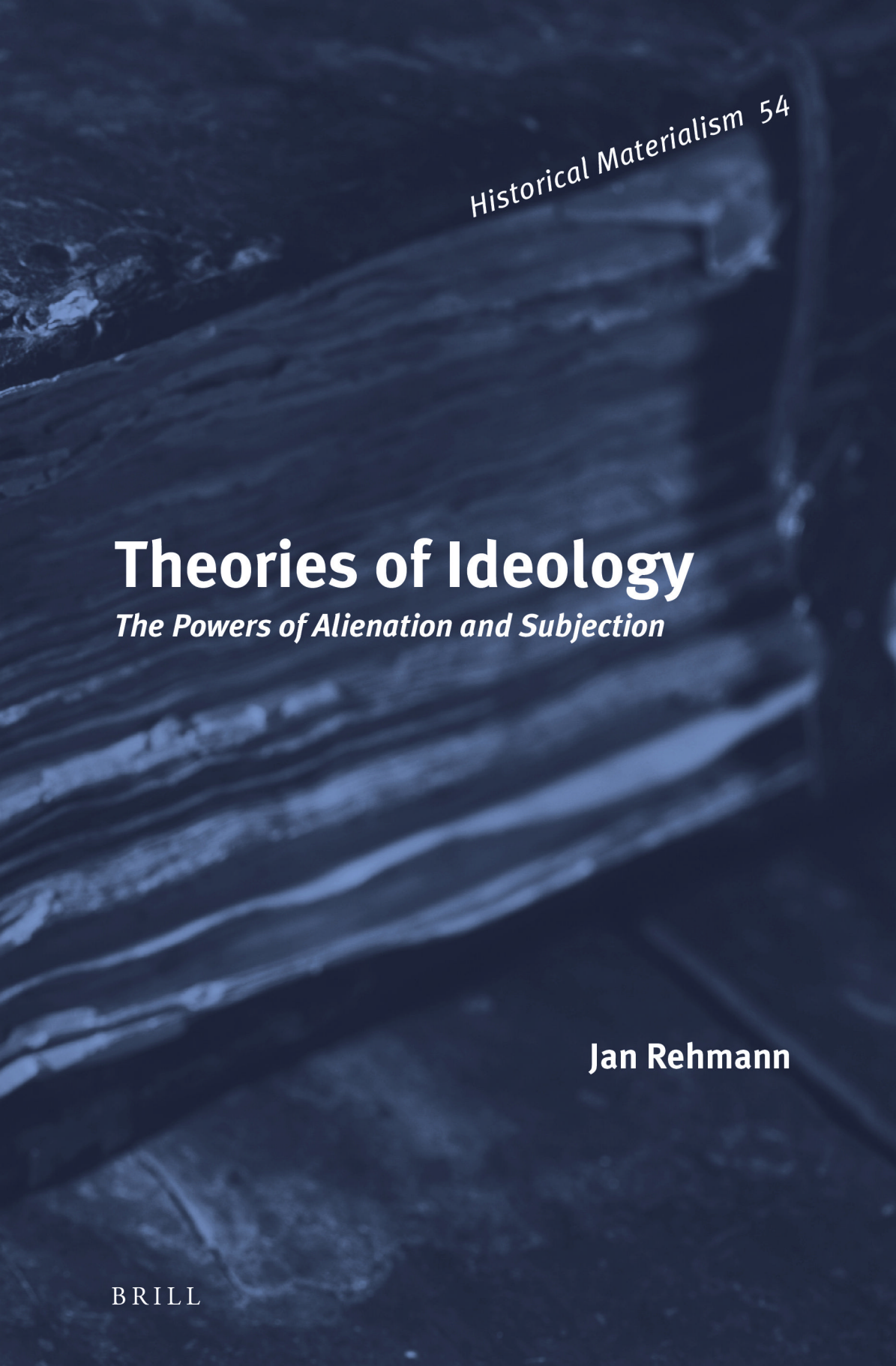

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Theories of Ideology
The Powers of Alienation and Subjection
Jan Rehmann
BRILL

Theories of Ideology

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Theories of Ideology

The Powers of Alienation and Subjection

By

Jan Rehmann



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Introduction

I

When the economic crisis hit in September 2008, neoliberal ideology – with its holy trinity of deregulation, privatisation and free trade – seemed completely discredited. As the US government initiated huge bailouts of big banks and financial institutions, granting them a support that the working and middle classes would never receive, public wrath turned immediately against both the financial heroes of previous years and the politicians bailing them out. Thomas Frank described this as a 'populist moment', which was however missed by the new Obama administration, which followed the bailout-course of its predecessor and turned over economic policy to two friends of Wall Street – Larry Summers and Tim Geithner.[1]

Lacking any independent and viable leftist formation (and with *Occupy Wall Street* still two years away), the terrain was immediately occupied by the Tea Party, which articulated and simultaneously redirected people's anger. What manifested itself in innumerable rattlesnake-flags reading 'Don't Tread on Me', was a different kind of populism, whose target had shifted from Wall Street to Washington: 'an uprising against government and taxes and federal directives', and one 'in favour of the very conditions that had allowed Wall Street to loot the world'.[2]

1. T. Frank 2012, pp. 34, 39, 167–8.
2. T. Frank 2012, pp. 41–2.

How can we understand this shift from 'Wall Street' to 'Washington', from a potentially progressive, anti-corporate populism, which swept Obama to the White House, to a right-wing populism which, instead of taking up the issue of the plight of those foreclosed, mobilised against the possibility that such 'losers' might get government-support? The first wave of mass-events was indeed kicked off by business-reporter Rick Santelli's televised rant on 19 February 2009, where, standing on the floor of the Chicago Board of Trade, he denounced the government's attempt to go about 'subsidising the losers' mortgages' with public money. The subsequent rallies were organised by leading conservative institutions. Without influential conservative organisations like *Americans for Prosperity* and *Freedom Works*, without the massive media-support by the Murdoch empire and the Fox News network, and without the money by large corporations such as the Koch brothers, the Tea Party movement would not have experienced such a meteoric rise.[3] Paul Krugman certainly had a point when he argued that these were not manifestations of a grassroots-movement expressing a spontaneous outpouring of public sentiment, but rather a series of 'AstroTurf (fake grassroots) events, manufactured by the usual suspects'.[4]

But this is less a satisfying answer than simply the beginning of a series of new disquieting questions: how could a predominantly white, male, middle-class mobilisation initiated and dominated by big money position itself as a movement from the bottom up? How could it be perceived as 'protest' given that it embodied an 'ultraliberal-authoritarian radicalisation' of a neoliberalism now in crisis,[5] which had reigned for over thirty years and was still in power? Why did Santelli not immediately become the laughing stock of the country, when he equated the stock-traders with 'America' and 'We the People'? How can we explain that the Tea Party, in spite of its open hatred of organised labour, gained significant traction among blue-collar workers?

The Tea Party is, of course, not an isolated phenomenon, but rather part of a series of neo-conservative uprisings, which in the US stretched from the backlash following the Vietnam War through the culture-wars of the 1970s to the Gingrich Revolution of 1994. The list is to be complemented by several successful right-wing and neo-fascist movements in Europe. Most of them present themselves as foes of the global and domestic elite and as representatives of the people on history's receiving end. If we had an X-ray for social conflicts, W.F. Haug argued, the Republicans would become visible as reckless representatives of capitalism, who oppose any subtraction from the produced surplus-value for social and reproductive purposes and only approve those expenses

3. Cf. Solty 2010a, p. 46.
4. Krugman 2009.
5. Solty 2011, p. 150.

that finance the coercive armour of capitalism.[6] Since such an X-ray is not easily available, what most people saw was a movement from below that was expanding rhizomatically along the lines of tupperware-parties and was confronting Obama, who had left his own electoral grassroots-movement behind, with an inverted mirror-image of that movement.

II

I will not explore these dynamics any further, but simply use them as a lead-in example for a first attempt to formulate the fundamental task of an ideology-theory. We are obviously dealing with a peculiar inversion. The elites of big capital and finance and their political and ideological representatives are not only capable of pushing through their neoliberal 'reforms', presenting them as an objective (and beneficial) necessity, but also of simultaneously manifesting themselves as a protest-movement, and this even in opposition to the consequences of their own politics. The protest is arranged in a way that it reinforces the predominant ideological pattern. Through this two-pronged strategy, those above succeed in realising its class-rule as 'hegemony'. Hegemony is one of the key concepts of Antonio Gramsci's theory, and means that the ruling class does not only 'rule' but also 'leads', in the sense that it generates among its subjects a kind of consensus (active or passive) to its rule. Connected to the ruling class are numerous politicians, jurists, religious moralists, philosophers, artists and other intellectuals who work on translating the predominant ideology into a language that the people find convincing. Whereas the foundation and the functioning of class-rule are systematically silenced, popular outrage is channeled into outrage against the latte-drinking, sushi-eating, Volvo-driving 'liberal elites',[7] against the 'bureaucrats', the trade-union leadership, the 'aloof' intellectuals and against the poor, who are usually racialised as a predominantly black and immoral inner-city 'underclass'.

In accordance with different regions and times, the components of the ruling power-bloc can change, as well as the oppositional counter-images it needs for its self-consolidation. In the 'golden years' of Fordism, roughly between the Second World-War and the end of the 1970s, the staunchly anti-communist and racist parts of the trade-union leadership in the US were to a large degree an integral part of the ruling bloc. In certain political conjunctures, leading politicians might direct their moral condemnation against particular factions of the ruling class, for example against the 'corporate raiders' of hedge-funds or the 'vulture-capitalists'

6. Cf. W.F. Haug 2012, p. 221.
7. Cf. T. Frank 2004, pp. 16–17.

of speculative finance-capital. The German fascists deployed their anti-Semitic enemy-images on three fronts: against the 'Jewish' labour-movement and the poor (the 'Bolsheviks' and the poor 'Eastern-European Jews'), the 'subversive' and 'deracinated' liberal intellectuals, and 'Jewish finance', portrayed as '*raffendes Kapital*' as opposed to German '*schaffendes Kapital*' ('money grabbing' as opposed to 'productive' capital).

The task of an ideology-theory is here to develop analytical instruments that allow for an understanding of these ideological inversions, displacements, and enemy-constructs. The term was coined in the 1970s in order to designate a re-foundation of Marxist research into ideology stimulated by Louis Althusser. It was distinguished from three other approaches: 1. the reduction of ideologies to epiphenomena of the economic – a tendency often described as 'economism' or 'class-reductionism'; 2. a traditional ideology-critique that understood the ideological as a 'false' and 'inverted' consciousness, which had to be criticised from the standpoint of a 'correct consciousness'; 3. 'legitimacy-theories' which, following Max Weber and Niklas Luhmann, posed the question of ideological integration in a 'social-technological' way, from the perspective of domination and its self-justification. Taking up Weber's analyses of 'rational' domination,[8] Luhmann proclaimed that the complexity of modern societies required a 'generalised acceptance of decisions'. What was needed were not motivated convictions, but 'acceptance without motivation'.[9] The passive acceptance of decisions made by 'legitimate' experts was depicted as an objective necessity, the possibility of democratisation and participation from below was not even considered. According to Jürgen Habermas, Luhmann called upon the elites to make their decisions in an 'autonomous' way, without democratic interference, so that his theory ultimately amounted to a new ideology that technocratically justified domination.[10]

The need for an ideology-theory renewal resulted from the fact that none of these traditions was able to explain the stability of bourgeois society and its state, let alone to develop a strategy of democratic-socialist transformation capable of gaining hegemony. The approaches of ideology-theory attempted to fulfil this need by inquiring into the social constitution and unconscious modes of the functioning and efficacy of the ideological. They thereby focused upon ideology's

8. The starting point of Weber's sociology of domination was the question with what kind of economic means or ideal motives an administrative staff can be bound to domination, and how the subjects can be convinced that this rule is 'legitimate' (Weber 1978, pp. 212–13). From there, he distinguished three types of 'legitimate domination', namely 'traditional domination' (the invocation of the ruling tradition's holiness), 'charismatic domination' (the invocation of the holiness or the heroism of an elected person), and 'rational domination', which invokes the legality of laws.

9. 'Motivfreies [...] Akzeptieren' (Luhmann 1969, p. 32).

10. Habermas and Luhmann 1971, pp. 239 et sqq., 269.

'materiality', its existence as an ensemble of apparatuses, intellectuals, rituals and forms of praxis.

III

How would these first descriptions apply to our example? It is obvious that the rise of the Tea Party movement cannot be simply explained as an 'expression' of the economy. Before the recent crisis favoured the populist assault of the Tea Party, it fuelled the masses' 'hopes' in the 'Yes, we can' promises of the Obama campaign, and it might well be argued that its devastating social consequences then constituted the sounding board for the emergence and popular anchorage of the *Occupy Wall Street* movement. Whether the endangered middle classes eagerly throw themselves into the arms of the upper classes or build alliances with the working class and the marginalised is not solely determined by their economic condition. It also depends on complex relations of force within and between ideological apparatuses and powers, which in turn leave their imprint on the common sense of people. Whether social movements take off or not, whether they maintain momentum or subside, depends on multiple conditions, not least on the actual actors and their capacities to seize the opportunities available to them, to invent creative forms of action and to build convincing alliances. A significant factor in the hegemonic relations of force is, for example, whether or not there exists an independent and non-sectarian leftist party or leftist formation which is able to articulate and connect different initiatives and movements.

Ideology-theory thus requires a break with 'economism'. Its object is precisely *not* the search for direct equivalences between economic conditions and ideological positions, as if the former were the underlying truth of the latter. It is, rather, confronted with the discrepancy, or refraction, between what Marxism traditionally described as 'objective' interests and the way they are interpreted by the subjects. The challenge is how to grasp why turning to certain ideological values and attitudes can go hand in hand with the loss of collective and individual agency. A major subject of a critical ideology-theory is people's 'voluntary' subjection to alienated forms of domination, the consent to conditions restricting their capacities to act.

In this regard, the critical understanding of ideology as 'false' and 'inverted' consciousness initially appears to be more appropriate. If people allow themselves to be mobilised by moral and family-values and receive in exchange a worsening of labour-conditions, more unemployment, the actual disintegration of families and finally the further decomposition of the values they imagined they were supporting, then something must be 'misdirected'. The mere assessment of

'false' consciousness does, however, not yet say anything about the conditions in which it emerges and endures. A *theory* of ideology begins at the moment when its social genesis, functional necessity and efficacy becomes the object of reflection. 'Falseness' is furthermore a highly generalising and potentially totalising notion, which tends to dissimulate the contradictory composition of ideologies. It seduces intellectuals to tear down oppositional or competing world-views without carefully paying attention to, and working on, the realistic elements within ideologies and common sense. It thus risks enhancing attitudes which impede the development of 'organic intellectuals' (Gramsci) in progressive movements and leftist parties.

According to Stuart Hall, the most important question regarding an 'organic' ideology is 'not what is *false* about it but what about it is *true*', namely what 'makes good sense', which is usually 'quite enough for ideology'.[11] This also applies to 'family-values', which are, despite the obvious hypocrisy and bigotry of many of their conservative proponents, not simply 'false', but represent, in whatever displaced or distorted forms, longings for solidarity, closeness, and reliability in a torn world, not least among the impoverished and marginalised, whose family-lives have been unhinged and destabilised. In this sense, the young Marx went beyond a rationalist rejection of religion as superstitious fallacy and described it as the 'sigh of the oppressed creature', the 'heart of a heartless world' as well as the 'spirit of spiritless conditions'.[12] His approach to religion helps to illustrate an important methodological difference between traditional ideology-critique and a materialist ideology-theory: whereas the former might content itself with a notion of religion as 'inverted' consciousness and as the 'opium of the people',[13] the latter would focus on an analysis of the relations of force within the 'religious field' (Bourdieu), which in turn functions as part of the hegemonic relations of force in civil society.

