

## DIVORCING IDEOLOGY FROM MARXISM AND MARXISM FROM IDEOLOGY: SOME PROBLEMS<sup>1</sup>

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*For David Roselli*

Accounts of ideology usually give a nod to Antoine Destutt de Tracy and Napoleon for the earliest recorded uses, then skip to Hegel and Marx for serious elaboration of the foundations of the contemporary use of the term.<sup>2</sup> While a wide range of other conceptualizations have spun off these foundations, I think it is fair to say that the most sophisticated contemporary theorizations of ideology have come from avowed Marxists. In this paper, I wish to explore the relationship between ideology as a focus of analysis, class warfare as its presupposition in Marxist theory, and taking sides in class struggle. I will argue that in treatments of classical antiquity, serious consequences—in some cases, serious contradictions—arise when Marxists lack an adequate conceptualization of ideology, when non-Marxists appropriate Marx-inspired theories of ideology without accepting fundamental Marxist presuppositions, or when non-Marxists feel compelled to carry on residual cold-war polemics to distance themselves as far as possible from the “taint” of Marxism.

Since the term “ideology” is, as David McLellan points out, itself an “essentially contested concept” (1986.1) and, therefore, by no means self-explanatory, let me attempt very briefly to sketch what I take to be some essential features of a properly Marxist concept of ideology.<sup>3</sup> Central

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1 Thanks to Steven Tuck for comments on an earlier version of this text.

2 E.g., Larrain 1979.24–34, Parekh 1982.1–7, McLellan 1986.5–9, Eagleton 1991.66–70.

3 Here I cannibalize my own discussion in Rose 1997.157f.

to such an analysis is the *relational* nature of class. Classes only emerge and become conscious of themselves as classes in a society characterized by serious conflicts over control of the material means of production, over human relations in the actual processes of production, and over the distribution of the fruits of production. Ideology is accordingly relational and a function of class conflict; it is not simply the worldview of one class or group viewed *in isolation*. As Fredric Jameson comments: "Ideology is designed to promote the human dignity and clear conscience of a given class at the same time that it discredits their adversaries; indeed, these two operations are one and the same" (1971.380).

It is certainly true that the term ideology is most often used by both Marxists and non-Marxists to mean the ideology of the dominant group because, as Marx pointed out, "the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production" (Marx-Engels 1976a.5.59). Alternative ideologies attain explicit articulation only in periods of grave crisis. But because class struggle, in the words of the *Communist Manifesto*, entails "an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight" (Marx-Engels 1976b.6.482), what generates ideology is a perceived threat to the interests of one class from the aspirations of a class opposed to it.

In addition to being relational, ideology functions by *persuasion* rather than force. Antonio Gramsci worked out this aspect in terms of an opposition between "hegemony" and "domination"—the dual process by which a dominant group seeks, first, to persuade those subject to its will of the inevitability and, where possible, the justice of their subjugation, and secondly, to enforce the dominant group's discipline (Hoare and Smith 1971.12). Louis Althusser elaborated Gramsci's concept by distinguishing the "ideological state apparatuses" (such institutions as the media, the schools, churches) from the "repressive state apparatuses" (the police, army, and courts) (1971.127–86). Because ideological apparatuses function by persuasion, they are inherently sites of struggle (1971.147, cf. 185).

Althusser's more original contribution to the theory of persuasion in ideological struggle is his notion of "interpellation" (1971.170–77), from the Latin *interpellare*, to "hail" or "accost" someone. Ideological apparatuses offer individuals a loaded version of their identities: politicians hail their audience as "my fellow Americans," priests address their audience as "fellow Catholics," while evangelicals address "true believers" or "born-again believers." To the extent that these audiences acquiesce in these in-

terpellations, they internalize the ideological positions associated with the interpellations.

This emphasis on persuasion in ideology implies that one's opponents' needs, desires, and values are not simply ignored, they are somehow redefined or mystified in terms acceptable to those opponents or shown to be by their nature "impossible" of fulfillment. Thus in the very heart of a dominant ideology, there are discernible, if distorted, *traces* of the alternatives against which the ideology is deployed. Ambiguity is, therefore, a central feature of a dominant ideology since, as noted by Jameson above, it is designed to sustain the positive self-conception of the dominant group and, at the same time, to co-opt, silence, or neutralize the perceived opposition.

A final related consequence of this ambiguity is that ideology is not simply propaganda, which is preeminently *conscious* manipulation (though it may often overlap with it), because ideology's goal is not only the subjugation of an underclass but the fostering of the self-esteem of the dominate group. Thus it is a self-serving set of deeply held, often unconscious beliefs. The great French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss was asked at the age of eighty what he retained from Marx. He replied: "Only a few lessons from Marx's teaching have stayed with me—above all, that consciousness lies to itself" (Lévi-Strauss and Eribon 1991.108). This formulation seems to me to capture neatly the ambiguity between the unconscious nature of much ideology and its obviously self-serving character.

Let me now turn to my main topic, a critique of what I believe are inadequate appropriations of Marxist notions of ideology. I have chosen as examples two explicitly Marxist authors and two authors who make some use of Marx-inspired accounts of ideology while rigorously repudiating any connection with Marxism. I will try to demonstrate that the projects of each of these scholars—projects concerned with issues of ideology that eminently lend themselves to Marxist analysis—are significantly diminished by either inadequate models of ideology, in the case of the committed Marxist authors, or, in the case of the throwback cold warriors, by the failure to exploit fully the Marxist models they treat so gingerly. My choice of authors (with the exception of Ando) reflects, in part, my own Hellenic specialization, but, more importantly, it reflects these authors' explicitness about their methodology—a quality not so common in classical scholarship.<sup>4</sup>

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4 I should perhaps point out the circumstances under which I moved out of my own primarily Hellenist and literary concentration to presume to discuss Clifford Ando's historical

Geoffrey de Ste. Croix's monumental *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* is 732 pages long. It explores not only the theoretical grounds for its title in one long section (1981.3–111), but also an extraordinary wealth of historical evidence spanning the archaic age in Greece through the fall of the Roman empire. However, the section entitled "Class Struggle on the Ideological Plane" covers this aspect of class struggle in this vast period in a mere forty-four pages. Greek literature before Plato in the fourth century B.C. is dismissed in fewer than four pages (411–14), and even these are full of Plato. De Ste. Croix's deep learning, intelligence, and passionate commitment are clear throughout. Despite an excellent quote from Eugene Genovese about ideology (de Ste. Croix 1981.411, Genovese 1972.33) that he cites only to ignore, most of his discussion of ideology is based on a simple "brainwashing" and "propaganda" model (de Ste. Croix 1981.411, these are his ironic terms), a reflectionist approach almost indistinguishable from the relatively rare occasions when positivist ancient historians discuss the "ideas" of a period. Only the most hardy of readers would wish de Ste. Croix's book any longer, but for those of us who teach Greek literature, his approach appears to leave us with the dreary options of denouncing the class character of virtually everything we teach or perpetuating his vision of the university as "a place where the governing class seeks to propagate and perpetuate its ideology" (411).

Ellen Meiksins Wood, no less passionately committed a Marxist than de Ste. Croix, offers us in *Peasant-Citizen and Slave* (1988) a spirited defense of Athenian democracy.<sup>5</sup> Her brief comments there about Plato (esp. 145–46, 171–72) are at a level of abstraction that renders serious comment perhaps superfluous. In her earlier work, *Class Ideology and Ancient Political*

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work on the Roman empire. I was invited by Rufus Fears to be the keynote speaker on the general topic of ideology at a conference on Roman Imperial Ideology he organized at Cumae, Italy in the spring of 2003. I informed Professor Fears that I would confine my discussion to Hellenic examples; but on the advice of my colleague Steven Tuck, I read Ando's book, which Tuck rightly described as unusually explicit in its use of contemporary theoretical models of ideology, in anticipation of the questions on methodology that I expected to be raised at the conference. Subsequently, at the request of Professor Fears, I spent the following summer preparing a version of my talk that he hoped to publish as part of a collection of the conference papers. This was the context of my adding a discussion of Ando's work. When that prospect of publication vanished, I eventually submitted the text to *Arethusa*. I point this out to emphasize that the bulk of my analysis antedated the well-deserved Goodwin award presented in January 2004.

5 Her work is warmly endorsed by Ober 1996.123f.

*Theory* (1978, written with Neal Wood), which by its very title proclaims the centrality of ideology to her project, she displays the sort of crude reflectionism in her more sustained treatment of Plato that makes Marxism very easy to dismiss. In a chapter entitled “Socrates: Saint of Counter-Revolution,” she offers a string of paraphrases gleaned helter-skelter from Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, Plato’s *Euthyphro*, *Alcibiades I*, *Laches*, *Apology*, *Gorgias*, *Meno*, *Crito*, *Charmides*, and even the *Phaedo* to summarize what she dubs “Socrates’ political ideology” (1978.94–103, my emphasis). She then proceeds to show us how “Socrates’ principle philosophic recommendations . . . reflect the anti-democratic political ideology just outlined” (103); Socrates’ concern with definition is “open only to those who possess the leisure and intellect necessary for a life of continual questioning and analysis” (104); Socrates’ famous paradox that “knowledge is virtue” is pronounced “highly intellectualist” and “therefore . . . beyond the attainment of the many” (105); finally, as far as the soul is concerned, we learn sadly that “it is only for the few with the leisure for critical self-examination under the guidance of a ‘doctor of the soul’ . . . who can improve their souls and truly master their bodies” (108).

