

英文要旨

論文題目

Philosophy of the masses  
Study on Étienne Balibar's political thought

氏名

Yusuke OTA

The objective of this thesis is to examine the political thought of the contemporary French philosopher Étienne Balibar (1942–), in the light of the concept of the masses. The term ‘masses’ means in this thesis refers to an indeterminate collectivity. It is the fundamental human group that exists prior to the other political entities. The masses are in this sense the first material of politics. It is this definition of the masses that allows Balibar to question the three main figures of political modernity: race, nation and Proletariat. Balibar’s political thought attaches great importance to the masses understood in this way and it is the basis for the political community that is to come. This gesture characterizes Balibar’s attempt to *philosophize on the masses*. Our research focuses, in particular, on his philosophical and historical trajectory from the 1960s to the 1980s, wherein the problematic of the masses gradually takes shape. Balibar’s idea of the politics of the masses and their community that appears in the 1990s comes as a continuation of this problematic.

The first part of this thesis focuses on Balibar’s writings from the 1960s to the 1970s.

These writings demonstrate the essential change in his perspective, namely, from that of the Proletariat to that of the masses. In his first work, *Lire le Capital* (1965), co-authored by Louis Althusser, Balibar uses structuralism to argue against the identity of the *political subject* in Marxism: the Proletariat. Structuralism introduces to his philosophy the problem of *political subjectivity*, the process in which the subject is constituted at the level of politics. This change in perspective is necessary because the evidence of the identity of the Proletariat, always schematically opposed to that of the Bourgeoisie, fails to recognize two critical issues in the Marxist tradition. The first issue is the becoming of the political subject, as opposed to the Proletariat. The second is the State's interpretation. These two issues have recurred each time Marxist historical reason has been shaken since Karl Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1852). Balibar's writings during the 1970s, *Cinq études du matérialisme historique* (1974) and *Sur la dictature du prolétariat* (1976) explore these issues with finesse. As Balibar gives up the Leninist position, defining the state as an instrument of a single ruling class, Balibar approaches Antonio Gramsci and Nicos Poulantzas, who consider the State to be a product of the condensation of power relations. From this perspective, the political subjectivity of the masses is reconsidered in light of the two instances: the economy and the State.

The second part of the thesis revalues Balibar's intermediate position between classes and the masses by examining his collaborative work with the American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein: *Race, nation, classe* (1988). While Balibar abandons the political subject of the Proletariat, he continues to defend the Marxist idea of classes. Class struggles only partially determines the modality of the masses, such that it is necessary to examine the reciprocal determination between the two terms. Taking this intermediate position and deepening the Althusserian concept of 'over determination', Balibar analyses the political subjectivation of the masses within the nation-state. This subjectivation takes place not only at the level of the division of classes (Bourgeoisie and Proletariat), but also at the national level marked by the distinction between the nation and the foreigner. The reflection on this double determination within the process of the construction of the people allows Balibar to escape the influence of the French Communist Party and Althusser.

This change is revealed in both theoretical and practical senses. In the theoretical

sense, Balibar analyses racism against immigrants among the French popular class and its articulation with nationalism. In a practical sense, Balibar supports the migrant workers' movement who cannot be reduced to national political subjectivation. It must be emphasized here that Balibar's conception of 'the masses' changes: from the 1980s, Balibar begins to use this phrase to designate the *minority* who are immigrant workers, whereas in his struggle against Eurocommunism in the 1970s, 'the masses' refers to the *majority* at the bottom of the French Communist Party and outside, namely those who oppose this strategy. Balibar's intermediate position consists, therefore, in recognizing the emergence of the new political subjectivity at the practical level and in maintaining the validity of the class struggle at the theoretical level. It is located at the same distance between the approach of economism (Wallerstein) and that of politicism (Michel Foucault, Claude Lefort, Miguel Abensour, Luc Ferry, Alain Renaut).

The third part of the thesis clarifies the politics of the masses that Balibar elaborates under the influence of Spinoza's political writings and links it to his contemporary project to reconstruct Europe. From *Spinoza et la Politique* (1985) to his masterpiece, *La Crainte des masses* (1997), Balibar continues to emphasize the importance of an aporia in Spinoza's last unfinished work, the *Political Treatise* (1677). According to Balibar, Spinoza intends to define democracy (government by all) as the most powerful state among others, such as monarchy (government by one) and aristocracy (government by few). In monarchy and aristocracy, the collective power of the masses inspires fear in their rulers and pushes them to democratize the constitution. These regimes can be strong enough as long as they are faithful to the voice of the masses. However, Spinoza's argument fails in the section on democracy, because democracy identifies the rulers and the ruled, eventually giving rise to the double fear that the masses will inspire by themselves and that they will feel from themselves. There is no democracy as a state institution in Spinoza's *Political Treatise*. This is the aporia of the 'fear of the masses'. From Spinoza's theoretical impasse, Balibar draws a singular definition of democracy as the uninterrupted transformation of the state by the movement of the masses.

Balibar has developed this idea in its contemporary European dimension: the refounding of Europe as a political community as a replacement to a Europe characterized by

legal and moral formalism. Since the 1980s, faithful to Spinoza's distinction between the two faces of the state, the community (*res publica*) of the masses and the government (*imperium*), Balibar has supported the movement of immigrant workers, considering them to be a concrete figure of the masses. His definition of Europe is based on this transformation of the political subjectivity of the masses: Europe is a 'vanishing mediator'. It accepts the cultural mix of the masses and vanishes as it becomes a translator of the world. Discovering the proper place for the politics of the masses in Europe means opening this place to its non-proper because the masses are mixed and heterogeneous. When the nature of Europe changes, its geographical borders will also change.

By analyzing Balibar's political thought from the 1960s to the present, we can conclude that it continues to be motivated by the philosophical return to the basis of the politics: the concept of the masses. This return was possible only when Balibar moved away from the central concept of Marxism, the Proletariat (first part of the thesis). It forced Balibar to rethink the political subjectivity of the masses without any normative a priori judgments on them. His analysis of nationalism and racism is a successful illustration of this approach in that it clarifies the ambiguity of their identity (second part of the thesis). This return finally allows Balibar to recognize the immigrant as an incarnation of the masses at the European level (third part of the thesis). The masses have constituted and will remain a driving force for the further development of Balibar's political thought: the philosophy of masses.