IV

The ideology-theoretical objections to a traditional ideology-critique of 'false consciousness' can be summarised in three points. One, a mere ideology-critique tends to overlook the material existence of the ideological, that is, its apparatuses, its intellectuals and praxis-forms, which impact on people's common sense; two, it overlooks or underestimates, by its fixation with phenomena of consciousness, the unconscious functioning of ideological forms and practices; and finally, the endeavour to refute ideologies risks drawing attention away from the main

11. Hall 1988, p. 46.
12. Marx 1843, p. 175.
13. Ibid.

ideology-theoretical task, which is to grasp their appeal and efficacy. A careful understanding of ideology's power over people's 'hearts and minds' is, however, a necessary prerequisite for developing an efficacious critique of ideology able to 'release' its appealing elements, which are capable of being transformed, and remounted to function 'in a different connection'.[14]

This proposal by Ernst Bloch should warn us that the notions of 'critique' and 'ideology-critique' can be utilised in quite different ways. In the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, the young Marx had opposed a 'vulgar', 'dogmatic' criticism, which '*fights* with its subject-matter', and 'true philosophical criticism,' which does not only show the contradictions of a phenomenon as existing, but '*explains* them,... comprehends their genesis, their necessity'.[15] *Critique* in a Marxian sense, in particular as developed in Marx's *critique of political economy*, does not mean the rejection of a phenomenon 'from the outside', but rather the historical-critical reconstruction of its emergence and inner composition. A critique of ideology in the sense of reconstruction and 'determinate negation' would thus coincide with the methodological claim of ideology-theories.

This shows that the demarcations between ideology-critique and ideology-theory are not as clear cut as they first seemed. Under closer examination, most of the approaches usually described as 'ideology- critical' also try to explain the conditions in which ideologies emerge and their efficacy – for example, in reference to the Marxian analysis of commodity-, money- and capital-fetishism and the 'objective thought-forms' it engenders (see Section 2.2.2.). At the same time, so-called ideology-theories contain of course a component of criticism, which however shifts from the traditional paradigm of a true-false dichotomy to the analytical distinction between domination and emancipatory agency, or, as the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* proposes, between an ideological 'socialisation from above' and dimensions of 'horizontal' socialisation (see Section 9.3.). In my critique of Althusser, I will push the envelope and argue that ideology-theories proclaiming to do without an ideology-critical perspective run the risk of being transformed back into functionalist theories of legitimacy.

The distinction from the approaches of 'ideology-critique' should, therefore, not be understood as an absolute one. Since the history of theories often moves through pendulum-swings, the traditions of ideology-critique and of ideology-theory have developed separately and often against each other. This is primarily due to the circumstance that the Althusser school, in the name of its understanding of Marxism as a 'theoretical anti-humanism', has rejected fundamental ideology-critical concepts like alienation, fetishism, and reification. Since I do

14. Bloch 1990, p. 113.
15. Marx 1843, p. 91.

not share this interpretation, and consider the consecutive separation of ideology-critique and ideology-theory to be misguided and counterproductive, I will try to bring the two strands back into dialogue. The objective of such a mediation is the renewal of an ideology-critique, which operates with a theory of the ideological as 'conceptual hinterland'.[16]

The structure of the book

Even though Althusser and his school liked to present their approach as something completely new *vis-à-vis* the entire Marxist tradition, ideology-theory should not be comprehended as a completely new discovery, but rather as a re-articulation and new re-evaluation of questions that had already been worked on by Marx and Engels in different terminology. After evaluating in Chapter One the pre-Marxian history of the concept, that is, from Destutt de Tracy, who had introduced the neologism 'ideology' in order to conceptualise an exact *science* of ideas, to the consecutive attack on the 'ideologists' by Emperor Napoleon I, I will focus in Chapter Two on the different usages by Marx and Engels, which in turn became the starting points for different ideology-theoretical schools afterwards. In contrast to the official 'Marxist-Leninist' interpretation, I will show that Marx and Engels did not develop a 'neutral' concept of ideology, but rather a critical concept which expected ideology to lose its functional necessity and to 'wither away' (like the state) in a classless society. Against a widespread misunderstanding, I will also demonstrate that their ideology-critical approach was not restricted to a critique of 'false consciousness', but was mainly interested in reconstructing the underlying real 'inversions' in the social relations of class-societies. They identified such inversions first in the division of manual and intellectual labour, then in the fetishism of the commodity, money, and capital, and finally in the detached position of the state emerging together with class-antagonisms as the 'first ideological power' (Engels) over society. Even though their language was deeply enmeshed in the contemporary discourses of 'consciousness', with which they were simultaneously in hand-to-hand combat, they were the ones who discovered the new continent of a critical ideology-theory and outlined promising research-questions, which were however to a large extent 'lost' in the consecutive development of Marxism.

Chapter Three deals with the historical phenomenon that both the official Marxism of the Second International and the 'Marxist-Leninist' tradition of the Third International repressed Marx and Engels's ideology-critique and replaced

16. W.F. Haug 1993, p. 21.

it with a 'neutral' concept of ideology. Lenin's opposition of 'material' and 'ideological' relations led to the identification of ideology and 'ideas' and therefore overlooked the materiality and relative autonomy of the ideological. His practical-political approaches to ideological struggles indeed contained valuable ideology-critical perspectives, which were, however, paradoxically combined with hierarchical forms and later systematically repressed by Stalinism. A combination of an impoverished economy, a lack of democratic traditions and what Rosa Luxemburg criticised as the 'ultracentralism' of the Bolshevik party led to a fully-fledged re-ideologisation of Soviet society, whose long lasting paralysing effects finally contributed to the downfall of administrative state-socialism.

Besides Antonio Labriola, it was mainly György Lukács who disrupted the marginalisation of Marx and Engels' critical concept of ideology – a historical achievement, which had a strong impact on the development of the Frankfurt School. Chapter Four reconstructs how Lukács combined both Marx's critique of commodity-fetishism and Max Weber's concept of 'formal rationalisation' to the effect, however, that he totalised his concept of 'reified consciousness' in a way that ideological contradictions and struggles vanished from sight. In this neo-Hegelian model of 'expressive totality' (Althusser), ideological reproduction seemed to function by itself, without any apparatuses, intellectuals, and ideological practices. Adorno and Horkheimer adopted their ideology-critical approach primarily from there (albeit without an orientation towards proletarian revolution), but then decided, after their return from their US exile to Germany, to abandon the concept of ideology altogether. Despite its totalising view, the Frankfurt School has developed significant contributions to an understanding of ideological socialisation in Fordism, the radical nature of which were toned down in the second generation around Habermas. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of Wolfgang Fritz Haug's critique of 'commodity-aesthetics', which has in my view the merit of overcoming the unproductive alternatives between an all-encompassing denunciation of modern 'reason' and a resigned abandonment of ideology-critique altogether.

Chapter Five interprets Gramsci's reflections on hegemony, common sense, and ideology as a promising alternative to the main characteristics of both 'Marxism-Leninism' and Critical Theory. According to a predominant pattern in secondary literature, Gramsci developed a 'neutral' concept of ideology, which differed from the Leninist account in that it referred not just to ideas, but to the hegemonic apparatuses in civil society. This is indeed an important ideology-theoretical shift, but the prioritisation of a 'neutral' concept of ideology dissimulates the important fact that he has also adopted a critical concept of ideology from Labriola. I will, therefore, bend the stick in the other direction and show how his 'philosophy of praxis' as well as his analysis of common sense, 'passive

revolution', subalternity, corporatism etc. are closely intertwined with a differentiated notion of ideology-critique, which, on the base of a theory of hegemony, is capable of intervening into the ensemble of ideological superstructures.

It is obvious that Althusser's concept of 'ideological state-apparatuses' (ISA) was strongly influenced by Gramsci's reflections on civil society and hegemonic apparatuses. But whereas Gramsci focused on the contradictory composition of 'common sense', of which ideologies were just a dimension, Althusser tended to generalise the aspect of ideological socialisation from above so that the aspect of struggle and resistance were again sidelined. In comparison to Gramsci, particularly new were the concepts of the subject, its voluntary subjection and 'imaginary' relations that Althusser developed on the basis of Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis. This enabled him to understand ideology as an unconscious, 'lived' relationship, and to grasp the dynamic and active character of ideological subjugation. As I argue in Chapter Six, Althusser's subject-theory had the weakness, however, that it no longer identified alienation with specific structures of domination in society, but with the human condition as such, so that human beings were conceived of as 'ideological animals' – forever subjected to an omnihistorical 'ideology in general'. Althusser's over-integrative model of 'interpellation' could not adequately conceptualise how and under what conditions the subjects can talk back at and resist the ideological appeals addressed to them. The contradiction between Althusser's attempt to establish a historical-materialist theory of ideological state-apparatuses and his unhistorical concept of 'ideology in general' became one of the reasons for the decomposition of the Althusser school.

This decomposition then becomes the starting point of Chapter Seven, which traces a contradictory development from Marxism to Postmodernism, in the course of which the concept of ideology was successively displaced by that of 'knowledge', 'discourse' and 'power'. Before discourse-theory became a marker for 'poststructuralism', it was first developed (primarily by Michel Pêcheux) within an Althusserian framework. A neo-Gramscian line around the early Ernesto Laclau and Stuart Hall integrated linguistic and semiotic approaches into an ideology-theory in order to be able to analyse neoliberalism, rightwing populism and popular culture. The 'superannuation' of ideology-theory by theories of discourse and power is then discussed with the example of Michel Foucault. I will argue that the postmodernist turn was not only a step back behind the ideology-theoretical level of differentiation, but also became itself an ideological component of neoliberalism. This does not mean, however, that its theoretical proposals are of no interest for a historical-materialist ideology-theory. I will therefore reflect on the question of how Foucault's concepts of '*dispositif*' and 'techniques' of power could be re-interpreted in an alternative framework.

Pierre Bourdieu dropped the concept of ideology in the 1990s and replaced it with 'symbolic violence'. While I do not see a convincing advantage in this

terminological decision, I dedicate Chapter Eight to his approach, because I consider his concepts of 'field' and 'habitus' to be highly relevant to the development of ideology-theory. Not only did he develop his concept of 'field' from Marx and Engels's reflections on the division of manual and mental labour, the concept has also the merit of conceptualising relatively decentralised ideological areas that are not organised in an 'apparatus'. The concept of 'habitus' is important when it comes to grasping the connections between ideological interpellations and embodied patterns of everyday practice, perception, and ways of feeling. I will also discuss the disputed question of whether Bourdieu's assumption of a 'homology' between structural positions and 'habitus' takes the creative potential out of social practice and thus reproduces a determinism similar to the one with which he charged Althusser.

Chapter Nine deals with the theory of the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT*), founded by Wolfgang Fritz Haug at the Free University of Berlin, a research-project in which I had the opportunity to participate as a student from 1977 to 1985. It is obvious that the theoretical approach we developed in these years has also influenced the present book. It is, in my estimation, an enduring merit of the *PIT* approach to have worked on reconnecting the separate strands of ideology-critique and ideology-theory on a new conceptual foundation. Starting from the critical concept of ideology outlined by Marx and Engels, the *PIT* developed a conception of the ideological as alienated socialisation (*Vergesellschaftung*) from above. The ideological is, however, not primarily situated on the level of consciousness so that the attention, similar to Gramsci and Althusser, focuses on the functioning of ideological powers, apparatuses, practices and thought-forms.

Since the *PIT* approach is at times conflated with Althusser's theory of ideology,[17] it may be useful to clarify two methodological decisions that helped avoid and overcome Althusser's 'functionalist' tendency: firstly, the *PIT*'s concept of the ideological does not claim to comprehend the entirety of the subjects' social practices, thought-forms, and feelings, but identifies the specific dimension of a socialisation from above, which is in turn traversed and counterbalanced by other dimensions of socialisation like the 'cultural', the dimension of 'horizontal self-socialisation' or the 'proto-ideological'. While it is true that on the level of empirical research these dimensions constantly overlap and permeate each other, they must, however, be distinguished analytically. The subjects are therefore not reduced to mere 'effects' of ideological interpellations. Following Gramsci, their everyday life and common sense are conceived of being heterogeneous and contradictory.

Secondly, the *PIT* understands the ideological itself as a contradictory 'compromise-formation' (Freud). For ideologies to be effective among the popular

17. For example, Hahn 2007, p. 87; Seppmann 2007, p. 164.

classes, they also need to integrate into their 'vertical' top-down structure the 'horizontal' elements that refer (in whatever displaced way) to the people's 'commons' and are therefore recognised by them as their 'own'. To the extent that the ideological presents itself as a contradictory form condensing opposite positions and forces, it is open to 'antagonistic reclamation' by the different classes of society (such as 'God', 'morality', and 'liberty' invoked by both corporate ideologues and oppositional social-justice movements). An ideology-critique informed by ideology-theory will therefore aim at deciphering the elements and functions of the 'common' in the ideological, release them and claim them back.

The purpose of Chapter Ten is, then, to relate the analytical instruments developed so far to the ideological formation of neoliberalism, in particular to the neoliberal philosophy of one of its main theorists, Friedrich Hayek. Marx's criticism of commodity-fetishism and his considerations on the 'religion of everyday life' in bourgeois society turned out to be very helpful for a theoretical understanding of how Hayek elevated the anonymous market-order to a kind of 'hidden God' to be obeyed, an authority that humans are not supposed to know, to challenge or to interfere with. A 'symptomatic reading' (Althusser) of Hayek's book *The Mirage of Social Justice* reveals ruptures in the text that indicate the interference of a different second text in latency: when Hayek described the 'real dilemma' between on the one hand the necessary belief of individuals that their success depends on their own efforts, and on the other hand the insight that the market is a 'game' that might fail the worthy and reward the unworthy, he expressed a fundamental contradiction of neoliberal ideology, which, on the one hand, urges the subjects to creative self-mobilisation, and on the other hand submits them to the ominous decrees of the market-order. Neoliberal ideology is continuously permeated by its opposite: its criticism of the state, which is in fact only directed against the welfare-state, flows into an undemocratic despotism, its 'freedom' reveals to signify the virtue of submission to pre-given rules.

In order to grasp the specifics of neoliberal hegemony, the ideology-theories developed in the 'social-democratic' epoch of the 1970s and 1980s need to be updated. The appeal of neoliberal ideologies needs to be investigated in the context of the transition to a new mode of production of high-tech Capitalism (W.F. Haug). The increasing tendencies towards a 'disciplinary neoliberalism' (Stephen Gill), based on a large prison-system and new technologies of panoptic surveillance, changed the relationship between repressive and ideological apparatuses as well as between consensus-formation and dispersion and distraction. The economic crisis and the ensuing protracted slump of the capitalist economies in the US and in Europe raise the question of the extent to which neoliberal capitalism is going to lose its hegemony. This, however, also depends to a large degree on the development of anti-capitalist movements, which are able to articulate the

fundamental contradiction between capitalism and democracy, and on credible and appealing democratic-socialist alternatives.

The last chapter of this book deals with the unfulfilled promises of the late Foucault and Foucauldian 'governmentality-studies'. The late Foucault promised to differentiate between techniques of domination and of self-conduct and to conceptualise their interaction with the concept of 'governmentality'. By defining 'governmentality' as 'conducting conduct', his approach intersected with the ideology-theory of the *PIT* focusing on the encounter of ideological socialisation and practices of self-socialisation. I will show, however, that the promised differentiation between techniques of domination and self-conduct was not consistently maintained, which was the main reason why the Foucauldian analysis of liberal and neoliberal leadership-techniques lost its critical edge. Instead of taking seriously Hayek's symptomatic 'dilemma' between neoliberal appeals to self-activation and submission under the fateful decrees of the market, 'governmentality-studies' focused unilaterally on the aspect of subject-mobilisation and uncritically reproduced the ideological self-image of management-handbooks. An ideology-theoretical re-interpretation would of course relate the neoliberal appeals to more creativity and initiative to the real structures of domination in corporations, as well as to the polarising social divisions of neoliberal capitalism: when neoliberal discourse of 'empowerment' meets with precarious labour-conditions, unemployment, and poverty, they tend to engender 'destiny-effects' (Bourdieu) which confirm the 'worthlessness' of the individuals and thus destabilise their agency and subjectivity.

'Poststructuralism' has often been attributed with the insight that concepts have no fixed semantic 'essence', but rather adopt different meanings in different perspectives and contexts. However, this is, in fact, common knowledge in critical theories of ideology as well. It also applies to the concept of ideology itself, whose usage depends on the respective theoretical and practical interests. I tried to lay open my own focus and preferences, without of course intending to prescribe one single 'valid' definition of ideology and ideology-theory. The book, which is an enlarged and modified version of my *Einführung in die Ideologietheorie*,[18] is meant to be useful also for those who prefer other thematic emphases and conclusions. This is one of the reasons why I have planned the exposition of ideology-theories as a comparative study, which describes the different theoretical approaches according to their own immanent logic and 'translates' them into each other's discourses, making possible a genuine dialogue.