Wood’s blithe indifference to concerns with distinguishing Socrates’ voice from Plato’s (Guthrie 1971.29–35), to questions of the forms of Platonic dialogic discourse, and the complexities of chronology and development within Plato’s thought—not to mention Plato’s profound contributions to the very concept of radical critique<sup>6</sup>—present us with a simple black and white picture: shame on any of us so benighted and elitist as to have been fooled into taking Plato seriously!

More recently in numerous diatribes in her brief role as editor of *Monthly Review* and in several books (Wood 1986, 1995), Wood declares militant war against all contemporary theory she dubs “postmodern”—thus depriving Marxism of the very supplements that have allowed Althusser, Eagleton, Jameson, and Žižek, for example, to carry forward so impressively the project of ideological analysis.<sup>7</sup> It is precisely the subtlety and persuasive

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6 In my chapter on Plato’s *Republic* (Rose 1992.331–69), I attempt what I hope is a more nuanced appreciation of the radical negations and liberatory utopian elements in Plato. Ober 1998.156–62 offers a useful short overview of the complexities perceived by various scholars in assessing Socrates’ and Plato’s political views.

7 This is not to suggest that Marxists have not had good reasons to engage critically with many aspects of what is so widely and loosely dubbed as “postmodernism.” See, for example, Eagleton’s vigorous critique in Wood’s collection (1997.17–25) and Jameson’s magisterial

force of these theorists that have tempted a number of non-Marxist classicists to apply their work to the study of classical texts.<sup>8</sup>

Josiah Ober's most influential work, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People*, is centrally concerned with ideology. He claims some affinity with Althusser (Ober 1989.40), and Gramsci's term "hegemony" is on almost every page. Explicit references to Gramsci in a later text suggest that Ober erroneously associates him with the concept of "false consciousness" (1996.26). Gramsci's own more nuanced term was "contradictory consciousness" (Forgacs 1988.333–34). Ober also seems to be under the impression that, for Gramsci, hegemony was solely a matter of elite control of the masses (Ober 1996.154). Yet a major concern of the *Prison Notebooks* is precisely developing a basis for a genuine proletarian hegemony, where the notion of ideological struggle across a broad spectrum of public discourses becomes central to carrying on class warfare in a period—such as the Fascist period in Italy—when direct confrontation is not feasible.<sup>9</sup>

Gramsci's concept of the "organic intellectual" as a crucial factor in this process might trigger Ober's wariness about what he calls the "intellectualist fallacy" (1996.132, see below), but it might also help to complicate

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overview in his *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991). What I point to here is the sweeping, often flatly anti-intellectual character of Wood's dismissals, her refusal to engage seriously, for example, with Freud (not to mention Lacan) or with the structuralist and post-structuralist focus on linguistics—areas that Eagleton (e.g., 1996), Jameson (e.g., 1972 and 1988), and Žižek (1994b, 2000) take very seriously.

- 8 Thalmann 1998 displays perhaps the fullest engagement with Marxist concepts of ideology by a non-Marxist classicist of whom I am aware. While I find some problems in his working out of his analysis (see Rose 1999a), his work is entirely free of the residual cold-war dismissiveness of Marx in Ober and Ando.
- 9 The whole discussion of "Machiavelli and the Modern Prince" (Hoare and Smith 1971.123–205) explores how a proper "Communist" Party should create the hegemony of the masses. The concept of the "organic" intellectual, in particular, points to the necessity of developing genuinely "'new' intellectuals who have come out of the new situation and are not a continuation of the preceding intellectual milieu." Their "task . . . is to determine and organize the reform of moral and intellectual life" (Hoare and Smith 1971.452–53). So, too, the whole critique of "common sense" (Hoare and Smith 1971.419–25) points to the necessity of forging a philosophy appropriate for "a class some of whose strata still have a Ptolemaic conception of the world [scil. from Catholicism, cf. Hoare and Smith 1971.420] that can none the less be the representative of a very advanced historical situation. Ideologically backward (or at least in certain aspects of their conception of the world, which remains disconnected and ingenuous), these strata are nevertheless very advanced on a practical level, in terms, that is, of economic and political function" (Hoare and Smith 1971.453).

Ober's simple dichotomy of mass and elite. Gramsci was, of course, aware that, in a class society where a radical division between manual and intellectual work is a given, class allegiance is not a simple deduction from the economic stratum into which one is born and that working-class struggles by and for the working class have been both immeasurably advanced and retarded by the intervention of theorists drawn from what Ober designates as the elite. Ober's admiration for Demosthenes, for example, might be articulated precisely in terms of Gramsci's concept of the organic intellectual.

Indeed, if one indulges in a now questionable teleological mode of criticism that assumes the end of a work reveals its pervasive intentions, one would have to conclude that refuting Marx was a major goal of Ober's enterprise. Page 339, the very last page of *Mass and Elite*, offers the following summation: "The thesis that the masses controlled the upper classes through ideological means . . . inverts the traditional Marxist approach to ideology and raises the possibility that lower classes can achieve major changes in the organization of society *without overt struggle on the material plane*. Hence, the assessment of the nature of Athenian democracy offered here may present an alternative to both ancient and Marxist—as well as modern elitist—conclusions on the fundamental relationship between politics and society" (1989.339, my emphasis). A footnote on the next to last page of *Mass and Elite* informs us: "I have deliberately used Gramsci's term to describe a situation which is in some ways an inversion of the one Gramsci himself saw as pertaining in modern capitalist societies" (1989.338 n. 65).

Certainly a key contention throughout Ober's work is that a distinguishing feature of Athenian democracy was the demos's acceptance of a trade-off: in return for winning political control, the demos, in effect, agreed to leave the unequal property relations virtually untouched (1996.27, 90–91, 119, and *passim*). This is an absolutely central point. It would be hard to overestimate the appeal of the idea that there *could* be genuine, effective democratic control of political life without any threat to the material privileges of the elite, without any significant demand for redistribution of the socially produced economic surplus. This entails an extraordinarily—but, alas, all too American—naïve acceptance of the complete separation of the political and economic spheres. I think Ober achieves this feat by what Marxist Pierre Macherey (1978) would call a structured silence. By concentrating heavily on forensic rhetoric and limiting his discussion of overtly political deliberative rhetoric to the tropes of self-presentation, Ober studiously avoids any discussion of the class content of the specific issues that were debated by the orators.

I would argue that the major issue, the major structured silence of Ober's work, is the issue of empire. Ober has a quite appealing affection for the Athenian democracy that leads him here to part company with a scholar to whom he is in other respects deeply and repeatedly indebted, M. I. Finley. Ober is at pains to defend democracy from Finley's conclusion that the wealth of empire was a decisive factor in holding open class warfare at bay in the fifth century.<sup>10</sup> Ober's response to this uncomfortable concept takes the form of a passionate anaphora: "Between 403 and 322 Athens had no empire, no major sociopolitical reforms, no Pericles—and also no oligarchic coups, no demands for redistribution of wealth, and no collapse of the assembly's ability to guide the state" (Ober 1989.100, cf. 23–24). This line of argument, though immediately a response to Finley (Ober 1989.23), essentially follows the thinking of A. H. M. Jones.<sup>11</sup> It seems to me, however, that Jones's formulation has a couple of virtues missing from Ober's. Jones at least mentions the obvious problem for his argument of the existence of the Second Athenian League, which *never* appears in Ober's text. Although earlier in his argument, Ober echoes Jones's point about the *expansion* of state financial obligations to the poor (24), in the passage cited above, he goes out of his way to reject *any* suggestion that internal class conflict had any impact at all on domestic or foreign policy decisions in fourth-century Athens.

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10 His words deserve extensive quoting: "It is a remarkable fact that Athens was free of civil strife, barring two incidents during the Peloponnesian War, for nearly two centuries; free even from the traditional harbinger of civil war, demands for the cancellation of debts and redistribution of the land. The explanation, I believe, is that during the long period when the full democratic system was fashioned, there was extensive distribution of public funds, in the navy and in pay for jury duty, public office and membership in the Council, as well as the relatively large land settlement programme in subject territory . . . What I am arguing, in effect, is that the full democratic system of the second half of the fifth century B.C. would not have been introduced had there been no Athenian Empire . . . I hold the empire to have been a necessary condition for the Athenian type of democracy" (Finley 1988.86–87).

11 Jones wished to address the long-standing charge that payment for jury duty and other functions of the democracy—which he calls "an essential part of the system"—"was provided by the tribute paid by Athens' allies in the Delian league, and that the democracy was therefore parasitic on the empire." Jones responded by declaring "there is a very simple answer, that the democracy continued to function in the fourth century when Athens had lost her empire; the Second Athenian League, which lasted effectively only from 377 to 357, was never a paying proposition, the contributions of the allies by no means covering the cost of military and naval operations. And not only did the democracy continue to function, but a new and important form of pay, that for attendance in the assembly, was introduced early in the century" (Jones 1964.5).



