to its "believers:"

The sale of Marx brought out by revisionists has in turn become,

i. Cited from David Forgacs, "The Communist Party and Culture," in *Culture and Conflict in Postwar Italy: Essays on Mass and Popular Culture*, edited by Zygmunt Barański and Robert Lumley (New York: St. Martin's Press), 103-104.

by an irony of history, *RELIGION*: so much so that one of the major spokespeople of this electorally won revisionistic church, Saint Amendola, has been able to address workers (transformed into *believers*) with a *Lutheran* homily concerning the *faith* built into *needless* sacrifice, without guarantees, “without opposition,” waiting for *god-capital* to demonstrate its arbitrary benevolence and save them.ⁱⁱ

Parinetto wanted to break up the revisionist rhetoric touted by the PCI in order to advance a heterodox reading of Marxist revolutionary theory. This he did by revisiting Marx’s early polemical writings on the human (e.g. *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, *The Holy Family*,

and *German Ideology*), and putting them in conversation with Freudian psychoanalysis. In doing so, his arguments are in dialogue with those thinkers who deeply influenced the New Left: Wilhelm Reich, Herbert Marcuse, and Norman O. Brown. Moreover, Parinetto found key interlocutors in Deleuze and Guattari, whose *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972) shapes many of his arguments in this book.

Parinetto’s philosophy is thus attuned to a current of thinking often described as Marxist humanism, insofar as he centers his analysis on the concept of a subject through the relational matrix of the body, rather than decentering subjectivity within the project of emancipation (for which Louis Althusser’s antihumanist structural Marxism provocatively argued).

ii. Luciano Parinetto, “Premessa,” in *Corpo e rivoluzione in Marx: morte diavolo analità* (Milano: Mimesis, 2015), 23. The emphases are Parinetto’s and the translation is mine. Notably, the theme of religious orthodoxy is a core focus of Parinetto’s oeuvre, dealt with at length in his *The Notion of Alienation in Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx and Neither God nor Capital* mentioned above. Unfortunately, none of this work is yet available in English.

In so doing, Parinetto's focus on the body also departs from that of Marxist-Leninists, such as Mario Tronti in *Workers and Capital*, who view the body in terms of labor power—a predominantly masculine concept. Marxist-Leninists retained the rigidity of a social vision split between base, structure, and superstructure, maintaining that issues relating to gender and sexuality would be resolved after the revolution. Parinetto is largely in agreement with Italian feminist critiques of this view: a revolution that does not consider the capacity of the female (or in Parinetto's view, the perverse, "transsexual") body, does not a revolution make. Parinetto turns away from these predominant Marxist positions, as well as many Italian feminist thinkers, in order to bring out the repressed and abject elements of

corporeality—the erotic, the perverse, sexuality, anality—elements either neglected by Marxist philosophy, or temporally relegated to "after" the revolution.

To date there exists no introduction to, or study of, Parinetto's philosophical thought in English. Even in Italy, Parinetto is almost entirely unknown, even though both his journalistic and philosophical output was prolific. His memory has survived in large part through the editorial and authorial efforts of Nicoletta Poidimani and Manuele Bellini, both of whom were Parinetto's students at the University of Milan.ⁱⁱⁱ In describing her teacher, Nicoletta Poidimani has quoted the Greek philosopher Diogenes: "Some people were laughing at him because he was walking backwards beneath the portico. Diogenes replied: 'Aren't

iii. Of interest here are three volumes that introduce and explicate some of the main themes of his work: Nicoletta Poidimani, ed., *Luciano Parinetto: l'utopia di un eretico* (Milano: Mimesis, 2005); Manuele Bellini, ed., *Corpo e rivoluzione. Sulla filosofia di Luciano Parinetto: con la bibliografia complete della sua opera* (Milano: Mimesis, 2012), and Manuele Bellini, *Dialettica del diverso. Marxismo e antropologia in Luciano Parinetto* (Milano: Mimesis, 2018).

you ashamed to reproach me for walking backward; you who walk backward through life's journey?" Parinetto often relied on this quote in his teaching, she writes. For him, it "underscores the pedagogical function of the 'other' (*diverso*), who mirrors other people's 'normality,' which he understood as misery. And he would make this point while walking backward, signifying his own alterity with his body, with this bodily gesture."^{iv} In this short excerpt from the resplendent *The Body and Revolution in Marx*, it is precisely the perverse body, a body that deviates from a "normal" path, which figures as Parinetto's central point of concern.

LUCIANO PARINETTO (1934-2001) was an Italian philosopher, poet, and music and literary critic. He taught philosophy at the University of Milan, and is remembered by his students as a "heretic" for his

dissent from commonly held philosophical assumptions and styles. Drawing on German idealism, Enlightenment philosophy, alchemical thought, and contemporary postmodern critique, Parinetto's writing attempts to loosen the rigidity of theoretical orthodoxy. His most enduring and imaginative engagements are with Marx.

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iv. Poidimani, "L'utopia di un eretico," 7. Translation mine.