18. Rehmann 2008 (second edition 2011).

Chapter One
Twisted Preliminaries: The 'Idéologistes' and Napoleon

One of the basic findings in theories of ideology and discourse is that the meaning of a term is not fixed once and for all, but subject to change. At times, it can even turn into its opposite. This is the case with 'ideology'. Although from the nineteenth century onwards the term is usually employed to mark an opposition to an exact and scientific conception of the world, it was originally introduced to describe a specific *science*. It was defined as an 'idea-science' (ideology), which means that it resembled more what could be described as a critical dissection of ideas and their derivation from sensory perceptions. But in a similar fashion to other concepts ending in 'logy' (such as biology and ecology), 'ideology' experienced a semantic shift from the systematic knowledge of an object to the object itself, from the critical analysis of ideas to the ideas themselves.

1.1. Ideology as a 'natural science' of ideas

The neologism ideology was introduced in 1796 by Destutt de Tracy in his *Mémoire sur la faculté de penser*.[1] In an analogy with 'ontology', it was designed as an analytical science that aimed, following the model of the exact natural science (in particular, physiology), to dissect ideas into elementary component parts and – derived from the Greek sense of *eidos* as visual

1. Destutt de Tracy 1992.

image – to investigate the perceptions upon which they were founded. Underlying this, following Locke, Condillac and Cabanis, was the sensualist conviction that sense-perceptions are the only source of our ideas. When Tracy looked for an appropriate name for his 'analysis of sensations and ideas', he first discarded two alternative possibilities. He saw 'metaphysics' as discredited, because it was defined in opposition to *physics* and claimed to explain what cannot be explained, namely the 'origin of things, their first cause'. Similarly, 'psychology', the supposed 'science of the soul', unrealistically presupposed that one can know what the 'soul' is. In contrast, for Tracy the term 'ideology' had the advantage of foregoing any pre-construed causal assumption. It is 'very sensible since it supposes nothing doubtful or unknown. . . . Its meaning is very clear to everyone'.[2] Based on the original Greek meaning of *eidos* [image], the 'idea' has a 'particular relation to the sense of seeing', a meaning which was lost when it was transferred from 'sensory things to intellectual things'. *Idea* is, therefore, to be understood as 'truly synonymous' to *perception*.[3] Basing itself on the principle of movement of D'Holbach and on Spinoza's concept of the capacity to act (*potentia agendi*), the new science of 'ideology' claimed to overcome the dualism of materialism and idealism. Tracy also took over from Spinoza the rejection of 'free will', so that the physiological and sensory determinants of ideas, feelings and actions moved into central focus. In opposition to metaphysics, and claiming its position, ideology was 'positive', i.e. exact in the style of the natural sciences, and practically useful:[4] 'One can never be an *idéologiste* without having previously been a physiologist and therefore a physician and chemist.'[5]

All other sciences were subordinated to the new 'super-science', which claimed to establish their unity.[6] For Tracy, it was not only the 'first one of all in the genealogical order [la première de toutes dans l'ordre généalogique]', but also 'the only one, of which all the others are only applications'.[7] 'This common denominator, this foundation underlying all knowledge, this origin expressed in a continuous discourse is Ideology', it is the 'knowledge of all knowledge', observed Michel Foucault, who considered Tracy's approach as 'the last of the Classical

2. Destutt de Tracy 1992, pp. 70–1.
3. Destutt de Tracy 1992, p. 72. From this perspective, Tracy criticised Kant for considering sensory intuition only as a passive property, as a motionless raw material for understanding and reason. Since he could not see that sense-perception was already an activity, he invented the machinery of reason (Destutt de Tracy 1992, pp. 254–5; cf. Crampe-Casnabet 1994, p. 81).
4. Destutt de Tracy 1992, p. 65.
5. 'On ne sera jamais idéologiste sans être auparavant physiologiste, et par conséquent physicien et chimiste' (Destutt de Tracy 1992, p. 292). Cf. Kennedy 1994, pp. 29, 31; Goetz 1994, pp. 58 et sq., 61 et sq.).
6. Cf. Kennedy 1994, pp. 18, 25.
7. Destutt de Tracy 1992, pp. 37–8.

philosophies', immediately before the threshold of modernity.[8] Ideology thus formed the foundation of grammar, logic, education, morality, the regulation of desires and, finally, the greatest art: 'to regulate society in a way that man gets the most possible aid and the least possible harm from his peers'.[9] The rational derivation of meanings and goals of action was designed to balance out the social oppositions that traversed bourgeois society and thus, primarily through the system of education, contributed to the overcoming of class-struggles in an enlightened representative democracy.[10]

1.2. A post-Jacobin state-ideology

The task of 'regulating' society clearly shows that ideology was not in fact a non-partisan, universalist and foundational science, but was, rather, supposed to function as an ideology in the modern sense. It was designed to overcome the social contradictions of class-societies without abolishing their underlying structures. Tracy based his understanding of the economy on the conviction that since 'yours' and 'mine' derive unavoidably from the prior distinction of 'you' and 'me', private property was 'the inevitable consequence of our nature'.[11] Marx quoted Tracy's statement that 'in poor nations the people are comfortable, in rich nations they are generally poor' and called him a 'fish-blooded bourgeois doctrinaire'.[12] The integration of social antagonisms was to be realised by 'rationally' influencing people's perceptions and opinions. This was to be achieved mainly through a centralised education-system. This particular orientation toward the institutions of a centralised state is certainly characteristic of political history in France and helps understand why Althusser later described the school-system as the dominant 'ideological state-apparatus'. The ideology of the ideologists was itself 'inseparable from the material practices of the ideological state apparatuses', observes Eagleton.[13] It is to be analysed, as Gramsci remarked, 'historically, in the terms of the philosophy of praxis, as a superstructure'.[14]

Let us have a look at the political and ideological conjuncture. 'Ideology' emerged in the post-Jacobin period of the French Revolution as a research-project

8. Foucault 1994, p. 85; cf. pp. 241–2.
9. '. . . de régler nos désirs, la morale; et enfin, du plus grand des arts, . . . celui de régler la société de façon que l'homme y trouve le plus de secours et le moins de gêne de la part de ses semblables' (Destutt de Tracy 1992, p. 39).
10. Cf. Goetz 1994, p. 71.
11. Cited after Kennedy 1978, p. 368.
12. Marx 1976, p. 802. Cf. also Marx's critique of Tracy's theory of reproduction, in Marx 1978, pp. 556–64.
13. Eagleton 1991, p. 69.
14. Gramsci 1971, p. 376; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §63.

of a group of scholars, the so-called '*idéologistes*', who played an important role in the foundation of the *Institut National*, the *École Normale Supérieure* and the *Institut de France*. Tracy was a wealthy landowner who had changed sides and supported the revolution. But in 1793, he was suspected of conspiring with the counterrevolution, imprisoned by the Jacobins, and condemned to execution. However, he was then saved by the toppling of Robespierre two days before his execution-date in 1794. He started his work on ideology in his prison-cell by reading Locke and Condillac's *Traité des Systèmes*, and laid out his project to work on the 'faculty of thought or perceiving'.[15] Opposing the 'irrational' Jacobin rule of terror, and advocating a 'rational' bourgeois order, Tracy and his circle occupied leading positions in the education-system under the rule of the Directory and strongly influenced its 'Thermidor' ideology. Tracy introduced the concept of ideology into the debates of the *Institut National*, which was created in 1795 as a state-institution bringing together leading republican intellectuals for the reorganisation of the education-system. 'Ideology' was thus a post-revolutionary construct. It was 'the ideology of a group of propertied intellectuals in power after Thermidor, who hoped to use it to transform and stabilize post-Revolutionary France'.[16] It was designed to institutionalise the achievements of the Enlightenment and republicanism at the very moment when Jacobinism was politically defeated – thereby marking a transition, which could be described in Gramscian terminology as a 'passive revolution' (see Section 5.2.).[17] It was meant to conserve republican achievements while 'evacuating' plebeian demands and to establish the principle of 'representation' against the 'utopia' of a direct democracy. In the brief period of the Directory, it was accredited with the status of a state-philosophy.[18]

1.3. Napoleon's pejorative concept of ideology

The meaning of 'ideology', however, underwent a fundamental shift during the rule of Napoleon I. The 'passive revolution' initiated by the *idéologistes* in the systems of science and education could only be unstable and temporary. One reason for this was their sharp anti-religious stance. Tracy described religion as 'an obstacle to sound logic and to sane . . . morality', so that it had to be replaced by 'ideology'.[19] But the emerging Bonapartist regime needed for its inner stability

15. Cf. Kennedy 1978, pp. 31–7.
16. Kennedy 1979, p. 358.
17. Gramsci analysed, for example, the emergence of the national states in Continental Europe as a 'passive revolution' against the Jacobin Revolution in France (for instance, Gramsci 1975, Q1, §150; Q10.II, §61).
18. Cf. Deneys 1994, pp. 109, 117–18; Goetz 1994, pp. 66–7, 71.
19. Cited after Kennedy 1978, p. 64.

a populist ideology with a solid religious component, as well as a renewed alliance with the Catholic Church (as sealed by the Concordat in 1801).

Napoleon Bonaparte had initially flattered the *idéologistes*, who in turn helped him stage the 'Eighteenth Brumaire', his *coup d'état* against the Directory in November 1799.[20] The dispute broke out in 1800, when Tracy and other members of the *Institute*, who had been nominated to join the *Council of Public Instruction*, tried to annihilate the religious components in public education and to establish their secular 'ideology' as the mandatory foundation of the *Écoles Centrales*. These plans were criticised both from the 'Right', which advocated the restoration of the *collèges* of the old regime, and from the 'Left', which criticised Tracy's elitist view that the *écoles centrales* were to be reserved for the children of the 'educated classes', whereas the children of the popular classes were to receive only an 'abridged' education.[21] When the Bonapartist government put a stop to these politics and prepared for the Concordat with the Catholic Church (1801), the proud term *idéologiste* was turned into the pejorative term *idéologue*. From now on, Napoleon accused the 'class . . . of windbags and *idéologues*' (*de phraseurs et d'idéologues*) of undermining the state's authority with rationalist and natural-right abstractions. The *idéologues* were not only 'dangerous dreamers', but also 'disguised materialists and not too disguised', who deprived the people of religion and salutary illusions and flattered the populace with a sovereignty that it could not exercise: 'Always distrusting authority, even when it was in their hands, they always refused to give it the indispensable force needed to resist revolution'.[22]

In other words, Napoleon criticised the *idéologues* because their 'ideology' did not fulfil the promise of *ideology* (in the modern sense), namely to deliver 'moral' and 'educational' devices that were effective in organising the people's 'voluntary' submission to the Bonapartist regime. As Napoleon's empire became increasingly precarious, destabilised by both military defeats and domestic opposition, the *idéologues* became the prime scapegoat, potentially encompassing all kinds of real or suspected opponents. 'We must lay the blame for the ills that our fair France has suffered on ideology', Napoleon claimed in 1812 after France's defeat at the hands of Russia, 'that shadowy metaphysics which subtly searches for first causes on which to base the legislation of peoples, rather than making use of laws known to the human heart'.[23] In the end, the concept became a 'weapon in the hand of an Emperor struggling desperately to silence his opponents and to maintain a crumbling regime'.[24]

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20. Cf. Kennedy 1978, pp. 77 et sqq.
21. Kennedy 1978, p. 91.
22. Cited after Kennedy 1978, pp. 89, 188–9.
23. Cited after Kennedy 1978, p. 215.
24. Thompson 1990, p. 31.

Under the blows of these vehement attacks, the concept of ideology 'gradually shifts from denoting a sceptical scientific materialism to signifying a sphere of abstract, disconnected ideas'.[25] With this pejorative meaning, the term passed into German before 1830 and was picked up in dictionaries by 1838. As early as 1828, Heinrich Heine, in his *Englische Fragmente*, described the Germans as 'a speculative people, ideologists, thinkers before and after the event, dreamers who live only in the future, never in the present'.[26] An echo of this semantic displacement can be detected in the doctoral dissertation of the 23-year-old Marx in 1840–1, when he ascribed to Epicurus: 'Our life does not need ideology and empty hypotheses, but rather, that we live without confusion'.[27]

Eagleton drew the conclusion that Marx and Engels adopted Napoleon's pejorative usage and shared in his 'pragmatic contempt for "ideology", in the sense of a fantastical idealism'.[28] But this explanation overstates the continuity, so that the specific new quality of the concept in Marx and Engels drops out of sight. Far from targeting 'fantastical idealism' from a 'pragmatic' point of view, *The German Ideology* reconstructed the supposedly 'autonomous' consciousness from the social division of material and intellectual labour (see Section 2.1.4.). To be sure, Marx and Engels tapped into (and were dependent on) the given semantic field that had been prepared by Napoleon's attacks. But they did not formulate their critique from the perspective of an autocratic power denouncing every objection to it as 'ideology'. On the contrary, power and domination were no more the invisible perspective that determined the usage of the concept of 'ideology', but rather became the explicit object of their ideology-critique.

In this respect, the similarities between the overall project of the *idéologistes* and of Marx are much more relevant: they both shared a common interest in the critical analysis of ideas and images, the conditions in which they emerged, and their mode of functioning. But whereas the *idéologistes* broke down ideas into ahistorical 'sensations', Marx referred them to the 'ensemble of social relations', which provided the hermeneutical key to decipher what the 'essence of man' in its concrete reality might be.[29] After the 'first baptism' of ideology by the *idéologistes* and the second by Napoleon, it was this 'third baptism' by Marx and Engels that inscribed ideology into the 'register of the fundamental concepts of modernity'.[30]

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25. Eagleton 1991, p. 70.
26. Cited after Rosen 1996, p. 172.
27. Marx 1841, p. 68.
28. Eagleton 1991, p. 78.
29. Cf. the sixth thesis on Feuerbach (Marx 1845, p. 4). See also Gramsci's comparison between Destutt de Tracy's 'sensualist' concept of ideology and the one of the philosophy of praxis (Gramsci 1971, pp. 375–7; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §63).
30. W.F. Haug 1993, p. 9.

Chapter Two

Ideology-Critique and Ideology-Theory according to Marx and Engels

Marx and Engels certainly did not elaborate an explicit and systematic ideology-theory in any way comparable to the rigour and coherence of their *critique of political economy*. Rather, they used the concept of ideology *ad hoc*, in concrete circumstances, mostly in confrontation with various opponents. This does not mean, however, that they utilised the term in an arbitrary way, or that their reflections were without theoretical validity. On the contrary, as soon as one distinguishes between the concrete discursive scuffles they were involved in and their methodological approach, one can see that their different usages were held together by an implicit coherence which, in an astonishing way, foreshadowed many of the achievements of later ideology-theories.

The fact that Marx and Engels deployed the term 'ideology' in different contexts and in different ways resulted in three primary tendencies being derived from their works in subsequent theoretical writings: firstly, an *ideology-critical* approach, represented in particular by György Lukács and the Frankfurt School, which interpreted ideology as 'inverted' or 'reified' consciousness; second, a 'neutral' concept of ideology, formulated in particular by Lenin and predominant in 'Marxism-Leninism', which understood ideology as a class-specific conception of the world and therefore also considered Marxism to be an 'ideology'; and third, a conception that ranged from Antonio Gramsci to

Louis Althusser, and from Stuart Hall to the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT*), which understood the ideological as the ensemble of apparatuses and forms of praxis that organise the relation of individuals to the self and to the world. These three interpretations are not always clearly separated from each other, but could also overlap and be combined.