To simply state of the fourth century, as Ober does more than once, that “Athens had no empire” (Ober 1989.100, cf. 24; 1996.20) is, I think, at the very least a bit disingenuous.<sup>12</sup> The fact that Athens did not ultimately *succeed* in regaining the kind of exploitative ascendancy over other cities that it enjoyed in the fifth century does not diminish the fact that extraordinary energies were expended by Athens to acquire such ascendancy, and, even when that proved impossible, the consciousness of itself as an imperial power and the obsession with control over access to the Pontic region remained. As G. L. Cawkwell puts it: “Athenian desire to recover her fifth-century imperial power is a major theme of the fourth” (1981.47).<sup>13</sup> Ernst Badian borrows a metaphor from Toynbee to speak of fourth-century Athens as “haunted by the ghost” of its fifth-century empire. Moreover, the loss of empire in 404 B.C. is precisely the context for understanding the proposal of Agyrrhios to institute pay for attendance at the assembly or the life-and-death struggle over the theoric fund, both of which, in my view, pace Ober, constitute quite significant demands for redistribution of wealth and

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12 To be sure, in an earlier work (1985), Ober at least acknowledges rather grudgingly that “in the fourth century, Athens regained a number of allies and engaged in activities which can be construed as imperialistic” (15). Arguing, like Jones (see preceding note), that “the so-called empire of the fourth century never showed a net profit” (15) is really irrelevant to assessing the goals of fourth-century Athens. On this Ober is unequivocal: the “Second Naval League,” as he dubs it, is in his view simply part of the “defensivism” (2 and *passim*) that he considers the dominant concern of fourth-century Athenian foreign policy. Thus it is no surprise that he endorses Cargill’s book on *The Second Athenian League* (1981), a work rightly subjected to harsh criticism indeed by Hornblower 1982.

13 I would argue that the history of Athens in the fourth century until her decisive defeat by Macedon suggests some striking continuities in the perception of foreign policy “realities”—what I would call a continuing imperialist consciousness—with fifth- and, perhaps, even sixth-century foreign policy objectives. I would argue, further, that these objectives arose to a significant degree from the displacement of internal class conflict over the distribution of the social surplus (cf. Rose 1999b), and, finally, that Demosthenes, in the whole series of his public orations, but particularly those initiated by the First Philippic, offers the clearest evidence for the persistence of that imperialist consciousness—despite the apparent complete bankruptcy of fourth-century Athenian imperialism. The introduction in the fourth century of pay for attending the assembly has a clear class character, but Ober, while referring to it frequently (1989.24, 98, 133, 143), does not hint that it had any relation to class warfare. He completely ignores the protracted struggles over the theoric fund as also having a class character and gives no hint that there could be a class character to the death-struggle of democracy with Philip. In Ober’s exploration of the topoi of political rhetoric, no distinctions emerge between the supporters of Philip—Isocrates and Aeschines—and his fight-to-the death opponent Demosthenes.

are a perfect example of the sort of struggle Marx would designate “hidden” class warfare.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, if we do conclude that refuting Marxism is, in fact, a major impetus of Ober’s work, this may help us to understand what appears at first blush an extraordinary internal contradiction in his representation of the relations of mass and elite. At the climax of his chapter-long analysis of Demosthenes 21, which he sees as “an example of *how* the democratic regime can and *should* use the skills and attributes of the ‘good elite’ speaker in reasserting order” (1996.105, my emphasis on the normative *should*), Ober concludes his elaboration of this ideal relationship with a bludgeoning evocation of the nightmare alternative: “It was in this dynamic relationship between truth regime and individual initiator/orator that Athenian democracy existed. Without the common assumptions I have dubbed the ‘regime of truth,’ Athens would [have] been *no more than a mob of self-interested individuals*—and thus certainly have fallen prey to the endless round of debilitating *stasis* that characterized the histories of so many Greek poleis in the fourth century. Without the intervention of distinct voices and individual histories into the matrix of social assumptions, Athenian society would have been static and *nightmarish—an Orwellian ‘1984’ with the demos as Big Brother*” (1996.106, my emphasis).

Even if we leave aside the puzzling conception of “intervention . . . into the matrix of social assumptions,” this peculiarly extreme statement of the absolute dependence of the Athenian demos upon its elite speakers to save it from its own potential for totalitarian monstrousness sits oddly with Ober’s more familiar insistence on the real “control” (e.g., 1996.5 and passim) exercised by the demos and his vigorous denunciation of the “intellectualist fallacy” that insists on the trickle-down of aristocratic ideology (1996.132). I do not think, however, that this “nightmarish” vision is a mere passing slip. Rather, it reveals the residual cold-war imaginary that underlies Ober’s entire construction of Athenian democracy. The Stalinist

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14 The most familiar Marxist formulation—cited in part above—is in the opening sentences of *The Communist Manifesto*: “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes” (Marx-Engels 1976b.6.482). As emphasized at the outset of my argument, the operative words here are “uninterrupted, now hidden, now open.”

Soviet Union—dominated by an elite if ever a society was (see, for example, Roy Medvedev 1972)—is offered as a frightening exemplar of the demos in complete control, unrestrained by what Ober elsewhere dubs “that indispensable elite of competence” (1996.25). I can only note here the radical difference between this sort of “celebration” of democracy and Marx’s own deep enthusiasm for the full-scale democracy of the Paris Commune of 1871 (Marx-Engels 1986.22.307–55).<sup>15</sup>

I will end this brief survey by venturing outside the area of the predominantly Hellenic focus of my own life’s work to consider the awesome recent tome of Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*. I use the word “awesome” sincerely: the range and richness of evidence adduced seem to imply not the work of a thirty-one-year-old assistant professor (flyleaf) but the distillation of a long lifetime spent in potentially daunting fields such as numismatics, epigraphy, sculptural iconography, the history of early Christianity, and hundreds of years of imperial rhetoric—just to name a few. Moreover, whatever my critical questions about the working out or applications of his methodology, there is no denying the ambitiousness and sophistication of Ando’s approach and the general coherence of his argument. In a field where contemporary social theory is generally shunned like the plague, he has immersed himself in a rich and complex body of work by some of today’s most important—and most difficult—thinkers. My own training entitles me to offer no critical assessment of the vast documentation he provides in support of his argument, but the centrality of ideology to his thesis and the explicit use of a number of Marxist theorists in his elaboration of his theoretical model of ideology

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15 I offer a brief excerpt to suggest what radical democracy meant for Marx (Marx-Engels 1986.22.331, emphasis in original):

The Commune was formed of the municipal councilors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were naturally working men, of [sic] acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislature at the same time . . . The police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible, and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the Administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the [sic] public service had to be done at *workman’s wages*. The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves. Public functions ceased to be the private property of the tools of the Central Government. Not only municipal administration, but the whole initiative hitherto exercised by the State was laid into the hands of the Commune.

make his work eminently relevant to the argument of my text here. At the same time, the complexity of the models he has chosen and the scope of his argument require rather fuller engagement with the underlying assumptions of those models and the ways in which they are deployed.

Ando begins with a categorical dismissal of interest in all forms of resistance to Roman rule: “Studies of resistance and insurrection abound, but they *invariably* reinforce our view of the empire’s history as one of actively appreciative prosperity, punctuated only rarely by purely local disturbances” (2000.1, my emphasis). He thus dismisses the very possibility of examining dialectically the evidence of responses of Rome’s subject peoples (Mattingly 1997.10, with important bibliography) and asserts that “belief in divine sanction for Roman conquest *inevitably* endowed the ideal of an eternal empire with a certain currency. The acceptance of this ideal had the practical outcome of debasing the ideals of rebellion, freedom, and self-determination” (2000.66, my emphasis). The process by which this belief emerged, where, and to what extent, is taken for granted here, and the alleged belief underpins a more aggressive, highly moralistic dismissal of *any* comparison of ancient and modern empires: “It is arrogance born of luxury that leads us to equate civilization with barbarism, or to patronize subject populations with deterministic ideologies of rebellion” (67). If I understand this tirade, anyone who thinks there are useful insights to be gained by ancient historians studying resistance to modern empires is guilty of arrogance, a patronizing attitude, and determinism.

The primary question to which Ando addresses his study is: “Why did the empire last so long?” (2000.xiii). His answer, as his title suggests, entails spelling out in very rich detail the success of imperial ideology in eliciting the loyalty of the provinces. Though Gramsci is never mentioned in Ando’s text, Ando’s fundamental emphasis on the priority of successful propagation of ideology in lieu of domination clearly derives, I believe, from Gramsci via Althusser, who explicitly cites Gramsci as the only point of departure for his own explorations of ideology (Althusser 1971.142 n. 7). Althusser, though explicitly criticized early in Ando’s methodological chapter, emerges as a central influence behind Ando’s pervasive focus on “ideological state apparatuses” (e.g., 2000.41).

