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Ideology, Subjectivation, and the Dialectics of the
Plane of Immanence: Prolegomena to Future
Revolutionary Theory

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Abstract

The capitalist mode of production is tantamount to a mode of subjectivation. Ideological objects, discursive formations, artifactuality, disciplinary apparatuses and mnemotechnologies all contribute to the determination of subjects within the capital-relation. This thesis examines just how this is possible. Through the work of Foucault, Althusser, Marx, Derrida, Stiegler, Donati and other social theorists an account of ideology and subjectivation is developed which argues that processes of material production and processes of subjective development are not mutually exclusive. Rather the capital-relation reproduces itself dialectically through objective and subjective transformations. This study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter articulates a relationship between ideological analysis and relational sociology. The second chapter argues for the identity of the mode of production and the mode of subjectivation. The third chapter deals expressly with subjectivation in advanced capitalism. The final chapter details the dynamics between the forces and relations of subjectivation and the immanent contradictions between time, space, nature, and technology within the capitalist mode of production.

Introduction

Sociality is inherently dialectical. The recognition of this fact is being registered in much contemporary sociological debate. Ideology too is dialectical, indeed, the very activity of sociality is mediated through various ideological constructs. In chapter one I consider the relationship between classical ideological analysis, and the contemporary paradigm of relational sociology. I contend that ideological objects can be cogently understood from a relational perspective.

Chapter two develops these arguments further and examines the conditions for the development of subjectivity within the capitalist mode of production. Here I argue that Marx also considered aspects of what Foucault called ‘subjectivation’ and that the particular processes of subjectivation within capitalist society also are a necessary part of its ideology. I look at specific processes of subjectivation as they are constituted through time, specifically, the value of labour time in capitalism.

The most recent forms of subjectivation in advanced capitalism are described in chapter three. The work of Derrida, Stiegler and some members of Frankfurt school are presented, as well as the work of Carcedi and others to argue that changes in capitalist production have necessitated changes in processes of subjectivation.

The fourth and final chapter examines the contradictions of capitalist production through the objects of time, space, technology, and nature. Each of these objects is dialectically related to the other and society can be viewed as the means by which sociality is expressed through these objects.