2.1. From 'inverted consciousness' to 'idealistic superstructures'

The critique of ideology as necessarily inverted consciousness could refer to numerous formulations in which Marx and Engels (for example, in relation to religion) spoke of 'inverted world-consciousness', an 'independent kingdom in the clouds', a 'distorted conception', a 'standing on its head', and so forth.[1] Ideology was accomplished by the thinker with a 'false consciousness', who missed the real motives impelling him; 'otherwise', noted the late Engels, 'it would not be an ideological process'.[2] According to *The German Ideology*, ideologists 'inevitably put the thing upside-down and regard their ideology both as the creative force and as the aim of all social relations, whereas it is only an expression and symptom of these relations'.[3]

2.1.1. *The* camera obscura *and its critics*

Different descriptions of 'distortion' and 'inversion' were embodied in the image of a *camera obscura*: 'If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.'[4] In order to disprove the idealist inversions of 'German philosophy', which according to Marx and Engels 'descends from heaven to earth', they claimed not to start from 'what men say, imagine, conceive', but rather from 'men in the flesh': 'Setting out from real, active men [*vom wirklichen tätigen Menschen*], and on the basis of their real life-process', they attempted to demonstrate 'the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. . . . It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness'.[5]

These descriptions have been vigorously questioned by different schools of ideology-theory. *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT*) criticised the terms 'reflexes' and

1. For example, Marx 1843, p. 175; Marx and Engels 1845, pp. 27 et sqq.; Marx 1873, p. 19.
2. Engels 1893, p. 164.
3. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 420.
4. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 36.
5. Marx and Engels 1845, pp. 36 et sq.

'echoes' as 'mechanistic metaphors' that were unable to grasp the genesis of ideologies like religion and morals.[6] According to Stuart Hall, terms like 'false consciousness' or 'ideological distortion' assumed that the masses were the 'dupes of history', whereas 'we', the critical intellectuals, were supposedly able to live without illusion.[7] Hall combined his rejection of an 'enlightenment' concept of ideology as 'inverted' consciousness with the epistemological critique of an 'empiricist relation of the subject to knowledge', according to which 'the real world indelibly imprints its meanings and interests directly into our consciousness' – except if there were some ideological distortions that obscured the unilateral truth of the real.[8] For Raymond Williams, it was an 'objectivist fantasy' to believe that 'real' life conditions could be known 'independently of language . . . and of its records', because it would be a fallacious assumption that there was '*first* material social life and *then*, at some temporal or spatial distance, consciousness and "its" products', which were, in reality, 'always . . . parts of the material social process itself'.[9] Terry Eagleton believed to have discovered that Marx and Engels were guilty of a 'naive sensuous empiricism which fails to grasp that there is no "real life-process" without interpretation':[10] 'What distinguishes the human animal is that it moves in a world of meaning; and these meanings are constitutive of its activities, not secondary to them'.[11] He drew the conclusion that Marx and Engels's metaphor of the *camera obscura* was unable to grasp the active and dynamic nature of human consciousness, and instead reduced it to a device 'passively recording objects in the external world'.[12]

2.1.2. *A 'naive sensuous empiricism'?*

At this point, it becomes questionable whether these criticisms really hit the mark of Marx and Engels's approach. Around the same time as Marx and Engels were writing *The German Ideology* (1845–6), Marx published his *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845), whose first thesis made the criticism that 'all previous materialism' had conceived of reality and of sensuousness 'only in the form of the *object, or of contemplation*, but not as *sensuous human activity, practice*, not subjectively'.[13] In contrast to such an objectivist 'previous materialism', Marx highlighted the achievement of idealism as having expounded the '*active* side'. However, it did so

6. Projekt Ideologietheorie 1979, p. 8.
7. Hall 1988, p. 44.
8. Ibid.
9. Williams 1977, pp. 60–1.
10. Eagleton 1991, p. 75.
11. Eagleton 1991, p. 73.
12. Eagleton 1991, p. 76.
13. Marx 1875, p. 3.

only 'abstractly', since it 'does not know real, sensuous activity as such'.[14] Given the fact that the *Theses on Feuerbach* announced the supersession of an 'old materialism' by a 'new' one,[15] which started from subjective practice, it would be astonishing if Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* assumed a 'passive' reflection of the exterior world by consciousness, thus falling back to the position that Marx had just denounced.

Let us look at the key passage, in which *The German Ideology* tried to counter the philosophy of conscience by developing five aspects of social activity. Against the evolutionist interpretation put forward by Williams and Eagleton (*first* 'real life', *then* meaning), Marx and Engels stressed that these aspects 'are not of course to be taken as . . . different stages, but just as . . . "moments", which have *existed simultaneously* since the dawn of history and the first men, and which still assert themselves in history today'.[16] Human beings must *firstly* produce the means to satisfy their basic needs, such as food, drink, housing and clothing. As Marx and Engels jokingly pointed out against German idealism, human beings 'must be in a position to live in order to be able to "make history"'.[17] In doing so, humans *consequently* create new needs, and *thirdly*, while re-creating their own lives on a daily basis, they also 'propagate their kind' and create relations between man and woman, parents and children.[18] These three 'moments' were then summarised, fourthly, by a surprisingly comprehensive concept of 'production', namely, the 'production of life [*Produktion des Lebens*], both of one's own in labour and of fresh life in procreation'.[19] Marx and Engels understood this as a twofold relation, one that is both 'natural' and 'social'. Whereas the concept of a 'natural' relation remained unexplained,[20] the 'social relation' was specified 'in the sense that it denotes the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end'. In history, this therefore constituted a 'certain mode of co-operation' which emerged in combination with a certain mode of production and was 'itself a "productive force" '.[21] *Fifthly*, people also had 'consciousness', which implies, because of the 'simultaneousness' of the five aspects, that the four moments mentioned so far were put into

14. Ibid.
15. Marx 1845, p. 5.
16. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 43 (my emphasis – JR).
17. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 41.
18. Marx and Engels 1845, pp. 42–3.
19. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 43.
20. The French anthropologist Claude Meillassoux saw here a 'latent "naturalism" ' at work, which he explained predominantly with the high prestige of Darwin's works and the influence of the evolutionist anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan (Meillassoux 1994, pp. 311 et sqq., 317–18). Cf. the summarising feminist critique by Frigga Haug, who proposed to overcome such naturalist tendencies by developing a critical-historical concept of gender-relations (F. Haug 2001, pp. 496 et sqq., 505 et sqq.).
21. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 43.

practice with 'consciousness'. This consciousness was, however, not described as 'pure' consciousness:

> The 'mind' is from the outset afflicted with the curse of being 'burdened' with matter, which here makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, of language. Language . . . *is* practical, real consciousness that exists for other men as well, and only therefore does it also exist for me; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men. . . . Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist.[22]

It is obvious that this line of argument has nothing to do with an 'objectivist fantasy' (Williams) of human life devoid of meaning and language. Nor is it a demonstration that language and consciousness only have a 'secondary' status. Instead, Marx and Engels argued against the idealist concept of a 'pure' consciousness and pointed out that consciousness has its social form in language. What is astonishing is the prescience with which they anticipated some of the insights of recent linguistic approaches that describe the material and social character of meanings with the concept of 'discourse' or 'discursive practice'.[23]

When Marx and Engels criticised the philosophy of consciousness, they did not argue that consciousness did not belong to the real practice of life. On the contrary, they argued that consciousness could *only* be understood as an integral part of life-practices, and, therefore, as a composite of social relations.[24] This is what they meant when they argued (immediately before the passage on the *camera obscura*) that the 'production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men – the language of real life [*Sprache des wirklichen Lebens*]'.[25] As soon as one deals with their core argument, it becomes evident that the philosophy of consciousness was not criticised from the perspective of an underlying dichotomy between (primary) 'life' and (secondary) consciousness, but rather because it severed consciousness from the practical context of life in order to demonstrate its nature as a primary force.

Where the critics of *The German Ideology* bring out their heaviest guns, namely the 'naïve' and empiricist epistemology that allegedly underpinned its concept of ideology, the result is ambiguous at best. To be sure, this criticism can easily be

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22. Marx and Engels 1845, pp. 43–4.
23. Cf. the entries in the Historisch-Kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus (HKWM) on '*Bedeutung*' (meaning) by Thomas Weber (Weber 1995, pp. 97 et sqq.) and '*Diskursanalyse*' (discourse-analysis) by Thomas Laugstien (Laugstien 1995, pp. 733 et sqq.).
24. A crossed-out sentence read: 'My relation to my surroundings is my consciousness' (Marx and Engels 1845, p. 44).
25. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 36.

validated by several polemical wordings in which Marx and Engels turned the discourse of the philosophy of consciousness upside down, for example. when they assumed that 'life determines consciousness',[26] or when they famously said that it was 'not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence [*gesellschaftliches Sein*] that determines their consciousness'.[27] It is furthermore undeniable that descriptions of ideology as 'false' or 'inverted consciousness' suggested – similarly to the terms 'echo' and 'reflex' – a concept of ideology as a volatile epiphenomenon, a 'castle in the sky' without any materiality and efficacy of its own. It is evident that such terminology could become a hindrance to an analytical reconstruction of the object. But the criticism misses the anti-objectivist and praxis-philosophical thrust of the overall argument in both the *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology*.

Methodologically speaking, it is necessary to distinguish between what was 'old' and what was 'new' in Marx and Engels's approach, namely to differentiate precisely between their specific intervention and the pre-existing discursive materials in which they were intervening and in which they articulated their intervention. Before returning to the metaphor of the *camera obscura*, I would like to go back to the way the young Marx analysed religion in the 'Introduction' to the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law* of 1843–4. These definitions can provide the pattern by which *The German Ideology* developed its concept of ideology shortly afterwards.

2.1.3. *Excursus to the young Marx's critique of religion*

To describe religion as an 'inverted world-consciousness'[28] was by no means a new idea. Marx had taken it from Ludwig Feuerbach's concept of projection, according to which the limited individuals project the potentially unlimited essence of the human species-being onto religion, where it is presented as omnipotent God, grace without limits, and endless love. According to Marx's succinct summary, religion is 'the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself again'. It is 'the *fantastic realisation* of the human essence because the *human essence* has no true reality'.[29] Both Feuerbach and Marx shared the theoretical perspective of fetching back the wishes and yearnings that had been 'alienated' in religion, and to strive for their fulfilment on earth. The main difference was that Marx described this alienation not in terms of a general philosophical humanism, but located it in the 'inverted

26. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 37.
27. Marx 1859, p. 263.
28. Marx 1843, p. 175.
29. Ibid.

world', i.e. in the structures of domination of class-societies: 'Religious distress [*das religiöse Elend*] is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and also the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature [*Seufzer der bedrängten Kreatur*], the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions'.[30]

This citation demonstrates paradigmatically that Marx's critique of religion was very different from a mere criticism of 'false consciousness'. Its main interest lay in the deciphering and setting free of the impulses of yearning and protest that are contained in religious form. It is furthermore very likely that the expression 'sigh of the oppressed creature' had a biblical origin and can be traced back – through Ludwig Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* and the German mystic Sebastian Frank – to Paul's letter to the Romans that described how the entire creation 'has been groaning in travail together until now' and also that we 'groan inwardly as we wait for . . . the redemption of our bodies'.[31]

What became more famous, however, was the definition of religion as 'the *opium* of the people' that immediately followed.[32] This poses the problem of how the two parts of Marx's twofold definition are to be connected. Did he mean that religion was *on the one hand* a 'sigh of the oppressed creature', and *on the other hand* an imaginary and paralysing 'opium of the people'? Read in this way, one approaches a dialectical understanding of religion as a field of contradictions which contains potentially activating and paralysing dynamics. The task of critical theory would then be to take the sigh of the oppressed seriously and enlighten it in a way that it overcomes the illusionary forms in which it was expressed. Or did he mean, religion was a 'sigh of the oppressed creature' and *as such* the 'opium of the people'? More precisely: is it *only* an inarticulate sigh without an analysis of the existing conditions of exploitation and oppression, and does it therefore function as an opium that paralyses any sustainable resistance of the emerging proletariat? In fact, there is no marker in the text that indicates a linguistic opposition between the 'sigh' and the 'opium'. The sharp opposition between a political strategy based on 'scientific' analysis and a 'utopian' and illusory protest was indeed a recurring theme in Marx's polemics with competing socialist and communist circles at the time. In the history of Marxist theory, it was primarily Ernst Bloch who modified this dichotomy by developing a concept of anticipation that combined what he called the 'cold stream' of sober-minded analysis and

30. Ibid.

31. Paul's letter to the Romans (Rom 8:22–3). Feuerbach quoted Sebastian Frank: 'God is an unutterable sigh [*unaussprechlicher Seufzer*], lying in the depths of the heart', and commented that this 'saying is the most remarkable, the profoundest, truest expression of Christian mysticism' (Feuerbach 1989, p. 122).

32. Marx and Engels 1975–2005, Vol. 3, p. 175.

the 'warm stream' of human dreams, hopes and longings.[33] Examined from this perspective, even if Marx never makes it explicit, his twofold definition contains the possible conclusion that the 'sigh of the oppressed creature', – because of its immediacy and distance from a 'determinate negation' – needs to be connected with a critical analysis of exploitation and oppression, and a rational strategy to overcome the structural causes of misery and suffering. This could also enable social movements with a religious background to overcome the illusory and paralysing aspects of religious 'opium'. It is obvious that the *a priori* definition of religion as an 'inverted world-consciousness' became a hindrance to the task of forging sustainable alliances with religious liberation-movements.

There is also another aspect that is often overlooked. This early text was, strictly speaking, not an essay on religion. It was, rather, an appeal to the Young-Hegelian philosophers to give up their fixation on religion, to overcome the restriction of their criticism to the domain of religion. The first sentence already made clear: 'For Germany the *criticism of religion* is in the main complete, and the criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism'.[34] In other words, Feuerbach had done his job of explaining religion as an alienating projection of the human species-being onto heaven; let us move on to the real task, the criticism of alienation and domination on earth. 'Criticism has torn up the imaginary flowers from the chain not so that man shall wear the unadorned, bleak chain but so that he will shake off the chain and pluck the living flower'.[35] By this poetic explanation, Marx reminded his Young-Hegelian colleagues of the overall perspective of a liberationist critique of religion.[36] In this vein, he called upon the critical philosophers to stop their obsession with pulling apart the 'holy form of human self-estrangement', and to proceed to a critique of the '*vale of tears*, the *halo* of which is religion', to unmask human self-alienation no more in its sacred forms, but in its secular forms. The 'criticism of heaven' was to be turned into the 'criticism of earth', the criticism of religion into the '*criticism of law*', the criticism of theology into the 'criticism of politics'.[37]

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33. Bloch 1986, pp. 208–9. Because of its 'cold stream', Marxism 'becomes not only the science of conditions, but at the same time the science of struggle and opposition against all ideological inhibitions and concealments', whereas as a 'warmth-doctrine' (*Wärmelehre*), it signifies the 'theory-practice of reaching home or of departure from inappropriate objectification' (Bloch 1986, pp. 209–10).

34. Marx 1843, p. 175.

35. Marx 1843, p. 176.

36. Domenico Losurdo took up Marx's flower-chain metaphor to illustrate the fundamental opposition between a Marxian critique of religion and a Nietzschean critique, which actually proposed the very thing that Marx was denouncing, that is, that people should 'tear up the imaginary flowers from the chain' in a way that they had to 'wear the unadorned, bleak chain' (cf. Losurdo 2004, pp. 455–6).

37. Marx 1843, p. 176.

As in *The German Ideology*, Marx's appeal was often articulated in the language of the Young-Hegelian addressees. Old and new discursive elements were intertwined. A careful textual analysis must be attentive to the contradiction that, on the one hand, Marx left the traditional critique of religion behind, while on the other hand moved within its discourse. What was new was primarily a criticism of Feuerbach's reductionism that, as Marx pointed out in the *Theses on Feuerbach*, 'consists in resolving the religious world into its secular basis', in resolving 'the essence of religion into the essence of *man*'.[38] Marx proposed instead to study the processes by which 'the secular basis lifts off from itself [*die weltliche Grundlage sich von sich selbst ablöst*]' and to explain this 'lifting off' 'by the inner strife and intrinsic contradictoriness of this secular basis [*aus der Selbstzerissenheit und Selbstwidersprechen dieser weltlichen Grundlage*]'.[39] This methodological rule of the historical reconstruction of religion (instead of its reductionist 'dissolution') was taken up again in a methodological footnote in *Capital*: 'It is, in reality, much easier to discover by analysis the earthly kernel of the misty creations of religion than to do the opposite, i.e. to develop from the actual, given relations of life [*aus den jedesmaligen wirklichen Lebensverhältnissen*] the forms in which these have been apotheosized. The latter method is the only materialist, and therefore the only scientific one'.[40]

One therefore needs to take into account that there are different textual layers: on the one hand a terminology belonging to a Feuerbachian critique of religion, on the other hand a significant theoretical paradigm-shift towards an analysis of the contradictions of class-societies, of their 'inner strife.' Could it be that *The German Ideology's* definitions of ideology are caught in a similar tension? The analogy is near at hand, since Marx developed his critique of ideology out of the critique of religion, and thereby transferred the category of 'inversion' from religion to ideology. As will be demonstrated in the next section, the traditional terminology of 'false consciousness' concealed the fact that Marx and Engels had in fact entered a new terrain of a materialist ideology-theory.