In his preface, Ando offers this brief account of his methodology: “I construct my argument in a contemporary idiom, drawing above all on the work of Max Weber and his successors, Pierre Bourdieu and Jürgen Habermas not least among them” (2000.xii). Nowhere does he spell out the grounds for describing either Bourdieu or Habermas as “successors” of

Max Weber: they could as easily—and, I will argue, better—be described as successors of Marx.<sup>16</sup> Ando, however, begins his discussion of ideology proper where Ober ends his, with a sweeping repudiation of Marxist approaches to ideology: “Ideology—at least from a Marxist perspective—is an omnihistorical reality, existing primarily to propagate the working class’s submission to the rules of the established order” (20).<sup>17</sup> Citing Althusser, he amplifies this point: “Ideology thus operates effectively because even its critics are ‘always already subjects, and as such constantly practice the rituals of ideological recognition’” (Ando 2000.20, citing Althusser 1970

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16 See below for Habermas. Wacquant, for example, argues that: “The relational perspective that forms the core of his [Bourdieu’s] sociological vision is not new. It is part and parcel of a broad, ‘polyphyletic and polymorphous’ structuralist tradition . . . that can be traced back to Durkheim and Marx. Its most succinct and clearest expression was perhaps given by Karl Marx when he wrote in *Die Grundrisse* (1971.77): ‘Society does not consist of individuals; it expresses the sum of connections and relationships in which individuals find themselves’” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992.16). Bourdieu himself states categorically in what I would call Marxist terms the basis for my fundamental objection to Ando’s substantially one-sided picture: “I do not see how relations of domination, whether material or symbolic, could possibly operate without implying, activating resistance. *The dominated, in any social universe, can always exert a certain force*” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992.80, emphasis in original).

It seems to me that Ando’s occasional glances at the way some provincials could turn the imperial system to their advantage (e.g., 73f.) is scarcely an adequate account of the resistance of the dominated or the force they exerted. On a related issue, Bourdieu, in his critique of another social theorist, specifically distances himself from Weber: “Just like Weber before him, Elias always fails to ask who benefits and who suffers from the monopoly of the state” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992.93). In this, I would say, Ando is all too much a follower of Weber.

17 Ironically, this would be a not-too-inaccurate description of Bourdieu’s analysis of schooling in his *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (1977). Consider, for example, the following: “The different types of structure of the educational specifications of the *essential functions of producing durable, transposable dispositions (habitus) incumbent on every educational system*, do indeed only assume their full significance when brought into relation with the different types of structure of the system of functions, themselves *inseparable from the different states of the balance of power between the groups or classes by and for whom these functions are realized*” (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977.179, my emphasis). Marx was quite clear that traditional societies that do not produce a significant surplus or in which the surplus is more or less equally shared do not have classes as such and therefore do not have ideologies in the negative, class-based sense. See Lévi-Strauss’s impassioned self-defense on this point, supported with repeated citations from Marx (1963.332–33). Bourdieu, who developed his concept of *habitus* primarily from his study of traditional Berber society, in his *Outline*, shifts the focus there from classes to gender- and age-groups (1977, e.g., 62, 163, 165). But in *Reproduction* (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977), as well as in *Distinction* (1984), class is his central focus.

[sic].172–73). His critique follows: “In its focus on *class*, such writing results in two critical forms of myopia. On the one hand, by concentrating on the subjugation of the proletariat, it can suggest that members of the bourgeoisie were not similarly situated within a social totality, indeed, within the same social totality” (2000.20, my emphasis).

I must confess that I find this particular argument utterly mystifying. In the first place, it is hard to think of a contemporary theorist more obsessively focused on class *and* the social totality than Bourdieu. Secondly, as far as I know, the greatest theoretician to focus repeatedly on “the social totality” is the Marxist Georg Lukács in his *History and Class Consciousness* (1971), a fundamental and purely Marxist assumption of which is that proletarians and bourgeois are inextricably part of the same social totality but have radically different interests within that totality.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the very insistence in Marx that classes are by definition relational implies precisely that they are part of the same social totality. Ando’s point, however, as I deduce it from his subsequent text, is that ideology is not primarily a *class* construct aimed at specific classes but a homogenizing discourse functioning on a purely individual basis.<sup>19</sup>

Ando’s critique proceeds: “On the other hand, by taking the fact of asymmetrical power relations for granted, historical inquiries often end merely by describing beliefs or texts as ideological, as though exposing them as such would in itself reveal their appeal and their enduring power.” For this point, a mysterious footnote cites Fredric Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious* (1981) without any specific page reference, so that we are left to wonder whether Ando believes Jameson also rejects a view of ideology as arising from “taking the fact of asymmetrical power relations for granted” or is himself an example of the alleged error. We are also left wondering whether Ando himself believes “asymmetrical power relations” were *not* a relevant factor in understanding Roman imperial history. If, however, his

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18 Martin Jay’s magisterial study, *Marxism and Totality* (1984), not only signals the centrality of Lukács in its subtitle (*The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*), but spells it out in impressive detail: e.g., “He is the founding father of Western Marxism, the theoretician who placed the category of totality at its heart” (85 and all of chapter 2).

19 It is striking that it is precisely Weber’s preference for focusing on individuals rather than structures that Bourdieu criticizes: “Marx and Durkheim are opposed to Weber in that by their methodological objectivism they counter the temptation to see in relations of force *inter-individual* relations of influence or domination and to represent the different forms of power (political, economic, religious, etc.) as so many sociologically undifferentiated modalities of *one agent’s* predominance (*Macht*) over another” (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977.4, my emphasis).

point is that some Marxist critics are guilty of simply pointing at some “beliefs or texts” as “ideological” without analyzing their actual appeals, I would agree; this is essentially my criticism of de Ste. Croix and Wood. But it is a poor critique that focuses on the worst examples of a given approach; Jameson, to whom Ando alludes so cursorily, offers one of the richest models of analysis of the appeal and enduring power of ideological texts, a model Ando might have applied with great benefit to his project. Very briefly, Jameson’s Marxist elaboration of the concept of a “double hermeneutic,” a concept adapted from the theologian Paul Ricoeur, enjoins critics of ideological constructs to search out both the utopian projections that constitute their appeal even to those being dominated and the various ways in which these constructs serve the interests of the dominant class.<sup>20</sup> Ando seems primarily to celebrate the utopian element and all too frequently to pass over in silence the self-serving aspects of Roman ruling-class ideology.

Ando continues with his critique of Marxist approaches: “Second, ideological discourse thus conceived presumes an untenable theory of subjectivity. On this view, ideological systems simply maintain themselves in accordance with functional imperatives, while social actors become cultural puppets, whose capacity for intention is circumscribed by plays of *différence* and whose statements bear no necessary referential relation to any existing state of affairs” (2000.20). A long footnote attacking Foucault and citing with apparent approval a rather silly book by Joe McCarney<sup>21</sup>

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20 For a fuller discussion of Jameson’s double hermeneutic, see Rose 1992.33–42.

21 I use this rather harsh term because the chapter to which Ando refers approvingly is devoted to trying to prove that Marx’s concept of ideology did not entail a notion of ideology as cognitive distortion. McCarney is well aware that the overwhelming majority of readers of Marx who consider this issue disagree with him (McCarney 1980.80; cf. the quote above from Lévi-Strauss about consciousness lying to itself). Certainly Bourdieu’s notion of the *habitus* is, like Marx’s concept of ideology, fundamentally unconscious, and it therefore distorts perception of reality: “The ‘unconscious’ is never anything other than the forgetting of history which history itself produces by incorporating the objective structures it produces in the second natures of *habitus*.” He amplifies this point with a long quote from Durkheim about “yesterday’s man” in each of us who “makes up the unconscious part of ourselves” (1977.78–79).

In a later text, again very much in the spirit of Marx, Bourdieu defines the liberatory potential of his form of sociology: “When you apply reflexive sociology to yourself, you open up the possibility of identifying true sites of freedom, and thus building small-scale, modest, practical morals in keeping with the scope of human freedom which, in my opinion, is not that large” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992.99). Finally, Ando himself goes on to credit Weber and his successors with explaining “how an individual within such a system can be led to *misrecognize* the objective conditions of his existence” (2000.21, my emphasis).



gives no clue why Marxists should be saddled with this caricature embellished with the French buzzword popularized by the distinctly unMarxist Jacques Derrida.<sup>22</sup> What sort of ideological analysis would be so vacuous as to claim that the “content,” so to speak, of any given ideological statement was somehow cut loose from “any existing state of affairs”? Moreover, to associate “cultural puppets” with Marxism is to ignore the subtlety of Marx’s own formulation of the relationship between human agency and historical forces beyond human control: “Human beings (*die Menschen*) make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past” (Marx-Engels 1979.11.103, slightly modified). Ironically, Bourdieu, embraced by Ando, departs most fully from Marx precisely in his pervasive pessimism and de facto determinism in spelling out the effectiveness of the *habitus* in subjugating the dominated classes.<sup>23</sup>

Moving to a positive description of his own model of ideology, Ando praises Bourdieu because he “has sought to distance his own theory of *habitus* and *doxa* from Marxist theories of ideology, and from the work of Louis Althusser in particular” (2000.21). This claim is supported by reference to a passage in which Bourdieu quibbles on a small point about “those

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22 To be sure, after years of apparently ignoring or dismissing Marx, Derrida, near the end of his life, wrote *Specters of Marx* (1994) in which he exhorts his readers to read Marx. But in so far as he is the theorist par excellence of the “play of *différance*,” he has nothing to do with Marxism or, rather—if one accepts Perry Anderson’s trenchant critique—he was a decisive figure in the demarxification of France in the 1970s and 80s (Anderson 1984.32–55). On the other hand, in his moving graveside tribute to Louis Althusser, he declares: “For thirty-eight years, my life has been linked in a thousand strange ways with that of Louis Althusser” (Kaplan and Sprinker 1993.241). The intimacy of French intellectual elite interactions never ceases to amaze.

