

Call for Papers, *Demarcaciones* No. 11: “After the Traces of Clinamen: The Need for Contingency in Aleatory Materialism.”

Editor: Marcelo Rodríguez A.

Demarcaciones, Latin American Journal of Althusserian Studies, calls for submissions for the dossier “After the traces of clinamen: the need for contingency in aleatory materialism.” The issue will be published in the second semester of 2024 as Journal Number 11. This dossier proposes to discuss and analyze the problems and perspectives of the contingency theory or the aleatory that we found in Althusser’s aleatory materialist philosophy. Understood in terms of Epicureanism, that is, as a non-anticipable material deviation (clinamen), contingency is not a simple modality or exception regarding the necessity, but rather what “breaks the laws of destiny (*foedera fati*).” In this context, the necessity itself, whatever it may be, could be considered “the becoming necessary of the encounter of contingencies.” What are the theoretical and political effects of this material deviation without which nothing emerges and still disturbs destiny, the dialectical order, the process of ideological interpellation/introjection (Y. Sato), etc.?

Since Fernanda Navarro’s interview with Louis Althusser in 1988, published in Mexico as *Philosophy and Marxism*, and the publication in 1994 of “The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter” (1982), the thesis of aleatory materialism triggered multiple reactions and comments. The vast bibliography about aleatory materialism available today allows us to affirm, in the first place, that the “theoretical instruments” that support this philosophical commitment (such as the concepts of encounter and emptiness, for example) are already present in Althusser’s writings from the sixties—or even earlier, if we consider the problem of the gravitation of the void in his memoir on Hegel’s philosophy. In the second place,

we can state that the “theoretical matrix” of this materialist position is the line of Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius, a line of thought that “provides the base model that is ontologically and physically inseparable”, as André Tosel indicates.

From a work of distinction and mismatch between the ideas of bricolage and structuralist combinatorics (“formalism” to think the accomplished fact) and the Marxist ideas of conjunction and combination (*Verbindung*), Althusser arrived at “atomism”, increasingly requiring it in his analysis and strategy. As G. M. Goshgarian points out: “Only with the June 1975 ‘Is it Simple to Be a Marxist in Philosophy’ in which Althusser locates ‘the premises of Marx’s materialism’ in Epicurus, Spinoza, and Hegel, and the March 1976 ‘The Transformation of Philosophy’, in which Machiavelli and Epicurus are the two philosophers expressly singled out for having practiced an anti-philosophy anticipating Marx’s, do we catch a glimpse of the dizzying promotion awaiting the Philosopher of the Garden at the *École normale supérieure*.” Such dizzying promotion culminates in the formula that Althusser told Fernanda Navarro, namely, that the ‘true’ materialism, the best adapted to Marxism, is the aleatory materialism in the line of Epicurus and Democritus.

What defines the clinamen, the declination of the atom dominating all Epicurean philosophy according to Marx? What are the effects of this originary and non-derived deviation? What is a thought on conjuncture? Althusser expounds the “logic” of the clinamen not only through the atomists of antiquity but also in Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, Marx, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Derrida, and Deleuze—that is, in that repressed and underground tradition that he calls materialism of the encounter, of the contingency, in short of the aleatory. Through patient and careful reading, he calibrates the concepts of this materialism where they act or can be propelled to act. For example, reading Henri Birault’s book *Heidegger et l’expérience de la pensée*

(1978), particularly a passage in which Birault exposes the “positive and protective” function of the “forgetfulness of being” and its redoubling in “the forgetfulness of a forgetfulness.”

Regarding this forgetfulness, Althusser notes in 1979: “redoubling of the antecedent [the redoubling of Epicureanism: the fall before + the clinamen redoubles > there is]”. In his reading of Jacques Derrida, he reads *Margins of Philosophy* and points out: “Materialism of the game / there is the game / Epicurus the fall!!!”.

Some topics for the present CFP may be:

- The atomistic void in the face of Hegelian negativity.
- The question of freedom in Marx’s doctoral dissertation and its relationship with Althusser.
- Chance in the production of compounds (Lucretius reconciles them). Expansion of the theory of the conjuncture.
- Dialectical materialism v/s aleatory materialism.
- The aleatory conditions of historical processes, as processes without subject or end.
- The logic of “interstices” in the capitalist world.
- The effectiveness of the theory of material deviation regarding other contingency and aleatory materialisms.

Submissions must be sent to revistademarcaciones@gmail.com before July 31, 2024.

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