2.1.4. Camera obscura *as metaphor for 'idealistic superstructure'*

In considering the context of the passage on the *camera obscura*, we can see how Althusser's claim that *The German Ideology* understood ideology 'in a plainly positivist context . . . as a pure illusion, a pure dream, i.e. as nothingness . . . , empty and vain', and as a mere 'form of consciousness' ('*forme-conscience*')[41]

38. Marx 1845, p. 4.
39. Ibid.
40. Marx 1976, p. 494, n. 4.
41. Cf. Althusser 1994, p. 496; Althusser 1995, p. 294; Althusser 2001, p. 108.

was a one-sided simplification. He took some of Marx and Engels's metaphors at face-value, but left out the 'historical life process' which was at stake, here: the 'inversion' of ideology, its 'standing on its head' was considered to be an effect of the social division of material and mental labour. It is only because of this underlying social division and from the moment of its emergence onwards that 'consciousness *can* really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice, that it *really* represents something without representing something real'. Only by means of this division is 'consciousness . . . in a position to emancipate itself from the world and to proceed to the formation of "pure" theory, theology, philosophy, morality',[42] which are practiced by specific intellectual groups 'as a profession, that is, as a *business*'.[43] In this vein, Marx and Engels proposed, for example, to explain the predominance of the 'spirit' in German historiography 'from its connection with the illusion of ideologists in general, e.g. the illusions of the jurists, politicians (including the practical statesmen)', which are themselves to be explained 'from their practical position in life, their job, and the division of labour'.[44] What makes possible and produces this reversal of consciousness is the real detachment of intellectual activities from social production, their growing independence and their predominant position in relation to production.

As we have seen, in his *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx proposed to explain religion from the 'intrinsic contradictoriness' of its secular basis.[45] We can see now that *The German Ideology* concentrated on a specific dimension of this contradictoriness, namely, the division between manual and mental labour. What *explains* the emergence of religion as an ideology out of the magic and natural mysticism of pre-state societies is not an 'inverted consciousness', but rather the formation of a specialised priesthood that is set free from manual labour. 'The first form of ideologists, *priests*', Marx wrote in a marginal note that in turn illustrated a passage written by Engels: 'Division of labour only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labour appears'.[46]

It is important to note that the 'division of labour' *The German Ideology* was concerned with was not meant to describe a 'horizontal' agreement about how to divide certain productive and reproductive activities, but rather a sharp 'vertical' split in society that was linked to the formation of private property, classes and the state. The connection to private property was so close that Marx and Engels even considered both as 'identical expressions: in the one [i.e. division

42. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 45.
43. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 379; cf. Marx and Engels 1845, pp. 62, 92.
44. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 62.
45. Marx 1845, p. 4.
46. Marx and Engels 1845, pp. 44–5.

of labour] the same thing is affirmed with reference to activity as is affirmed in the other [private property] with reference to the product of the activity'.[47] It is interesting to see that private property itself was for Marx and Engels directly derived from patriarchal gender-relations, which in turn they described as class-relations.[48] The intertwining with emerging class-domination is such that the division of labour 'implies the possibility, nay the fact, that intellectual and material activity, . . . that enjoyment and labour, production and consumption, devolve on different individuals'.[49] It is also tied to the emergence of the state as an 'illusory community' representing the 'common interest', in and through which 'the struggles of the different classes are fought out among one another'.[50] Althusser restricted himself to picking out terms like 'illusory' and drew the conclusion that ideology, here, was 'pure illusion', which showed for him that the concept of ideology was 'not Marxist'.[51] But as soon as one takes Marx and Engels's complex arrangement of gender, class, and state into consideration, one can see that they had in fact undertaken a decisive shift towards an ideology-theory that, instead of clinging to a naive concept of 'false consciousness', conceived of the ideological as a material and institutional arrangement in society.

It becomes clear from this vantage-point that the *camera obscura* is to be understood not as a metaphor for 'false consciousness', but rather for the 'idealistic superstructure' of class-societies.[52] The fact that *The German Ideology* combined, here, a category that was usually employed for describing a world-view or philosophical tradition (namely 'idealistic') and a category for a material and institutional reality ('superstructure') is symptomatic for the transition from a traditional discourse of consciousness to a historical-materialist ideology-theory. Marx would later, in *Theories of Surplus Value*, employ the category of 'superstructure of ideological strata' (*Superstruktur ideologischer Stände*).[53] Used in this sense, the attention of ideology-theory should not remain bound to the inner image of the *camera obscura*, but should come in from the side and investigate the material arrangement, and thus the socially unconscious, of the discourse of consciousness:[54] 'The detachment of consciousness is framed and constituted

47. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 46.
48. Private property's 'nucleus' lies in the 'family, where wife and children are the slaves of the husband. This latent slavery in the family, though still very crude, is the first form of property'. This was in agreement with the definition of 'modern economists, who call it the power of disposing of the labour-power of others' (Marx and Engels 1845, p. 46).
49. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 45.
50. Marx and Engels 1845, pp. 46–7.
51. Althusser 2001, p. 107; Althusser 1995, p. 293.
52. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 89.
53. Marx 1969–71a, p. 287; cf. Marx 1999a, p. 259.
54. W.F. Haug 1984, p. 26.

by the material "*dispositif*" [in a Foucauldian sense] of social domination'.[55] It is therefore not a particular content of consciousness that makes intellectuals ideologues, but a specific 'positioning in the structure of domination', which is to be reconstructed socio-analytically, starting from the contradictions in society.[56] A similar view was held by Pierre Bourdieu, who took *The German Ideology*'s considerations on the divisions of manual and mental labour (as well as of town and countryside) as a starting point from which to develop his concept of social 'field' (see Section 8.2).

It can be concluded that the ideology-theoretical demarcation from the 'ideology-critical' approach of *The German Ideology* is not as clear cut as it first seemed. The criticism 'catches' Marx and Engels as they fight a hand-to-hand scuffle with their opponents, and thereby move within their opponents' discursive materials, drawing on these and polemically turning them against these opponents. Critics rightly point out that the terminology that characterised ideologies as 'false' and 'inverted' had not yet explained anything with regards to their genesis nor to their functioning, and was even more likely to impede such an analytical reconstruction. They have a point as far as they demonstrate that it was impossible to develop a historical-materialistic ideology-theory directly from metaphors like 'echo' and 'reflex.' But they overlook the new continent Marx and Engels were entering: the socio-analytical reconstruction of ideology from the contradictions of the social divisions of labour.

2.1.5. *'Ruling ideas' and 'conceptive ideologists'*

Let us observe how *The German Ideology* applied the division of manual and mental labour to the ruling class as well. The argument started with a general statement about the relationship between class-domination and 'ruling ideas': 'The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force'.[57]

According to Stuart Hall, such an equation overlooked the 'internal fractioning of the ideological universe of the dominant classes'. He used the example of Thatcherism to demonstrate how a new ideological formation first gained hegemony within the Conservative Party. The intellectuals of the ruling power-bloc organised a 'novel combination of ideological elements, distinct from other combinations through which the dominance of the English ruling classes has,

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55. W.F. Haug 1984, p. 24. Foucault used the concept of *dispositif* mostly in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1995) for describing the institutional, spatial, and temporal arrangements of 'disciplinary power' (see Section 7.4.6.).

56. Cf. W.F. Haug 1984, p. 25.

57. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 59.

historically, found expression', and succeeded in forging a rightwing-populist ideology 'that has effectively penetrated, fractured, and fragmented the territory of the dominated classes'.[58] The quoted passage of *The German Ideology* was, indeed, far too general to account for such a differentiated analysis of hegemonic struggles. It suggested a static view that had damaging consequences for the political practices of leftist movements: if it is clear from the outset that the ruling class, by definition, rules over intellectual and cultural life, oppositional socialists are discouraged from intervening in the struggles over hegemony.

Notwithstanding this weakness, the argument of *The German Ideology* contains some suggestions that are fruitful for understanding hegemonic processes. It points out, for example, that each new class trying to take power 'is compelled . . . to present its interests as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and present them as the only rational, universally valid ones'.[59] This 'translation' of class-interests into the 'form of universality' could be considered a crucial component for a class-formation to gain and to maintain hegemony – a process described by Gramsci as transition from a 'corporative' to a hegemonic phase that requires a 'catharsis' of group-egoisms.[60] Marx and Engels's statement can be read as a research-task as to *how* – for example, through which ideological apparatuses, think-tanks, with the help of what kind of intellectuals, in what ideological forms, and so on – a class succeeds in presenting its specific interests as 'the only rational' and 'universally valid' ones.

The German Ideology gives a partial response to this question by observing that the separation of material and mental labour is reproduced in the ruling classes as well: 'one part appears as the thinkers of the class (its active, conceptive ideologists, who make the formation of the illusions of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), while the others' attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of this class and have less time to make up illusions and ideas about themselves'.[61]

This could be read as a prefiguration of Gramsci's analysis that every emerging class 'creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields'.[62] Marx and Engels even seemed to recognise the possibility of contradictions within the ruling

58. Hall 1988, p. 42.
59. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 60.
60. Cf. Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §6.
61. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 60.
62. Gramsci 1971, p. 5.

power-bloc: the cleavage between the 'conceptive ideologists' and the economically 'active' members of the ruling class 'can even develop into a certain opposition and hostility between the two parts'.[63] But instead of studying such possible opposition and hostility, which could, in principle, lead to a hegemonic crisis, they stopped short and declared that these splits 'automatically vanish' whenever the ruling class itself was endangered, 'in which case there also vanishes the appearance of the ruling ideas being not the ideas of the ruling class and having a power distinct from the power of this class'.[64] There are, certainly, numerous examples to be found that reaffirm such a realignment in dangerous times of crisis, but the empirical observation becomes overly general as soon as it is taken as a theoretical statement. It would then exclude *a priori* that oppositional movements can acquire the capability of using certain constellations of hegemonic crisis to widen the cracks within the ruling power-bloc and successfully pit different factions against each other. By treating this possibility as a mere 'appearance', the momentary opening towards a critical analysis of ideological contradictions within the ruling power-bloc seems to be retracted. Instead of assuming general harmony between economic and ideological rule, a materialist research of ideology should rather focus on what is dynamic, moving, contradictory, and precarious in the relationships among different factions, not least in order to reveal the potential points where oppositional movements might be able to intervene.

2.2. The critique of fetishism in the *Critique of Political Economy*

Another way of explaining the 'reversals' of both modern consciousness and bourgeois market-society is proposed by Marx using the concept of 'fetishism'. He first came across the concept in 1842 when he studied Charles de Brosses's investigation on 'fetish-gods'.[65] The same year, he published an article about the 'Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood' (taking place in the Rhine Province Assembly) in the *Rheinische Zeitung*. There he took up the term fetishism, which religious history at the time used to describe as a 'primitive' level of religious evolution. The article turned the term against the 'fetish-servants' of modern private property: when the Spaniards landed in Middle America, the indigenous people in Cuba considered the gold to be their 'fetish'. 'They celebrated a feast in

63. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 60.
64. Ibid.
65. Cf. the HKWM entry by Thomas Marxhausen (Marxhausen 1999, pp. 343–4). Marx's excerpt of de Brosses's book *Du Culte des dieux Fétiches ou Parallèle de l'ancienne Religion de l'Egypte avec la religion actuelle de Nigrité* (1760) was published in Marx and Engels 1975–, IV, 1, pp. 320 et sqq.

its honour, sang in a circle around it and then threw it into the sea'.[66] Marx took this sentence verbatim from his excerpt of Brosses's book.[67] But now he polemically applied the concept to the (former) commons of wood and game that the provincial legislature had just transformed into private property. If the indigenous people of Cuba had seen the debates in the Rhine Province Assembly, they would have regarded the wood and the hares as the Rhinelanders' fetish, 'and they would have thrown the hares into the sea in order to save the *human beings*'.[68] In this ironic reversal, it is the privatisation of the commons that is described in terms of fetishism, whereas the native Americans destroyed the idols and thereby liberated the human beings. After that, Marx deployed the term regularly for the characterisation of a 'religious' veneration of bourgeois riches, until it appeared for the first time in the 'Appendix' of the first edition of *Capital* Volume One (1867) as characteristic of the equivalent-form of the commodity itself.[69] This new usage was then enlarged into a whole sub-chapter in the second edition of 1872.[70]

The fact that Marx transferred a term describing a specific stage of religion to bourgeois commodity-society is in itself a shift of high significance for an ideology-theory. Before I turn to the 'secret' of commodity-fetishism, I will take a look at the trajectory from the young Marx's critique of religion to his later critique of fetishism.

2.2.1. *From the critique of religion to the critique of fetishism*

We have seen how, in the *Introduction* to the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law* of 1843–4, the young Marx appealed to his Young-Hegelian colleagues to give up their fixation on a critique of religion and instead 'to unmask self-estrangement in its *unholy forms*'. By doing so, their 'criticism of heaven turns into the criticism of the earth, the *criticism of religion* into the *criticism of law* and the *criticism of theology* into the *criticism of politics*'.[71] Methodologically speaking, the specifics of Marx's approach to religion do not, therefore, consist of substantially defining religion as an 'inverted consciousness' or 'opium of the people', but in the very paradigm-shift that reveals 'religion-like' inversions in the law, politics, and the economic alienations of bourgeois society.

This is, indeed, an interesting paradox: at the very moment when Marx provided his famous description of religion as both an opiate and a sigh of the

66. Marx 1842, p. 262.
67. Cf. Marx and Engels 1975–, IV, 1, p. 322.
68. Marx 1842, pp. 262–3.
69. Cf. Marx and Engels 1975–, II, 5, pp. 637–8.
70. Cf. Marx 1976, pp. 163 et sqq.; Marx 1867, pp. 81 et sqq.
71. Marx 1843, p. 176.

oppressed, he declared to leave the whole matter behind. And this is what he was actually doing from then on. He immediately set to work to accomplish what he had announced in the *Introduction* to the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, and he did this simultaneously in different areas. I shall content myself with summing up some examples: when Marx criticised, in the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, the Hegelian fixation on the state, which starts out from the state and 'makes man the subjectified state', he did so by applying the pattern of Feuerbach's critique of religion: 'Just as it is not religion which creates man but man who creates religion, so it is not the constitution which creates the people but the people which creates the constitution'.[72] Whereas the analogy to religion was here still an illustration of Hegel's 'inverted' derivation, the next passage already referred to the 'religious' functioning of the constitution's ideology itself: 'Up till now the *political constitution* has been the *religious sphere*, the *religion* of national life ['*Religion des Volkslebens*'], the heaven of its generality over against the *earthly existence* of its actuality'.[73] This is clearly more than a didactic analogy: it points out a basic ideological structure that Marx considers to be common to religion, law, and politics.

Marx developed his criticism of modern politics most notably in *On the Jewish Question*, which was published in 1844. His starting point was the separation of church and state in the US, which he described as a '*displacement* [*Dislokation*] of religion from the state into civil society'.[74] Religion has been 'banished' from the sphere of public law to that of private law and has thus been 'thrust among the multitude of private interests'.[75] This political emancipation was, however, not connected to the disappearance of religion (as Bruno Bauer had expected), but instead to modern freedom of worship, in which religion 'not only *exists*, but displays a *fresh and vigorous vitality*'.[76] This has changed the inner characteristic of religion as well: religion thrives in the US no longer as 'the essence of *community*',' but rather as the 'essence of *difference*', as 'the expression of man's *separation* from his *community*,' in short: as the spirit of 'bourgeois-civil society', 'the sphere of egoism, of *bellum omnium contra omnes*'.[77]

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72. Marx 1843, p. 29. Rosa Luxemburg was one of the few second-generation Marxists who clearly noticed this specific shift of the young Marx: whereas the other Young Hegelians 'almost exclusively took shelter behind the domain of theological speculations, i.e. behind the *most abstract* form of theology', the young Marx 'from the outset and instinctively set out to tackle the next and most immediate ideological form of material social life, the law' (Luxemburg 1970–5, 1/2, p. 139).