23 See, for example, this argument from *Reproduction*: “The agents produced by PW [= pedagogic work] would not be *so totally prisoners* of the limitations which cultural arbitrary imposes on their thought and practice, were it not that, *contained within these limits* by self-discipline and self-censorship (the more *unconscious* to the extent that their principles have been internalized), they live out their thought and practice in the *illusion of freedom and universality*” (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977.40, my emphasis). One doesn’t come much closer than this to mere puppets. In a fascinating interview with the Marxist theorist Terry Eagleton in which Bourdieu, now 61 (i.e., in 1991), is at pains to stress his distance from traditional French Marxism, Bourdieu argues: “Even in the most economic tradition that we know, namely Marxism, I think the capacity for resistance, as a capacity of consciousness, was overestimated . . . I am seen as pessimistic, as discouraging the people, and so on. But I think it is better to know the truth” (Žižek 1994b.268).



who speak of ‘ideological apparatuses,’” but proceeds to endorse what I take to be one of Althusser’s major contributions: “Any analysis of ideologies, in the narrow sense of ‘legitimizing discourses,’ which fails to include an analysis of the corresponding *institutional mechanisms* is liable to be no more than a contribution to the efficacy of those ideologies” (Bourdieu 1977.188, my emphasis). It is precisely the contribution of Althusser, following Gramsci, to insist that ideology is not simply some set of “ideas” or discourses but a set of institutions, institutional practices, and a “praxis” of ideology’s targets, i.e., specific modes of action that literally “embody” the ideology (he gives as examples the “well-known rituals of baptism, confirmation, communion, confession, and extreme unction,” 1971.178).<sup>24</sup> Bourdieu’s *Outline* is entirely devoted to the thesis that ideology is a *practice*. It is explicitly committed to spelling out his response to a challenge laid down by the young Marx in his first thesis on Feuerbach, which is quoted as the epigraph of *Outline*: “The principle defect of all materialism up to now—including that of Feuerbach—is that the external object, reality, the sensible world, is grasped in the form of *an object or an intuition*; but not as *concrete human activity*, as *practice*, in a subjective way. This is why the active aspect was developed by idealism, in opposition to materialism—but only in an abstract way, since idealism naturally does not know real concrete activity as such” (Bourdieu 1977.vi = Marx-Engels 1976a.5.3, emphasis in original). Bourdieu’s sustained attack on Lévi-Strauss labels his approach “objectivism” that “constitutes the social world as a spectacle presented to an observer” (1977.96) and fully endorses by contrast the implications of his Marxist epigraph: “With Marx of the *Theses on Feuerbach*, the theory of practice as practice insists, against positivist materialism, that the objects of knowledge are *constructed*, and against idealist intellectualism, that the

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24 Richard Nice, the translator of both *Reproduction* and *Outline*, laments that the latter text, now circulating thanks to his efforts “beyond its field of production,” i.e., outside of France and its intense internecine intellectual struggles, might become “open to misreading. Thus nothing guarantees that, for some readers, this work, written *against* the current at present dominant in France, ‘structuralism’ or ‘structural-Marxism,’ will not be merged with the very tendencies it combats” (Bourdieu 1977.viii). To be sure, subtle distinctions that are the very essence of French intellectual family feuds may well get lost in translation. The fact remains that Bourdieu’s project is profoundly embedded in the currents of French Marxism and, more importantly, draws heavily on the thought of Marx himself. He does object to what he sees as Althusser’s “aristocratic” pretensions in setting up Marxist “science” in opposition to “ideology” (Žižek 1994b.267).

principle of this construction is practical activity oriented towards practical functions" (1977.96, emphasis in original).<sup>25</sup>

Bourdieu is further praised by Ando because he "escapes the boundaries of Marxist thought not least because his inquiry reaches so far beyond the level of politics and economics" (2000.21). To suggest that Marx himself was only interested in politics and economics is a cliché of cold-war anti-communism;<sup>26</sup> but it is hard not to conclude that what is really suggested by this comment is Ando's own desire to distance himself from politics and economics. For Bourdieu, in fact, economic and social factors are at least as determining of the *habitus* as they are determining of consciousness or a specific "ideology" for Marx: "The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g., the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*" (Bourdieu 1977.72); "The structures characteristic of a determinate type of conditions of existence, through the economic and social necessity which they bring to bear on the relatively autonomous universe of family relations . . . produce the structures of *habitus* which become in turn the basis of perception and appreciation of all subsequent experience" (Bourdieu 1977.78).<sup>27</sup>

But setting up Bourdieu as a counterweight to Marx and Althusser turns out to be a straw construct. Ando, in fact, makes virtually no use of the concept of *habitus* in so far as it is genuinely differentiated from "ideol-

25 In *Reproduction*, Bourdieu begins his chapter on the role of exams in education with another epigraph from Marx, again fully endorsed by the body of his analysis: "The examination is nothing but the bureaucratic baptism of knowledge, the official recognition of the transubstantiation of profane knowledge into sacred knowledge. Marx *Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State*" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977.141).

26 The comments of Marx and Engels on literature, for example, fill nearly 1500 pages (Solomon 1973.5; cf. Praver 1978). Marx was also deeply intrigued by the work of Darwin, to whom he wished to dedicate the second volume of *Capital* (Darwin declined the honor) and by the relatively new discipline of anthropology, especially the writings of Henry Lewis Morgan, from whose work he transcribed hundreds of pages of excerpts (McLellan 1973.424). As Lévi-Strauss remarked bitterly in response to a critic named Revel, "Marx and Engels knew incomparably more anthropology almost a hundred years ago than Revel knows today" (Lévi-Strauss 1963.336).

27 Cf.: "Insofar as it defines the primordial conditions of production of the differences between *habitus*, the *structure of class relations*, regarded as a field of forces which expresses itself both in *directly economic and political antagonisms* and in a system of symbolic positions and oppositions, supplies the *explanatory principle* of the systematic characteristics which the practice of the agents of a determinate class takes on in different areas of activity" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977.203–04, my emphasis).

ogy,”<sup>28</sup> which is overwhelmingly Ando’s own preferred term: “An ideology, like Bourdieu’s *habitus*, is embedded in history: individuals in Bourdieu’s societies, like those in the world of Althusser, are always already subject to a system of thought that systematically directs their attention away from the arbitrariness of the hierarchies obtaining in their society” (21).

I find it ironic that where Bourdieu is most obviously a “successor” of Marx and most deeply relevant to Ando’s project, he is most systematically ignored.<sup>29</sup> I refer to Bourdieu’s climactic discussion in *Outline* of “modes of domination” (1977.183–97), where “history” is central in a specifically Marxist sense of distinguishing pre-capitalist from capitalist modes of exploitation, domination, and ideological manipulation. Bourdieu very suggestively distinguishes the relatively autonomous and objective mechanisms for reproducing the relations of domination under capitalism (e.g., pp. 189–90) from the need in pre-capitalist societies for, on the one hand, “direct domination of one person by another, the limiting case of which is the appropriation of persons, i.e., slavery” (190), and, on the other, for “symbolic violence—*censored, euphemized*, i.e., unrecognizable

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28 Bourdieu’s most obvious original contribution consists in grafting onto the notion of class ideology as practice his adaptation of Chomsky’s concept of generative linguistics: “Through the *habitus*, the structure which has produced it governs practice, not by the processes of a mechanical determinism, but through the mediation of the orientations and limits it assigns to the *habitus*’s operations of invention. As an *acquired system of generative schemes* objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted, the *habitus* engenders all the thoughts, all the perceptions, and all the actions consistent with those conditions, and no others” (Bourdieu 1977.95, my emphasis).

Bourdieu is also characteristically at pains throughout his text to cite Chomsky where he disagrees with him. Ando’s only acknowledgement of this aspect of Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* is, I believe, somewhat misleading: “Bourdieu, too . . . emphasizes the bounded flexibility of ideologies . . . He insists, therefore, that it is unnecessary to posit individual subjects mindlessly misrecognizing the fact of their subjugation to an arbitrary social order. Rather a *habitus*, or an ideology, is a system of belief that channels rather than stifles creativity: *habitus* is generative” (23). It is true that Bourdieu associates his concept of *habitus* with Chomsky’s “generative” grammar and emphasizes that a key aspect of the *habitus* is a repertory of strategies for responding to a wide array of social challenges. But he is also very clear in pointing out that the *habitus* of dominated people does *limit* those strategies to versions of the “possible” that *maintain* their dominated status (Bourdieu 1977.77). His critique of Chomsky is precisely that he “remains locked in the dilemma of determinism and freedom, conditioning and *creativity*” (Bourdieu 1977.95, my emphasis).