73. Marx 1843, p. 31.

74. Marx 1844, p. 155.

75. Ibid.

76. Marx 1844, p. 151. Bauer came to the anti-Judaistic conclusion that the Jews should give up their 'narrow' religion in order to gain political emancipation.

77. Marx 1844, p. 155 (translation corrected). Unfortunately, the *Marx-Engels Collected Works* (Marx and Engels 1975–2005) translate the German term *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* almost automatically as *civil society*, thereby eliminating the double sense of the German

At the same time, Marx considered modern politics itself to function like a 'religion': when modern man frees himself from the domination of religion, he does so only 'politically', 'through the *medium of the state*' and therefore 'in a *roundabout way*' ['*auf einem Umweg*'], and this meant for Marx: in a 'religious' way.[78] To support the analogy between 'political' and 'religious' estrangement, he introduced an extraordinarily general definition of religion: 'Religion is precisely the recognition of man in a roundabout way, through an *intermediary*', be it Jesus Christ or the modern state, which has now become 'the intermediary between man and man's freedom.'[79] The bourgeois revolution 'gathered' ['*bündelte*'] the previously dispersed parts of the political spirit and established them as 'the *general* concern of the nation, ideally independent' of the particular elements of bourgeois-civil society.[80] Religious inversion seems to have slipped into politics, where it compels people to live 'a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly life'.[81] It splits the human being into an egoistic private individual of bourgeois-civil society, 'withdrawn . . . into the confines of his private interests and private caprice, and separated from the community' on the one hand, and in the moral person of the citizen of the political state on the other hand, who is 'only abstract, artificial man, man as an *allegorical, juridical* person' and 'deprived of his real individual life and endowed with an unreal universality'.[82] At the same time as the Feuerbachian critique of religion is transformed into a critique of the form of politics in bourgeois society, the perspective of liberation takes on a new scope: the objective is no longer merely 'political' emancipation, but rather 'human emancipation', by which the 'real, individual man' no longer 'separates social power from himself in the shape of *political* power', but rather organises his '"*forces propres*" ["own powers"] as *social* forces', and thereby 're-absorbs in himself the abstract citizen', and becomes 'a *species-being* in his everyday life'.[83]

Almost simultaneously, the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* explain the alienation of workers using the categories of a Feuerbachian critique of religion. In bourgeois society, labour's product confronts the producer as '*something alien*, as a *power independent* of the producer', with the result that

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term which denoted both *civil society* and *bourgeois society*. Instead, I have followed Georges Labica's suggestion (Labica 1987) to capture the German concept's ambiguity by translating it as 'bourgeois-civil society' (*société civile-bourgeoise*). For a detailed philological critique of such de-contextualised mistranslations and their misleading consequences for the debates on civil society, cf. Rehmann 1999a.

78. Marx 1844, p. 152.

79. In a similar way, Marx used the term 'religious' to express 'the dualism between individual life and species life', 'the separation and remoteness of man from man' (Marx 1844, p. 152).

80. Marx 1844, p. 166.

81. Marx 1844, p. 154.

82. Marx 1844, pp. 154, 164, 167.

83. Marx 1844, p. 168.

'the more objects the worker produces the less he can possess and the more he falls under the sway of his product, capital, . . . the more the worker spends himself, the more powerful becomes the alien world of objects which he creates over and against himself'.[84] According to Marx, it is 'the same in religion'. 'The more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself'.[85] Since the alienation does not only manifest itself in relation to the product, but also to producing activity, the worker 'feels at home when he is not working, and when he is working he does not feel at home'.[86] That the worker's activity belongs to someone else is again compared to religion, where 'the spontaneous activity of the human imagination . . . operates on the individual independently of him – that is, as an alien, divine or diabolic activity'.[87]

Religion in its traditional sense does not play more than a marginal role in Marx's theory of alienation: 'Religious estrangement as such occurs only in the realm of *consciousness*, of man's inner life, but economic estrangement is that of *real life*', so that the 'positive transcendence of private property' means the overcoming of all kinds of estrangement and brings about 'the return of man from religion, family, state, etc., to his *human*, i.e., *social* existence'.[88] It is obvious that these deliberations contain both strengths and weaknesses. The paradigm-shift from a critique of religion to a comprehensive critique of estrangement in the labour-process is an important step towards Marx's elaboration of a *critique of political economy*. But the notion that the abolition of private property will lead to a return from 'religion, family, state' and thereby cause the respective ideologies to vanish by themselves, is certainly an economistic illusion. The ideological does not seem to be endowed with any 'materiality' and efficacy of its own.

That the analogy with religion is much more than a stylistic fancy of the young Marx can be demonstrated through the many religious analogies from Marx's early writings that reappear throughout his later *critique of political economy*. As he had observed, for example, in *On the Jewish Question*, the real God of bourgeois society is money: it rules over the human beings that bow to it and degrades traditional gods by turning them into commodities.[89] To illustrate the omnipotence of money, the late Marx of *Capital* refers to a passage in the *Book of Revelations* that describes the handing over of power and authority to the 'beast'.[90] As Bastiaan Wielenga observes, Marx took up the biblical vision, which

84. Marx 1844a, p. 272.
85. Ibid.
86. Marx 1844a, p. 274.
87. Ibid.
88. Marx 1844a, p. 297.
89. Marx 1844, p. 172.
90. 'These are of one mind and give over their power to the beast. And no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is the name of the beast or the number of its name'

originally characterised the totalitarianism of the Roman Empire, and used it to illuminate 'the all embracing power of money and market'.[91]

Most notably, some passages of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* will re-emerge in similar wordings in the chapter regarding commodity-fetishism in *Capital*. In order to explain the phenomenon that in the capitalistic market the producers are ruled by the 'things' they produce, Marx uses the analogy of the 'misty realm' of religion:

> There the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. I call this the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labor as soon as they are produced as commodities.[92]

The main difference with the early writings is that Marx, with the category of fetishism, has now found a concept by which his critique of religion, taken over from Feuerbach, 'arrived' at the core of capitalist economy and helped him to sharpen and to concretise his demonstration of a fundamental 'inversion' in bourgeois society. From the perspective of Marx's own understanding, it appears as if his early critique of religion has finally found its proper object in the capitalist mode of production and circulation.

The concept of fetishism was utilised by historians and sociologists of religion in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to describe what they considered to be the oldest and most primitive stage of religion.[93] But there is more to it. The scholarly usage of the term is part of a larger colonialist paradigm that one could analyse with Edward Said's concept of an 'orientalist' construction of the 'other':[94] the term 'fetish' can be derived from the Portuguese word *feitiço* and was first developed by Portuguese missionaries in Africa in order to portray what they considered to be the 'primitive' African religion they encountered. One can still see the Latin root of *facticium* (*facere*) designating something that has been 'made,' or is 'man-made'. Similar to the Spanish transition from *hecho* (*hacer*) to *hechizo*, the meaning shifts to sorcery and witchery: the man-made products gain power over their makers.[95] The etymology reveals a supremacist, white, European attitude, be it 'Christian' or 'enlightened' in a secularised sense:

(Marx 1976, p. 181). The passage from the *Revelations*, which Marx quotes in Latin, is a combination of *Revelations* 17:13 and 13:17.

91. Wielenga 1984, p. 89.

92. Marx 1976, p. 165.

93. For example, Charles de Brosses (in 1756), Christoph Meiners, Philipp Christian Reinhard, J.A. Dulaure, Auguste Comte; cf. Pietz 1993, p. 131.

94. Cf. Said 2003, pp. 331–2.

95. Cf. W.F. Haug 2005, p. 161.

these 'primitive' and 'unenlightened' believers carve objects, and then bow to their own artifacts and worship them. If one considers this colonial context, one can see that Marx's use of the concept is a masterpiece of ideology-critique. By taking up this concept, he addresses the contemporary ideologies of European supremacy that feel so much more 'rational' and 'enlightened' than those 'primitive' people who worship their own artifacts. Marx turns the tables on them by demonstrating that it is their modern bourgeois order that harbours the craziest and most anachronistic fetishism at its very core, an irrational reversal by which exchange-value rules over use-value, money rules over labour, accumulated capital rules over life, shareholder-values rule over life-values. The decisive argument of Marx's critique of fetishism is this: since the producers have no democratic control over what is being produced, how it is being produced, or how the surplus is being distributed, the products of their labour pile up on the other side of the divide – they become the wealth of the capitalist owners. Commodities turn into an alien power that is used against the workers by replacing them with new technologies, by firing them, by impoverishing them, by making them 'superfluous'. This irrational system, that periodically destroys its own wealth by disastrous crises, is finally to be overcome by an 'association of free people'.[96] 'What is this fetishism of African worshippers, compared to European fetishism, by which the entire regulation of societal production, which decides over the weal and woe of people, is handed over to the dynamics of the things produced!'[97]

In terms of a theory of ideology, the Marxian critique of fetishism therefore assumes a twofold character. As far as it can be considered as a polemical and subversive response to predominant bourgeois and Eurocentric ideologies, it is an ideology-critique at its best, namely one by which the ideological phrases of its opponents are turned over and over until the underlying social meaning becomes evident. As far as Marx's critique of fetishism unearths the reified inversions within bourgeois economy, it goes beyond ideology-critique, at least in the traditional sense of a critique of 'false consciousness'.

Walter Benjamin is one of the few philosophers who took Marx's shift from the critique of religion to the critique of bourgeois economy and its 'religious' deep structure seriously. In an early fragment from 1921, *Capitalism as Religion*, he argued that capitalism is (*pace* Max Weber) not only a formation 'conditioned by religion', but is itself an 'essentially religious phenomenon'. It is a 'cultic religion' that does not need a specific theological dogma because it functions by itself like an apparatus with its own 'material' practices and rituals: as a pitiless mecha-

96. Marx 1976, p. 171.
97. W.F. Haug 2005, p. 162.

nism that does not redeem, but engenders debt and guilt.[98] To illustrate this new 'ethos', Benjamin refers to Nietzsche's concept of *Übermensch* [overman], who in his passage through the 'house of despair' and in the absolute loneliness of his path is the first 'to recognize the religion of capitalism and begin to bring it to fulfillment'.[99] The fact that Benjamin characterises capitalist religion as a 'cult', is a significant ideology-theoretical finding: this 'religion' does not primarily function through a set of 'ideas' and on the level of an 'orthodoxy', but rather on the level of material practices, an 'orthopraxis', an ensemble of 'normalising' practices and rituals. It is here that Marx's critique of fetishism intersects with the theological critique of *idolatry* – provided that the *idols* are not just defined in terms of the deities of competing denominations or restricted to 'secularism' or 'advertising', but rather refer to the 'structural sin' of an idolatrous system, an institutionalised dance around the 'golden calf' and its hegemonic values.[100]

How does one explain the specific power of the products of labour over living labour and the mystifications of bourgeois society connected to it?

2.2.2. *From ideology-critique to the critique of 'objective thought forms'*

Marx describes as commodity-fetishism a specific characteristic of bourgeois commodity-production, namely that it prevents any possibility of deliberately and intentionally organising the overall arrangement of production in accordance with a social plan. It is only after the fact, i.e. when the commodity is being sold, that the societal connection of the producers is enforced as an alien, reified power that operates behind their backs. It is only 'by equating their different products to each other in exchange as values' that the private commodity-sellers 'equate their different kinds of labour as human labour'.[101] It is, therefore, only at this moment that they are informed whether the time needed for producing their commodities corresponds to the average of socially necessary labour-time in this sector; or rather, exceeds the average, for example because of outdated means of production – a fact that decides between success and failure, and often between life and death.

Marx illustrates the brutality of this reified power, which operates *a posteriori*, by comparing the 'regulative law of nature', by which the socially-necessary

98. Benjamin 1996, p. 288. The original German expression '*verschuldende Religion*' (Benjamin 1972–89, Vol. 2, p. 100) has a double meaning that is lost in most of the English translations. It means both 'debt-producing' or 'indebting' and 'guilt-producing', thereby reflecting the intimate connection between the German '*Schuld*' (guilt) and '*Schulden*' (debt).
99. Benjamin 1996, p. 289.
100. Cf. Rehmann 2011b, pp. 146–8.
101. Marx 1976, p. 166.

labour-time asserts itself, with the way that the 'law of gravity asserts itself when a person's house collapses on top of him'.[102] In a similar fashion to Marx's comparison with *camera obscura* and the inverted projection of images on the retina, this reference to the 'law of gravity' has of course nothing to do with a naturalisation of social power in capitalist commodity-production.[103] The example demonstrates, instead, that this ban on economic planning is utterly irrational, which becomes obvious as soon as one compares it to an architect who builds a house without precisely calculating the forces of equilibrium in its construction beforehand. Commodity-fetishism can be described as an inversion, because the producers have ceded their collective agency and planning-capacities to the commodity-form which has taken over the regulation of society. 'Their own movement within society has for them the form of a movement made by things, and these things, far from being under their control, in fact control them'.[104]

It is striking that Marx has by now described this fetishistic inversion *not* on the level of consciousness. The fact that it is only at the moment of the sale of the commodity that the producers are informed about the value of their labour, and in this sense are ruled by 'a movement made by things', is not primarily a matter of their 'imagination' or of a 'misrecognition'.[105] When producers cannot sell their commodities or must sell them too cheaply, they know very well that they are dealing with a hard, sturdy and even brutal reality – a reality however, which is at the same time difficult to grasp. Marx therefore describes it as a 'thing which transcends sensuousness' ['*sinnlich-übersinnliches Ding*'], 'abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties'.[106]

Contrary to an ideology-critique fixated on inverted consciousness, Marx even seems to insist that there is no 'inversion' in consciousness at all: to the subjects that are involved in this exchange-form, 'the social relations between their private labours appear *as what they are*, i.e. they do not appear as direct social relations between persons in their work, but rather as material relations between persons [*sachliche Verhältnisse zwischen Personen*] and social relations between things [*gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse der Sachen*]'.[107] But how does the appearance

102. Marx 1976, p. 168; cf. Marx 1867, p. 86.

103. In *Capital*, Marx took up again the example of visual perception, where the impression something makes on the optic nerve was perceived 'as the objective form of a thing outside the eye', and compared it with the reification of commodity-fetishism. But now he makes explicitly clear that commodity-fetishism is a 'definite social relation' between people and therefore has nothing to do with a 'physical relation between physical things' (Marx 1976, p. 165).

104. Marx 1976, pp. 167 et sq.; cf. Marx 1867, p. 85.

105. Žižek's assumption that the 'essential feature of commodity fetishism . . . consists of a certain misrecognition which concerns the relation between a structured network and one of its elements' (Žižek 1989, pp. 23–4) is, therefore, misleading.

106. Marx 1976, p. 163.

107. Marx 1976, p. 166 (my emphasis – JR).

of social relations '*as what they are*' relate to Marx's description of commodity-fetishism as a 'mysterious', 'fantastic form' ['*phantasmagorische Form*'] or a 'mystic veil of mist' ['*mystischen Nebelschleier*']?[108]

Marx responds to this apparent contradiction by introducing the concept of 'socially valid, and therefore . . . objective thought forms' [*objektive Gedankenformen*],[109] which are reproduced directly and spontaneously as 'current and usual thought forms' [*gang und gäbe Denkformen*].[110] As Marx has done with the syntagma 'idealistic superstructure', he now combines a term describing thinking (thought-form) and a term referring to 'reality' (objective). As an 'objective thought form', commodity-fetishism is both a form of social life in bourgeois society and a corresponding form of practice and consciousness, that is, 'reasonable' practice as well as practical reason. Marx is here far from any naive ideology-critique that claims to get rid of these 'inversions' by mere rational enlightenment: the 'belated scientific discovery' that the commodity-values are actually not 'things' but rather reified expressions of human labour is certainly an important achievement, but this 'by no means banishes the semblance of objectivity [*gegenständlichen Schein*] possessed by the social characteristics of labour'.[111] We will meet this argument again in the context of the wage-form and the 'trinity-formula' (see Section 2.2.3.).

One can now better understand why Marx describes the consciousness corresponding to commodity-fetishism both as 'inverted' and as one adequate to reality. As W.F. Haug has observed, 'it is, although "inverted", pragmatically correct, since it corresponds to the forms of action that fit to the "normal" social-economic conditions'.[112] Marx's critique therefore targets the very *normality* of bourgeois reality: the 'inversion' sits in the fundamental structure of unplanned, private commodity-production and -circulation itself; what is 'inverted' is its mode of functioning that proceeds stealthily behind the backs of the producers. The corresponding mode of thinking is 'inverted' only insofar as it takes the reification of praxis-forms at face-value as a 'natural' and 'self-evident' fact. This everyday naturalisation can only be considered as 'false' if one looks at it from the perspective of a dialectical analysis which 'regards every historically developed form as being in a fluid state, in motion, and therefore grasps its transient aspect'.[113]

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108. Marx 1976, pp. 164–5, 173.
109. Marx 1867, p. 87; Marx 1976, p. 169.
110. Marx 1867, p. 542; Marx 1976, p. 682.
111. Marx 1976, p. 167.
112. W.F. Haug 2005, p. 165.
113. Marx 1976, p. 103. Marx called this the 'rational form' of dialectics as opposed to its 'mystified' (Hegelian) form and highlights its ideology-critical character: 'it does not let itself be impressed by anything, being in its very essence critical and revolutionary' (Ibid.).

2.2.3. *The wage-form and the 'true Eden' of human rights*

Marx's analysis of the 'inversion' of capitalist economy starts out with the commodity, the cellular form of the capitalist mode of production. The money-form, which he describes as the 'finished form of the world of commodities', is more difficult to decipher as a fetish, because it has already assumed the 'fixed quality of natural forms of social life', i.e. a stage of naturalisation that 'conceals the social relations between the individual workers, by making those relations appear as relations between material objects'.[114] As the *critique of political economy* ascends from the commodity to money, then to the commodity of labour-power, wages, capital and rent, the fetish-concept remains a constitutive part of the analysis.

The wage of the labourer appears on the surface of bourgeois society as the 'price of labour', whereas it is actually only the price of 'labour-power'.[115] It seems as though the entire working day is paid, but what is actually paid is only the labour necessary for the reproduction of labour-power, not the surplus-labour, which is the source of surplus-value for the capitalist. 'The wage-form thus extinguishes every trace of the division of the working day into necessary labour and surplus labour, into paid labour and unpaid labour'.[116] The term 'value of labour' is for Marx therefore an 'imaginary expression'.[117] I will later deal with the elaborate concept of the imaginary in Althusser's theory of ideology, in a version that is taken from and informed by the psychoanalytical school of Lacan (see Section 6.5.). But whereas Althusser caricatured Marx's approach as an empty and illusory reflex, Marx himself used the term 'imaginary' not in the sense of a baseless illusion or false consciousness, but pointed out that these imaginary expressions 'arise . . . from the relations of production themselves. They are categories for the forms of appearance of essential relations [*Erscheinungsformen wesentlicher Verhältnisse*]'.[118] The term 'forms of appearance' is not to be understood as a volatile castle in the sky, but rather in a sense that is both 'imaginary' and 'real'. We can express this with the syntagma 'real-imaginary': similar to the 'real-imaginary' forms of commodity-fetishism, they are 'objective thought forms' that operate both on the level of social reality and practical consciousness:[119] 'All the notions of justice held by both the worker and the

114. Marx 1976, pp. 168–9.
115. Marx 1976, pp. 675, 677–8.
116. Marx 1976, p. 680.
117. Marx 1976, p. 677.
118. Ibid.
119. Note that the German language differentiates between two terms that are usually both translated as 'appearance', namely '*Erscheinung*' (apperarance, phenomenon, manifestation) and '*Schein*' (appearance, semblance, pretence, chimera, sham, illusion). Marx's term '*Erscheinungsformen*' therefore refers to something more 'real' and 'material' than to mere '*Schein*'. But Marx at times also uses the term '*Schein*' in this sense, for example when he talks about the '*gegenständlichen Schein*' of labour (Marx 1976, p. 167).

capitalist, all the mystifications of the capitalist mode of production, all capitalism's illusion about freedom . . . have as their basis the form of appearance discussed above'.[120]

The proper 'weight' of these 'mystifications,' their anchorage in the actual economic relationships and in common sense can be illustrated by the observation that the struggles of the labour-movement, even those strongly influenced by Marxists, have been (and still are) predominantly fought out over wage-levels, within the 'real-imaginary' spaces of the wage-form. To transcend this form would sooner or later amount to a fundamental challenge of the capitalist relations of production and its corresponding organisation of labour. Radical demands often fail (except in pre-revolutionary conjunctures), and they do so not only because they are crushed by the oppression or propaganda of capitalist opponents and their allies, but also because they do not link together with the 'common sense' of the workers, whose notions of freedom and justice are nourished by the wage-form. In terms of Gramsci's theory of hegemony (see Section 5.5.), one could analyse the wage-form as a fundamental hegemonic factor that determines the practical and common sensual forms of thought 'from below'.

In a famous passage, Marx summarised both the imaginary and the realistic character of these common-sense notions: The sphere of circulation is 'in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. It is the exclusive realm of Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham'.[121] Even if the reference to the Biblical 'garden of Eden' might sound ironic, the passage is much more than a mockery of an illusion lacking any reality. As Marx is well aware, the stability of bourgeois rule in part rests on the phenomenon that in the 'noisy' sphere of circulation, 'where everything takes place on the surface and in full view of everyone', the participants of market-exchanges act indeed as 'contractors' that 'contract as free persons, who are equal before the law'[122] and only look to their own advantage.[123] Marx leaves no doubt that the freedom of the 'doubly free' labourer, whom the money owner 'finds' on the market,[124] is not a mere chimera, but represents a real difference in status to the serf. The German proverb '*Stadtluft macht frei*' ('town air sets you free') illustrates the principle whereby a serf became a freeman if he stayed in a town for a year and a day. Marx also knows, however, that the idea of a 'free' labourer being 'found' by the money-owner on the labour-market is a methodological abstraction that does not correspond to actual historical developments. To rectify this abstraction, he adds the chapter on 'So-Called

120. Marx 1976, p. 680.
121. Marx 1976, p. 280.
122. Ibid.
123. Marx 1976, pp. 279–80.
124. Marx 1976, p. 274.

Primitive Accumulation' that outlines how emerging proletarians had been robbed of the 'commons', violently driven from their lands, 'set free' from their agricultural means of production and of life, and then driven into coercive workhouses by 'bloody legislation' and other repressive measures against vagabondage. In actual history, the propertyless have not been acknowledged as juridical subjects for a long time.[125] And what is the reality of contractual freedom and equality if the majority is forced to sell their labour-power in order to survive, while the few buy their labour-power in order to make profit?

That Marx undertakes both to analyse the sphere of circulation as the real basis of 'human rights' *and* to simultaneously reveal their restricted and imaginary nature, illustrates the ingenuity and subtlety (not to forget the extraordinary literary quality) of these passages: in the transition from the 'noisy' and visible sphere of circulation to the 'hidden abode of production', the physiognomy of the 'contractors' changes dramatically: 'He who was previously the money owner now strides out in front as a capitalist; the possessor of labour-power follows as his worker. The one smirks self-importantly and is intent to business; the other is timid and holds back, like someone who has brought his own hide to market and now has nothing else to expect but – a tanning'.[126]

2.2.4. *Capital-fetishism, the 'trinity formula' and the 'religion of everyday life'*

Marx continually argued against the spontaneous tendency of a reifying perception of social relations, pointing out that capital is not a 'thing', i.e. not an invested amount of money, but rather a 'definite social relation of production pertaining to a particular historical and social formation, which simply takes the form of a thing'.[127] That is why he insisted that capital did not come into being 'with the mere circulation of money and commodities', but required the combination between the owner of the means of production and the 'free worker

125. Polanyi described the privatisations of the commons by enclosures as 'a revolution of the rich against the poor': 'The fabric of society was being disrupted; desolate villages and the ruins of human dwellings testified to the fierceness with which the revolution raged' (Polanyi 1957, p. 35). 'The country folk had been dehumanized into slum dwellers; the family was on the road to perdition; and large parts of the country were rapidly disappearing under the slack and scrap heaps vomited forth by the 'satanic mills' (p. 39). Since the violent expropriations are not restricted to the 'origins' of capitalist relations of production but go along throughout their development, David Harvey proposes to substitute the concept of 'primitive accumulation' by 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey 2003, pp. 137 et sqq.). David McNally draws the line from 'capitalism's first war against the poor' to the current enclosures of the 'global commons' and the initiatives to commodify the human genome (McNally 2006, 89–112).

126. Marx 1976, pp. 279–80.

127. Marx 1976, p. 953.

available, on the market, as the seller of his own labour-power'.[128] The process of reification then finds its 'pure form' in interest-bearing capital, in which capital appears 'simply as a thing', a 'mysterious and self-creating source of interest, of its own increase', and a 'self-valorizing value, money breeding money, and in this form it no longer bears any marks of its origin', so that it becomes wholly the property of money to create value 'as it is the property of a pear tree to bear pears'. This is a godsend for vulgar economics, because the source of profit is no longer recognisable.[129]

Towards the end of *Capital* Volume Three, Marx summarised the different stages of reification and mystification of the capitalist mode of production in the 'trinity formula', according to which capital creates profit (plus interest), land creates ground-rent, and labour creates wages. In this context, Marx introduced the term 'religion of everyday life', which he described as a 'bewitched, distorted and upside-down world haunted by Monsieur le Capital and Madame la Terre who are at the same time social characters and mere things'.[130] It was the great achievement of classical economics to have dissolved this 'religious' reification of the relations of production 'by reducing interest to a part of profit and rent to the surplus above the average profit, so that they both coincide with surplus-value,' which in turn is engendered by living labour. But it becomes again clear that for Marx, this 'religion of everyday life' is so deeply anchored in socio-economic reality that it cannot be unhinged by a critique of 'false consciousness': even when scientifically disproved, its everyday validity and efficacy remain unbroken, since 'the actual agents of production themselves feel completely at home in these estranged and irrational forms of capital-interest, land-rent, labour-wages, for these are precisely the configurations of appearance in which they move, and with which they are daily involved'.[131]

In reviewing these aspects of Marx's analysis, in particular in regards to the combination of 'reification' and 'mystification,' it becomes clear that his concept of fetishism tried to comprehend different aspects in their interconnection. There is, for one, the specifics and efficacy of a modern objectified mode of domination in which the capitalistic market operates as a higher power that subordinates not only the producers and consumers, but also the capitalists themselves, so that the relationship between supply and demand 'hovers over the earth like the fate of the ancients, and with invisible hand allots fortune and misfortune to men, sets up empires and wrecks empires, causes nations to

128. Marx 1976, p. 274.
129. Marx 1976, pp. 516–17.
130. Marx 1981, p. 969; cf Marx 1894, p. 817.
131. Ibid.

rise and to disappear';[132] second, the self-mystifying naturalisation of this reified domination into inherent necessity without alternatives by which specific social power-relations appear as 'natural forms' of social life.[133] And finally, there is the production of consent so that the producers feel 'completely at home' in these 'estranged and irrational forms'.[134] These different aspects – reification, dissimulation and 'voluntary' subordination – are for Marx not only related to each other, but also immediately inscribed in the material arrangement of bourgeois domination as 'objective thought forms'.

2.2.5. *The 'silent compulsion' of economic rule as ideology?*

Marx characterised capitalism's typical mode of domination as a 'silent compulsion of economic relations', which typically operates effectively without applying 'extra-economic force', and this not least for the reason that the working class acknowledges the demands of the capitalist mode of production 'as self-evident natural laws'.[135] It seems as if it is already this 'silent compulsion' that sets the course for the ideological subordination before the ideologues start to talk loquaciously about it, or to try to silence, justify or deny it. Has ideology thereby been, as Eagleton presumed, 'transferred from the superstructure to the base', and, if the capitalist economy has its own built-in devices of deception, what need would there be 'for specifically ideological institutions at the level of the "superstructure" '?[136]

One is confronted, here, with a difficult and much-debated methodological question. If one decides to consider Marx's analysis of capitalist fetishism as the core of his 'ideology-critique', as, for example, proposed by Gerhard Hauck or Sebastian Herkommer,[137] one faces the problem that its object tends to coincide with the overall project of the *critique of political economy* aiming at dialectically reconstructing both the socio-economic reality and the corresponding thought-forms. Equating the ideological with the 'silent compulsion of economic relations' (and its in-built mystifications) however risks getting entangled with the pitfalls of an economistic approach that would render a theory of specific ideological apparatuses, practices, and struggles superfluous. On the other hand, it is obvious that all three moments of Marx's theory of fetishism – the objectified

132. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 48.
133. Marx 1976, p. 168; Marx 1867, p. 86. 'The fact that social life is dominated by *inanimate* entities lends it a spurious air of naturalness and inevitability: society is no longer perceptible as a human construct, and therefore as humanly alterable' (Eagleton 1991, p. 85).
134. Marx 1981, p. 969; Marx 1894, p. 817.
135. Marx 1976, p. 899.
136. Eagleton 1991, p. 85.
137. Cf. Hauck 1992, pp. 12, 14, 19; Herkommer 2004, p. 83.

mode of domination in bourgeois modernity, its naturalisation into a fateful mechanism, and the creation of a 'feeling at home' in these estranged forms – are of crucial importance for a theoretical understanding of voluntary subordination to bourgeois society. How could these moments then be dismissed or neglected by an ideology-theory that takes the analysis of the self-submission to estranged conditions as its main task of research? Are they perhaps relevant for an ideology-theory without being 'ideological' by themselves?

Unfortunately, this difficulty cannot be clearly resolved by 'philology' either. On the one hand, it is to be noted that Marx never deployed the term 'ideology' in the context of his fetishism-analyses, which could be interpreted as an indication that he himself was not inclined to consider fetishism as part of a projected ideology-theory. On the other hand, the passages on fetishism contain again and again the 'inversion-' metaphor that refers back to the concept of ideology in *The German Ideology*. Furthermore, the association with 'religion' as the historically first form of ideology is maintained throughout.

The status of Marx's analysis of fetishism in a historic-materialistic ideology-theory was therefore contested by different Marxist traditions from the outset. Unnoted by Kautsky, Plekhanov and Lenin, the concept of fetishism played a central role neither in the tradition of 'Marxism-Leninism' nor in Gramsci's theory of hegemony. For Althusser, it was a relic of a pre-Marxist, 'humanist' concept of alienation, and, furthermore, 'fictitious theory'.[138] One could object, however, that an ideology-theory which, in its zealous drive to distance itself from any kind of ideology-critique, keeps its distance from an analysis of the 'objective thought forms' of bourgeois society, is unable to identify the points of connection where ideological practices, rituals, and discourse interlock with the everyday life-experiences and the common sense of 'the actual agents of production'.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, in his *History and Class Consciousness* of 1923, Georg Lukács made the commodity-fetish into 'the universal category of society as a whole.'[139] For the early Habermas it was the 'lowest rung on the ladder of ideology'.[140] Richard Sorg considers the fetishism chapter of *Capital* Volume One as the 'exposure of the contents of the foundational structure of bourgeois consciousness in all its manifold forms', and for Alfred Sohn-Rethel, the 'formal analysis of the commodity holds the key not only to the critique of political economy, but also to the historical explanation of the abstract conceptual mode of thinking and of the division of intellectual and manual labour

138. Cf. Althusser 1994, pp. 487, 497; cf. Althussser 1979, p. 230, n. 7.
139. Lukács 1971, p. 86.
140. Habermas 1963, p. 205.

which came into existence with it'.[141] Terms like the 'universal category' and the 'foundational structure' of consciousness, as well as the conviction of having found the one 'key' to the division of intellectual and manual labour, tend to endow the fetishised forms of market-economy with an encompassing power that is able to permeate the entire domain of the ideological – paradoxically with a perfection similar to the Foucauldian concept of 'power', which has been developed in a completely different context (see Section 7.4.5.). If ideologies are nothing but expressions of inverted and reified economic forms of practice, the die is already cast, and there is no more need for an ideology-theory that focuses on the analysis of 'idealistic superstructures', their apparatuses, forms, intellectuals, practices and specific struggles.