29 Ando does have one reference to this section, but is only interested in Bourdieu’s account of the process of institutionalization of domination, which Bourdieu sees as characteristic of modern capitalist society.

... The reason for the pre-capitalist economy's great need for symbolic violence is that the only way in which relations of domination can be set up, maintained, or restored, is through strategies which, being expressly oriented toward the establishment of relations of personal dependence, must be disguised and transfigured lest they destroy themselves by revealing their true nature" (191).

To an extraordinary degree, Ando's book spells out the rich array of means by which the personal relation of dependence on the emperor is "euphemized" by many of the specific strategies Bourdieu dubs "symbolic violence . . . the violence of credit, confidence, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, gratitude, piety" (Bourdieu 1977.192). Ando, for example, while acknowledging that "urban centers [were] constructed or refurbished to promote the uninterrupted transfer of local wealth to Rome," goes on to insist, "whatever the Romans' motivation, the circulation produced by imperially sponsored or subsidized building was not without real benefits to local populations" (13). While the latter point is unquestionably true, the whole argument ignores or censors out the fact that constructing the environment in Rome's image, filling it with statues of Roman emperors (I think immediately of the shudder of terror I felt when I first looked at the colossal statue of Constantine in Campidoglio's courtyard of the Palazzo dei Conservatori), bronze plaques, and wooden boards full of Roman directives is also massive symbolic violence. Moreover, Ando passes over in silence a very relevant point Bourdieu makes precisely about the *cost* of establishing domination in pre-capitalist societies: "Wastage of money, energy, time, and ingenuity is the very essence of the social alchemy through which an interested relationship is transmuted into a disinterested, gratuitous relationship, overt domination into misrecognized, 'socially recognized' domination, in other words, *legitimate authority*" (1977.192, emphasis in original).

Precisely to the extent that Bourdieu is focusing on ideology as a cover for real exploitation, his approach is diametrically opposed to Ando's systematic repression of exploitation, class warfare, and—in the sense given it by Marxists—of history. On the one hand, Ando has no interest in exploring what is specific to a pre-capitalist society, and, on the other, as noted earlier, he firmly rejects any juxtaposition of ancient imperialism with the abundantly studied modern forms of empire, colonialism, etc.: "The increasing sophistication of narratives for the co-optation of the governing class in the East, the hard-won achievement of the last half-century, is now under attack by those who wish to view first-century Greeks through twentieth-century postcolonial eyes. All evidence suggests that Greeks experienced

power and assessed claims to legitimate domination in ways profoundly different than did the subjects of early modern empires” (60, cf. 66, 120, 152). It is hard to believe that any serious historian would deny that there are profound differences between ancient and modern forms of imperialism, but it is another matter entirely to foreclose so categorically (“all evidence suggests”) any exploration of potential similarities. Ando’s own application to the Roman empire of theories of ideology developed primarily in relation to modern capitalism implicitly acknowledges that, whatever our commitment to appreciate the real differences of another culture and period, “we cannot” as Seyla Benhabib says, explicating Habermas, “divest ourselves of the constituents of our culture at will or by an act of fiat; they are the ones we bring to bear on the analysis of any situation” (Benhabib 1986.272). Bourdieu, in dismissing as totally meaningless the debate over the “relative worth of different modes of domination,” suggests sarcastically that the only interest of these interminable debates “lies in the revelation of the researcher’s social phantasms, i.e., his unanalyzed relationship to his own society” (1977.238 n. 51). Reading that phrase, I could not help thinking of the combination in Ando of his rigorous, repeated refusals of the relevance of his own era with his relentless, all-but-unequivocal celebration of the Roman empire. His favorite term for Tacitus, as well as for modern critics of the empire, is “cynics,” (e.g., 202, 402), and he explicitly rejects the skepticism of modern historians about the Romans’ claims of a “unified empire” (250) or Augustan propaganda. Thus he declares, “To the cynic, Augustan propaganda simply informed provincials that Augustus would spread the burden of his exploitation as evenly as possible; in practice Augustus revolutionized ancient imperialism” (409). This misleading antithesis allows Ando to dismiss the issue of exploitation and talk instead about Augustus’s success in celebrating the advantages of Roman law for the provincials. Acknowledging that an unusually detailed account of an appeal by provincials to a Roman official to adjudicate a case *could* imply no real faith in Roman justice, he argues: “Nevertheless, such cynicism can scarcely account for the tens of thousands of individuals and groups that turned to Rome for justice in the first centuries of this era” (74). Is it only cynicism to ask where else in a totalitarian state would they turn with cases that required adjudication?<sup>30</sup>

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30 Fergus Millar, even more categorical than Ando in his dismissal of all contemporary approaches to analyzing the nature of the Roman empire (1977.xii), lays equally heavy emphasis on the emperor’s role in dispensing justice, but includes the role of terror (e.g.,

Though allusions to Althusser and Jameson crop up in odd places,<sup>31</sup> and I have already stated my grounds for stressing the fundamental importance of the concept of hegemony and of ideological state apparatuses, Ando's most common explicit methodological buzz words are Max Weber's "charisma" and Jürgen Habermas's "consensus."<sup>32</sup> Ando spells out accurately the tension in Weber's concept between, on the one hand, the "pure" form of charisma that is by definition antithetical to institutionalization, bureaucracy, and any form of systematic "normalization" and, on the other, the attachment of charisma to an office—in short the institutionalization or, in Weber's terms, the "routinization" (Weber 1968.54–61) of charisma.

According to Weber, in its pure form, charismatic leadership arises in periods of deep public distress and chaos: the extraordinary successes of the leader give rise to the belief by the public that he has some special relation to the forces normally beyond human control—that he is in some sense "divine," uniquely favored by divinity, or in direct communication with divinity. Ando argues that the early emperors, by attaching the initial charisma of Julius Caesar and Augustus to the *office* of emperor (29–33), by fostering the cult of imperial divinity as *the* unifying religion of the empire (407 and *passim*), elicited, especially from the provinces (25), consistent loyalty.

It would be hard to exaggerate the centrality of the idea of charisma to Ando's whole enterprise. He himself sums up his case as follows: "This

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9–10). He traces the function of dispensing "justice" first to the absolute power of Roman provincial governors and, ultimately, to the power of Hellenistic monarchy (16–17)—needless to say without any invocation of "charisma."

31 The specifically Althusserian term "interpellation" appears on 7, 46, and 212, the phrase "always already" on 259. Jameson and even Althusser's pupil Foucault—rejected on 20—are cited with apparent approval on 214.

32 I find it amusing that Bourdieu is so scornful of the very concept of consensus: "Only when it is seen that a group's integration rests on the (total or partial) identity of the *habitus* inculcated by PW [= pedagogical work], i.e., when the principle of the homology of practices is located in the total or partial identity of the practice-generating grammars, is it possible to escape from the *naïveties of the social philosophies of consensus*" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977.35, my emphasis). He also singles out Weber's concept of charisma for scathing dismissal: "If one is not to resort to the miracle of an absolute beginning (which the Weberian theory of charisma tends to require), it is necessary to posit that the successful prophet is the one who formulates for the groups or classes he addresses a message which the objective conditions determining the material and symbolic interests of those groups have predisposed them to attend to and take in" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977.25). This strikes me as quite a good description of the formulations associated with Augustus.

book argues that the charismatic power of the imperial office *guaranteed* the orderly functioning of the Roman bureaucracy” (410, my emphasis). It would be pointless to deny the enormous usefulness of the worship of the divinized emperors in perpetuating Roman rule. The alliance of religion and centralized power seems to be a feature of the very earliest imperial civilizations (White 1959.303–28), and it is—alas—obviously still with us.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, I think it is important to notice that this emphasis on the inherently irrational and homogenizing power of religion facilitates Ando’s ignoring of a number of issues associated with this form of leadership. For example, Weber himself “cautioned against the authoritarian ramifications” of modern charismatic leadership (Benhabib 1986.260); with the ancient form, its authoritarian character is simply a given of no interest to Ando: the countless arbitrary deaths caused by the emperors do not appear. In a footnote, he refers sarcastically to Nock’s interpretation of the report in Suetonius (*Aug.* 98.2) of a striking tribute to Augustus from passengers and sailors arriving at Puteoli from Alexandria: “The sentiments it records do not harmonize with political interpretations of imperial cult” (234 n.123). Regardless of whether Nock was right or wrong, what is amazing is Ando’s apparent belief that his own view of the imperial cult is somehow not “political.”

Emphasis on charisma tends also to deflect analysis away from the political content or actual class interests served by the specific policies of the charismatic leader. Ando does allude several times to the class base of the imperial system. Apropos of the senate’s condemnation of Cornelius Gallus, Ando notes the “willingness of the governing class to secure their status in the new regime by using their control over some organs of the state to sanction the prevailing order” (152). He also notes: “Emperors required the cooperation of the class from which they themselves had sprung” (153), and alludes in passing to the de facto irrelevance of the plebs to law under the empire (154–55). Late in his book, almost as an afterthought, Ando points out: “Romans had always sought to govern their far-flung empire through local aristocracies, because their personnel were few and because

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33 Religion is also often a vehicle for protest against the abuses of power, as noted by de Ste. Croix 1981.442 and n. 5 (641–42) referring to Brunt and Josephus (Brunt 1977). But the emphasis of both Althusser and Bourdieu is on the alliance of the church with the dominant powers (Althusser 1971.143, 150–52, 154–56, and *passim*; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977.33, 37, 63, and *passim*).

they consciously sought to create social structures committed to the maintenance of the status quo" (363). But in another context, he scornfully rejects a class-based analysis or even a "political" analysis: "Why should a Roman aesthetic have appealed to so many different populations? The answer that 'the leading families in each city . . . were those who contributed most to the ruler cult and also profited most from it' [Zanker 1988.332] is insufficient. Among other things it presupposes a largely *political* role for the ruler cult" (303–04, my emphasis). One cannot help wondering: if the ruler cult is so fully in Ando's own terms a central piece of imperial "ideology," how is it not "political"? Ando speaks as if the successful internalization by the provincials of "belief" in this cult somehow divests it of its political meaning. One may posit "sincere" belief in the superhuman powers of the individual in whom so much power is, in fact, concentrated, but this in no way explains how this power is exercised and in whose interests.

Habermas's centrality to Ando's project strikes me as perhaps the most ironic aspect of Ando's repudiation of and suppression of Marx. Habermas without Marx is unthinkable. Martin Jay's thoughtful overview of Habermas is, for example, entitled, "Jürgen Habermas and the Reconstruction of Marxist Holism" (Jay 1984.462–509). Even a work that tends to downplay the role of Marx in Habermas's thought sums up Habermas's project in language that is, I believe, impossible not to recognize as deeply indebted to Marx: "Habermas conceives of his project as an attempt to develop a theory of society with a *practical* intention: *the self-emancipation of people from domination*" (Held 1980.250, my emphasis). In the preface to his book-length study of Habermas, Thomas McCarthy notes: "His [Habermas's] contributions to philosophy and psychology, political science and sociology, the history of ideas and social theory are distinguished not only by their scope but by the unity of perspective that informs them. This unity derives from a vision of mankind, our history and our prospects, that is rooted in the tradition of German thought from Kant to Marx, a vision that draws its power as much from the *moral-political intention* that animates it as from the systematic form in which it is articulated" (McCarthy 1978.ix, my emphasis). He goes on to say: "The tradition of Western Marxism Habermas seeks to renew has remained comparatively underdeveloped here [sc. in the United States]; a number of important works by Lukács, Korsch, Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marx himself were only recently translated" (ix).

It is especially useful to situate Habermas's work in this way—as



it is, indeed, that of Bourdieu<sup>34</sup>—as part of a *tradition* of thinking in which Marx is a key figure but quite the opposite of a reified set of unquestioned dogmas. Rather, for the Frankfurt School (technically members of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt)<sup>35</sup> that Habermas joined in 1956 (Ryan 2003.44), a major goal was to *rethink* Marxism. Started in 1923 as an alternative to membership in the Soviet-dominated Communist Party and to the non-revolutionary socialism of the Weimar Republic, the initial goal of the Institute was to arrive at a “pure” Marxism. The rise of Nazism forced the removal of the Institute to New York since its most prominent members (Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse) were Jews. For the members of the Institute, the success of Nazism in Germany demonstrated the inadequacy of Marx’s rational faith in the capacity of the working class to know its own best interest. Thus a key focus of the school was the attempt to graft Freudian psychoanalysis and insights from more traditional sociology (e.g., Durkheim and Weber) onto Marxist thought as a means of achieving a clearer grasp of the barriers to human freedom. The Marxist core of Habermas’s project is to refine our understanding of different forms of rationality in the direction, first, of arriving “at a more adequate description and explanation of the pathologies of modernity [sc. capitalism]” (Habermas 1987.303) and, secondly, of fostering human liberation from the constraints of class division and the domination of one class over the other. This is the appropriate context of Habermas’s critique of Weber and of his own concept of “consensus.” Habermas, indeed, describes his last long section of *The Theory of Communicative Action* as “this second attempt to appropriate Weber in the spirit of Western Marxism” (1987.302). As Benhabib describes that context (Benhabib 1986.228–29, my emphasis):

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34 Bourdieu, born in 1930 (Habermas was born one year earlier), came to intellectual maturity in the 1950s and early 60s in an atmosphere permeated by the specific Marxisms first of Sartre, then of Althusser (Poster 1975). He reacted against both, but as Thompson puts it in the process of denying Bourdieu the label of “a contemporary exponent of Marxism,” “there can be no doubt that his work is deeply influenced by Marx’s approach. The very fact that Bourdieu gives a certain theoretical priority to social classes and to the role of economic capital in social space is ample testimony to his debt” (Thompson 1991.30–31). I would argue that, particularly in the early works—*Reproduction* and *Outline*—Marx sets the agenda. Even in later works like *Distinction*, confirming the insights of Marx comes naturally to him (Bourdieu 1984.178–79, 280, 397–98, 467).

35 For a fascinating history of the Frankfurt School, see Jay 1973.

Habermas has focused on the inconsistency between the utopian kernel of the early bourgeois political tradition—the consensus of all as the basis of a just order—and the institutional contradictions of capitalism which *constantly violate* this utopian promise through *relations of exploitation* based on race, class, status, and gender differences . . . Habermas introduced certain distinctions which later amounted to a radical revision of Max Weber’s diagnosis of societal rationalization, who saw societal rationalization in terms of the expansion of purposive-rational action systems<sup>36</sup> . . . Habermas argued that a categorical distinction needed to be made between the rationalization of communicative action on the one hand, and the purposive-rational and strategic action on the other . . . The rationalization of communicative action would entail a *decreasing degree of repressiveness and rigidity*, increasing role distance, and the flexible application of norms; in short, *socialization without repression*.

Ando takes an essentially utopian project directed toward creating freedom from the oppressions of present-day capitalism and projects it back into the Roman empire: “What we require is a model of social action in general, and of communicative action in particular, that reveals what promises the Romans made when they published their laws, letters, and regulations . . . Jürgen Habermas has supplied just such a model in his theory of communicative action . . . He thus confronted and ultimately denied the legitimacy of the choice set forth above, between sheer cynicism toward, and consensual commitment to, the Romans’ way of doing things” (75). The unwary reader might deduce from this passage that Habermas actually applied this theory to the Romans. In any case, I confess I am confused by this sentence: in most of Ando’s book, I, at least, have the impression that “consensual commitment to the Romans’ way of doing things” is precisely what he means by “consensus.”

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36 The classic statement of Weber’s view of Western rationalization—which comes very close to the rationality of the capitalist enterprise and the subordination of all other factors to the enhancement of profit—is his introduction to *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 1958.13–31).

Weber reappears at this point as the unacceptable defender of the “cynical” view of Roman power (76): “In lived realities, he [Weber] argues, law as a determinant of human conduct should be defined by its empirical validity, such that the orientation of actions could result merely from accommodation to a coercive apparatus. Weber would thus seem to allow our weak explanation for provincials’ recourse to Rome” [i.e., that they appealed to Roman officials for “justice” out of “sheer cynicism” (74)]. At this point, Ando makes a claim, to which I return later, that “Roman coercion was, more often than not, a mere conceptual possibility, and cannot account for the attractiveness of Roman courts in settling local disputes” (76). Habermas is here invoked as rescuing Ando’s “strong view” of the provincials’ consensual endorsement of Roman rules: “Habermas surmounted this impasse by positing that orders based on subjective recognition of their legitimacy ultimately rely upon their consensual validity” (76–77).

Ando’s reference for this view cries out for contextualization—even at the risk of our getting lost in the sheer density of Habermas’s prose (Habermas 1984.191–92; I have italicized the statement used by Ando, the other emphasis is in the original):

The problematic of societal rationalization arises from the fact that “ideas of the validity of norms” are supported with reasons and can thus also be influenced by the intellectual treatment of internal relations of meaning, by what Weber calls “intellectualization.” *The stability of legitimate orders depends on, among other things, the fact of recognition of normative validity claims.* And as this social validity stands in internal relation to reasons (in general to the potential for justification inherent in interpretive systems, worldviews, and cultural traditions), the systematization and elaboration of worldviews carried on by intellectuals has empirical consequences. Intellectual engagement with cultural interpretive systems leads as a rule to learning processes that the social scientist can *recapitulate and appraise* if he adopts the same performative attitude as the intellectuals who are influential in the object domain.

My limited point here is that Habermas is *not* talking about “a society like that of Rome” (Ando 2000.77) but about the potentially significant

role that intellectuals—specifically social scientists—can play by means of their own critical engagement with the interpretive systems put forth in the defense of the status quo. He goes on to argue: “Processes of rationalization can attach to societal orders of life *only* because the stability of legitimate orders depends on the de facto recognition of validity claims that *can be attacked internally, that is, shaken by critique, new insights, learning processes, and the like* (Habermas 1984.192, my emphasis). I, at least, find it quite inconceivable to describe the relations between Rome and its subjugated periphery as entailing Roman directives open to *attack*, susceptible to being *shaken by critique, new insights, or learning processes*. Habermas’s ideal of communicative action can only be fully realized in what he calls “substantive democracy”: “genuine participation of citizens in the processes of political will-formation, that is, substantive democracy, would bring to consciousness the contradiction [sc. in contemporary capitalism] between administratively socialized production and the continued private appropriation and use of surplus value” (Habermas 1975.36). In another context, Habermas argues: “Language is *also* a medium of domination and social power. It serves to legitimate relationships of organized force. Insofar as legitimations do not articulate the power relationship whose institutionalization they make possible, insofar as that relationship is merely manifested in the legitimations, language is *also* ideological. In that case it is not so much a matter of deceptions in language as of deception with language as such. Hermeneutic experience, encountering this dependence of symbolic context on actual relations, becomes a critique of ideology” (Habermas 1988.172).<sup>37</sup>

Ando’s dismissive account of Rome’s coercive potential is facilitated by his opening dismissal of concern with resistance to Rome (2000.1). It goes hand-in-hand with his lack of interest in the economics of empire. His impressive bibliography has no room for either Ramsay MacMullen’s

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37 Cf. Held’s summary of Habermas’s theory of communicative competence: “In this theory, Habermas argues that all speech is oriented to the idea of a *genuine* consensus—a discursively achieved consensus—which is *rarely* realized . . . The very structure of speech is held to involve the *anticipation* of a form of life in which *truth, freedom, and justice are possible* . . . It is just this *anticipation of an ideal* form of discourse which can be used as a normative standard for a *critique* of distorted communication. It is Habermas’s contention that in *every* communicative situation in which a consensus is *established under coercion or other similar types of conditions*, we are likely to be confronting instances of *systematically distorted communication*. This is, in his view, the contemporary formulation of *ideology*” (Held 1980.256, my emphasis).

*Enemies of the Roman Order* (1966) or de Ste. Croix's *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (1981), three long chapters of which are devoted explicitly to Rome, though Roman examples are scattered through much of the rest of his text. Taking the broadest view of the nature of the Roman economy, de Ste. Croix cites A. H. M. Jones: "The cities were . . . economically parasitic on the countryside. Their incomes consisted in the main of the rents drawn by the urban aristocracy from the peasants . . . The splendours of urban life were to a large extent paid for out of [these] rents" (de Ste. Croix 1981.13 = Jones 1940.268, 287). Ando has no space for such considerations or their implications. But Colin Wells, who is certainly no Marxist, at least has room in his modest history of the Roman empire to acknowledge the sort of evidence cited by de Ste. Croix (Galen's account of the starvation of superexploited peasants, Wells 1984.269 = de Ste. Croix 1981.14) and to add on his own account Libanius of Antioch's "catalogues [of] the immense hardships and injustices inflicted on the poor peasants" (Wells 1984.270). He also notes, despite his clear admiration for the "immeasurable majesty of Roman Peace" (= Chap X), "by how a society invests its resources, you can tell where its real priorities are. In most towns and cities, the amphitheatre was the biggest building . . . Public slaughter was clearly for the Romans a fundamental institution" (Wells 1984.273). He sums up its functions in ways that should recall Bourdieu's analysis of symbolic violence: "The amphitheatre was part of this theatre of terror. It was a lesson in pain and death, in the uncertainty of life, in the stratification of society and the arbitrariness of power . . . Those who died in the arena died for the established order . . . It was a terrifying demonstration of what could happen to those who failed to please their masters, who failed to conform to the established order" (277).

Ando offers us a magnificently elaborated account of the mechanisms of legitimation, the seemingly endless barrage of imperial propaganda that so successfully complemented the material and symbolic violence ever available to Roman rulers and their local elite supporters. What he leaves untheorized is his own stake in the whole process of Roman legitimation. Indeed, what is perhaps most elusive about Ando's work is any clear examination of what is at stake for himself or his readers in the success of the imperial ideology to which he attributes the stability and durability of the empire. At times, caught up—I suspect—in the perspective of his Marx-inspired models, he speaks as if his main point was the massive fraud perpetrated by imperial ideology in masking its exploitation and domination. Thus, for example, he refers to Augustus's "ongoing effort . . . both

to dominate political life at Rome and to construct an ideological apparatus to disguise the fact of dominance" (281).

More characteristically ambiguous is Ando's account of the impact of the publications of the imperial bureaucracy: "The publications of the imperial bureaucracy must have given to many an impression of unprecedented activity and rationality. Provincials displayed their faith in the truth value of those documents when they constructed personal histories based on their contents and chronology. That rationality was not merely one of equitable and systematic exploitation. Rather, the rulers of the empire perpetually sought to found their actions on the *consensus* of their subjects, making them active participants in their own subjugation by urging them to iterate the principles of the ruling order" (338, emphasis in original). It is hard to decide what weight Ando gives here to "not merely, etc." It is easy enough to understand why the exploitation is dubbed "systematic," but what are the grounds for calling it "equitable"? If the provincials are "active participants in their own subjugation," how is the resultant "consensus" not a fraud? Sometimes this seems exactly what he is saying: "The agents of the government and the people of the empire *jointly conspired* to believe their empire a notional and necessary unity" (270, my emphasis).

Most of the time, however, Ando is less ambiguous in his celebration of the Roman imperial achievement. "These constituencies—the army, the population of Rome, the Senate, provincial populations—discovered their stake in the system as a whole and learned to control their dissatisfaction with its details" (293). Ando begins his concluding chapter by declaring that "if more of Cicero's *De legibus* survived, this Conclusion would be easier to write" (406). Given the way he uses what he has of Cicero, it is hard not to conclude that, in all respects, Ando wishes us to see the empire as the practical realization of Ciceronian ideals. So in the case of the state religion: "The Principate made it possible for this ideal *consensus* to be realized: quite independent from the steady extension of the franchise, the position of Augustus atop the empire allowed the Mediterranean world to share a deity for the first time" (407, emphasis in original). Speaking of Cicero on law, Ando argues: "Romans of the republic did regard such rationality in the governance of the provinces as an ideal, though it was seldom realized: nothing could have struck provincials as so shockingly innovative as Augustan promises to make this ideal concrete . . . Roman bureaucratic niceties do not excite modern scholars. They were, however, the lived testimonials that suggested the *truthfulness* of Augustan propaganda" (409, my emphasis).

Ando is certainly not alone in feeling, as I would deduce he does, that given the range of their options, more people were better off under the Roman empire than if left to their own “barbarous” ways.<sup>38</sup> Given that the past is truly past, there is a sense in which making sweeping moral judgments about the “justice” of the Roman empire seems an exercise in futility. But I would argue that only to the extent that one in the present is deeply committed to enlarging the scope of human cooperative freedom do the precise mechanisms by which the dialectic of freedom and domination was played out in the past take on real urgency. As Walter Benjamin put it: “Every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably” (1969.255).

This rapid romp through various uses of the concept of ideology has argued that Marxists cannot afford to rely on the crudest available “orthodox” formulations of ideology as a simple reflection of class interests, and non-Marxists risk some serious contradictions and missed opportunities in applying formulations developed by Marxists if they are unprepared to accept class warfare as the indispensable presupposition of those formulations. I would not, however, wish to be understood as implying or advocating a purist—and self-defeating—position that would exhort non-Marxists to ignore the work of Marxists. I would like to see—at last—the end of an internalized cold-war reflex that inhibits, I believe, these scholars from taking Marxist work more seriously. To put the issue in a broader perspective, I believe that it is true in general, for historical reasons I cannot explore here, that European intellectuals, regardless of their personal political convictions, are much more likely to have read Marx seriously than their American counterparts. Cold-war rhetoric in this country has been extraordinarily successful in convincing very many intellectuals that Marx is unworthy of being studied with the same level of seriousness as, say, Max Weber or Leo Strauss. Thus when scholars are nonetheless drawn to Marx-inspired work, they reveal a compulsion to protect themselves from imagined accusations of being “Marxists”—a compulsion they do not seem to feel when relying heavily on the work of, say, Weber.

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38 Julius Caesar perhaps set the pattern of belief that non-Romans’ penchant for internecine strife could only be curbed by the impositions of Rome—even if, as in the case of the Gauls, more than a million needed to be slaughtered to bring about the *pax Romana*. Yet it is precisely here—in reconstructing the voices repressed by empire triumphant—that post-colonial analyses are so essential to complicate the picture of “Romanization” (Mattingly 1997).

To be sure, Marx had no unique access to permanent truth, and his work has lent itself to some tragic distortions; but blaming him for all the crimes of Stalinism and associated phenomena is no more justified than blaming Nietzsche for the horrors of Nazism. Neither of these intellectual giants produced a codified monolithic system; both developed their thought over a considerable period of time around some key problems that still have important resonances today. But I would claim that Marx has proven extraordinarily productive in his various meditations on the meaning and working of ideology—productive in the specific sense of inspiring directly a rich body of work that cannot be ignored by anyone interested in the problem of ideology.

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