Is there a way out of these methodological difficulties? Let us take a look at some positions that try to mediate from different sides. According to Sebastian Herkommer, a Marxist concept of ideology has to start from Marx's critique of objective thought-forms, which constitute, however, only a basic level of ideology.[142] Simultaneously, 'ideological state apparatuses' (Althusser) like churches, schools, and political parties are to be analysed in their own 'materiality', their 'real mode of existence', and in regards to their specific efficacy.[143] The question is then, how the relationship between this ideological functioning and the fetishistically '[in]verted' thought-forms is conceived. In Herkommer's account, we find mainly categories like 'widening' ['*Erweiterung*'], 'reinforcement' ['*Verstärkung*'], and 'multiplication' ['*Potenzierung*'],[144] which, however, leave little room for an analysis of the (relative) autonomy and specificity of the ideological. Thomas Metscher describes the fetishism of the commodity and the idols of the market as the 'elementary forms of the ideological' and as 'elementary ideological powers', which provide the ' "primitive" ' socialisation' ['*ursprüngliche Vergesellschaftung*'] and thus establish the functioning of the ideological powers (state, law, religion, education).[145] To conceptualise the objective thought-forms of bourgeois society as the 'elementary' and 'primitive' base, from which the ideological powers are derived as secondary manifestations, tends to suggest a gradualist model that reduces the dialectics of 'interaction' (Engels) to a unilinear development.

Approaching this relationship from another direction, W.F. Haug and the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT*) propose to consider 'objective thought forms' as the basis of the integrative power of bourgeois ideologies, but without themselves

141. Sorg 1976, p. 45; Sohn-Rethel 1978, p. 33.
142. Herkommer 2004, pp. 83, 150.
143. Herkommer 2004, pp. 108, 153.
144. Herkommer 2004, pp. 151 et sqq.
145. Metscher 2010, pp. 326–7; Metscher 2012, pp. 74–5; cf. the letter-exchange on questions of ideology-theory in Rehmann and Metscher 2012.

forming an ideology. The reason is that they are not regulated 'from above', through 'ideological powers' (Engels). Only if the objective thought-forms and their representations 'are articulated within the operative structure of the ideological powers and are ordered according to their rules is their processing to be called ideological in a strict sense'.[146] It is certainly understandable that a concept of the ideological, which is defined in terms of an ensemble of institutionally administered norms, values, and ideals, needs to be kept separate from the effects of commodity-fetishism, wage-form, and capital-fetishism. But how is this distance to be maintained, when the ideologically socialised 'think spontaneously and contradictorily within the ideological forms and in this way process their experiences in practical life'? W.F. Haug calls this 'private *Weltanschauung*',[147] but also, on other occasion, the '*Do it yourself* of ideology' in everyday life that functions as a 'sounding-board' [*Resonanzboden*] for elaborate ideologies and their 'institutionalised discourses'.[148] The difficulty of conceptually connecting the different levels explains Metscher's criticism that Haug and the PIT, due to their latent Althusserianism, are too much fixated on the institutional processes of ideological socialisation 'from above' and thus neglect the 'dialectic of the ideological'.[149]

Is there a way out of this theoretical conundrum? It would certainly be self-defeating for any research on ideology to reduce the contradictory everyday experiences in bourgeois society to the effects of fetishism. But it is also important to develop analytical instruments that grasp the 'meeting-points' and combinations between ideological discourses and the 'objective thought forms' of bourgeois society that produce common-sense mystifications. What is decisive is not so much how exactly the terminological delimitations are set, but rather how to find a differentiated method of analysis that links the 'silent compulsion of economic relations', the ways this compulsion is dealt with in everyday experience and its 'discursive' arrangement and 'processing' by different ideological apparatuses and their ideologues, without subsuming the different levels of social reality to a single logic. The concrete ways in which the competing ideological powers relate to economic practices and relations (such as justification or dissimulation of power-relations, imaginary spaces of compensation and many more) cannot be determined beforehand, but are to be investigated empirically.

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146. Cf. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 68; *PIT* 1979, p. 187.
147. Ibid.
148. W.F. Haug 1993, pp. 172, 227.
149. Metscher 2010, pp. 344–5; Metscher 2012, pp. 77–8; cf. the letter-exchange on questions of ideology-theory in Rehmann and Metscher 2012.

2.2.6. *'Science' between ideology and ideology-critique*

There is at least one example where Marx himself was concerned with the ideological 'processing' of objective thought-forms, namely in the case of 'vulgar economists' – among them Destutt de Tracy as their 'genuine luminary'[150] – who do 'nothing more than interpret, systematize and turn into apologetics the notions of agents trapped within bourgeois relations of production', 'giving them a certain comprehensible arrangement'.[151] It is their ideological function to 'translate' the objective thought-forms immediately into a doctrinaire language, precisely 'from the standpoint of the ruling section, i.e. the capitalists, and their treatment is therefore not naive and objective, but apologetic',[152] according to what is 'useful to capital or harmful, expedient or inexpedient'.[153] There is hardly any other attitude that Marx despises more than an approach to science 'from the outside'. As he argues against the apologist Malthus, the instrumentalisation of research according to the 'particular interests of existing ruling classes or sections of classes', is 'baseness' and a 'sin against science':[154] 'When a man seeks to *accommodate* science to a viewpoint which is derived not from science itself (however erroneous it may be) but from *outside, from alien, external interests*, then I call him "base" '.[155]

Marx juxtaposes the 'vulgar' reproduction of the 'superficial appearance' with the 'urge of political economists like the physiocrats, Adam Smith and Ricardo to grasp the inner connection'.[156] Notwithstanding the inconsistencies and shortcomings of classical political economy, he sees in its 'urge' to grasp the inner connection an important scientific achievement that helps challenge the naturalising effects of commodity-fetishism. In the context of the 'trinity-formula', he points out 'the great merit of classical economics to have dissolved this false appearance and deception, this automatisation and ossification of the different elements of wealth vis-a-vis one another . . ., by reducing interest to a part of profit and rent to the surplus above the average profit, so that they both coincide in surplus-value'.[157]

Even if, as we have seen, Marx cautions that a mere intellectual critique of fetishism is not sufficient to break its power in everyday life, it is obvious that, for him, the science of political economy has the potential of an ideology-critique that counteracts the mystifying effects of fetishism and its spontaneous 'objective

150. Marx 1978, p. 564.
151. Marx 1981, pp. 956, 969.
152. Marx 1969–71c, p. 453; cf. Marx 1999c, p. 445.
153. Marx 1976, p. 97; Marx 1867, p. 15.
154. Marx 1969–71b, p. 120.
155. Marx 1969–71b, p. 119.
156. Marx 1969–71c, p. 453.
157. Marx 1981, p. 969.

thought-forms'. As he explains in the 'Preface to the First Edition' of *Capital* Volume One (1867), 'free scientific inquiry' has in the domain of political economy even more enemies than in other domains: it 'summons into the fray on the opposing side the most violent, sordid and malignant passions of the human breast, Furies of private interest'. These 'Furies' are also mobilised in the predominant ideological powers: 'The Established Church, for instance, will more readily pardon an attack on thirty-eight of its thirty-nine articles than on one-thirty-ninth of its income. Nowadays atheism itself is a *culpa levis* [venial sin], as compared with the criticism of existing property relations'.[158]

In order to understand the ideology-critical potentials of Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*, it is important to identify exactly at what point he marks his difference with classical political economy: Smith and Ricardo's achievement was that they 'uncovered the content' concealed within the value-forms, namely labour, but it is one of their 'chief failings' that they never succeeded in discovering 'the form of value', which means: they have 'never once asked the question why this content has assumed that particular form, that is to say, why labour is expressed in value, and why the measurement of labour by its duration is expressed in the magnitude of the value of the product'.[159] The difference is important, because if one focuses only on the content (labour) and takes the value-form for granted, one will miss the specifics of this form and naturalise it into an 'eternal natural form of social production';[160] only if one succeeds in deciphering the *value-form* can one identify it as a form of specific social practices (exchange, buying and selling) that epitomises a specific 'social formation in which the process of production has mastery over man, instead of the opposite'.[161]

Methodologically speaking, the approach of classical political economy can be described as analytical reduction. In a similar way to what Feuerbach does with 'religion' when he 'resolv[es] the religious world into its secular basis',[162] the classical economists reduce the form to its inherent 'essence', to labour. While they seek the 'secret' of the commodity-form 'behind' this form (in its 'substance'), Marx is interested in the secret of this form itself.[163] Since he aims at tracing the genesis and the peculiar functioning of the commodity-form itself, his method can be described as historic-critical reconstruction.[164] In one of his earliest

158. Marx 1976, p. 92.
159. Marx 1976, pp. 173–4, n. 34.
160. Ibid.
161. Marx 1976, p. 175.
162. Marx 1845, p. 4.
163. Cf. Harvey 2010, p. 45. Following a remark made by Lacan, Žižek – drawing on an analogy with Freud's interpretation of dreams – concludes that Marx has thus discovered the value-form as a 'symptom' (Žižek 1989, pp. 11 et sqq., 15 et sqq.).
164. Cf. W.F. Haug 2005, pp. 179–80, 185.

writings, the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1843), he opposes 'vulgar', 'dogmatic' criticism, which '*fights* with its subject-matter', and 'true philosophical criticism', which not only shows the contradictions of a phenomenon to exist, but '*explains* them, . . . comprehends their genesis, their necessity',[165] and which also signifies their transitory character and eventual downfall. It is this method of historic-critical reconstruction that determines Marx's ideology-critical understanding of dialectics, which 'regards every historically developed form as being in a fluid state, in motion, and therefore grasps its transient aspect'. In its 'rational form', therefore, dialectics 'does not let itself be impressed by anything, being in its very essence critical and revolutionary', and thus becomes a 'scandal and an abomination to the bourgeoisie and its doctrinary spokesmen'.[166]

It is mainly here, on the methodological level of Marx's historic-critical *reconstruction*, that a comparison with Jacques Derrida's philosophy of *deconstruction* could be fruitful. It is clear that Marx's dialectical dissecting of reified and ossified historical forms into their 'motions' and 'fluid states' overlaps with Derrida's 'deconstruction' of apparently stable meanings. Another commonality is Derrida's challenge to ideologies of immediacy, according to which meanings emerge directly from the empirical speech-acts of subjects. They refer rather to an unlimited network of past and present linguistic practices – a dependency described by Derrida as a primacy of 'writing' and of 'text' (texture) to speaking. Without delving much further into the intersections and divergences, I would like to argue that Marx's method goes beyond, and is more encompassing than, Derrida's approach and thereby has the potential to re-integrate some of its elements into a historic-materialist framework. Whereas Derrida's deconstruction is bound to a disembodied understanding of discourse and language, Marx puts to work a historic-critical reconstruction of both the capitalist mode of production and the corresponding 'objective thought-forms', thus opening the way to exploring their inner connection and interactions.[167]

Some Marxist scholars argued that the ideology-theoretical importance of Marx's critique of 'vulgar economics' has recently been confirmed by neoliberalism's predominance from the mid-1970s onwards. According to Joachim Bischoff, it is only now that vulgar economics has gained hegemony, since the

165. Marx 1843, p. 91.
166. Marx 1976, p. 103.
167. According to McNally, 'there are elements of deconstruction that can be seen to develop the Marxist critique of "immediacy" according to which the forms in which phenomena appear cannot be an adequate basis for knowledge'. (McNally 2001, p. 56). A productive integration of these elements needs however to come to terms with Derrida's 'linguistic idealism', which manifests itself in his disembodied notion of language (McNally 2001, pp. 56 et sqq.).

neoliberal concept of society basically rests on the 'superficial idea that value-creation in society is based on the three factors of production', described by Marx as the 'trinity-formula'.[168] Different to traditional religions, neoliberalism is a 'specific daily-life religion of highly developed capitalism', in which 'the surface-mythology of bourgeois society . . . becomes again the base of the ideological sphere'.[169] According to Herkommer, it is only during neoliberalism that the vulgar-economic approach could 'assert itself on a general level' and become the 'hegemonic ideology'.[170]

2.3. Did Marx develop a 'neutral' concept of ideology?

The interpretation of ideology as a neutral medium of class-interests claimed to find confirmation in a passage of the *Preface* of 1859, where Marx distinguished between the 'material . . . transformation in the economic conditions of production' and the 'legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms, in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out'. As the immediate context shows, the 'conflict' Marx is talking about is specifically the 'conflict existing between the social productive forces and the relations of production'.[171]

Following the young Lenin, this passage was interpreted in the predominant tendencies in 'Marxism-Leninism' to the effect that social relations were divided into 'material' and 'ideological' relations.[172] Such a dichotomy contained and produced far-reaching consequences. It established a theoretical understanding that reduced the ideological to 'ideas' (see Section 3.2.). To bolster such a dichotomy, interpreters often quoted Engels's observation that everything that sets people in motion has to 'pass through their minds'.[173] The conclusion was that the 'ideological forms' quoted above are forms of consciousness, in which the class-conflicts of society find their expression. Ideology seemed to be a set of ideas, in and by which an 'objective' class interest – be it feudal, bourgeois, or proletarian – was represented. In both 'Marxism-Leninism' and the 'sociology of knowledge', which became the predominant school in 'Western' social theories, the ideological was then considered 'neutral' in the sense that it functioned as a medium allowing the expression and representation of different, even opposing, class-interests.

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168. Bischoff 2003a, p. 136.
169. Bischoff 2003b, pp. 28 et sq.; cf. Bischoff 2003b, pp. 16, 33.
170. Herkommer 2004, p. 94; cf. Herkommer 2004, p. 154.
171. Marx 1859, p. 263.
172. Cf. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 1, p. 151; Bauer et al. 1974, p. 19.
173. Engels 1886, p. 389.

Philologically speaking, however, this interpretation is questionable. Firstly, Marx did not speak in this passage about class-interests or class-conflicts in general, but rather about a specific conflict, namely between the productive forces and the relations of production which had become their 'fetters'. The question here was therefore not how class-interests were reflected in 'ideological forms', but rather in and by what ideological forms the people involved become aware of and 'fight out' the contradictions between productive forces and relations of production. To better understand what was meant here, it is useful to consult the *Eighteenth Brumaire* of 1852, in which Marx pointed out the paradox that those who are at the forefront of social transformations 'anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise': 'Thus Luther donned the mask of the Apostle Paul, the revolution of 1789 to 1814 draped itself alternately as the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire'.[174] But what the French revolutionaries accomplished 'in Roman costume and with Roman phrases', was according to Marx something completely different, of which they were not aware, namely 'the task of unchaining and setting up modern *bourgeois* society'.[175] The perceived gap between the agents' actual revolutionary role in history and their self-image of faithfully returning to 'pure' origins illuminates why, in the *Preface* of 1859, Marx insisted on distinguishing between 'ideological forms' and transformations in the conditions of production, 'which can be determined with the precision of natural science'. Today we would certainly question the role Marx ascribed to 'natural science' as guarding against 'ideology'.

Secondly, and more importantly, this passage did not say that the 'legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic . . . forms' were to be understood as ideas altogether. That they are *also* forms of consciousness does not mean that they are *merely* forms of consciousness. We have already seen in *The German Ideology* that Marx and Engels linked their observations of 'inverted consciousness' to the underlying societal arrangement that divided manual and mental labour (see above Section 2.1.4.). The passage in question says explicitly that in 'ideological forms' people not only become 'conscious' of the conflict between the productive forces and the relations of production, but also '*fight it out*'.[176] This indicates that the concept of 'ideological form' deployed here assumes a stronger 'materiality' and a more independent inner logic than the rhetoric 'expression' of class-interests allows. In this sense, the late Engels developed the concept of 'interaction [*Wechselwirkung*]', and emphasised that the ideological (and in

174. Marx 1852, p. 104.
175. Ibid.
176. Marx 1859, p. 263.

particular the political and juridical) forms 'also have a bearing on the course of the historical struggles of which, in many cases, they largely determine the *form*'.[177] Gramsci, who started his work on the *Prison Notebooks* by translating the *Preface* (as well as the *Theses on Feuerbach*) into Italian, tried to exclude an understanding of 'ideological forms' as mere forms of consciousness by translating the concept as 'ideological terrain' (see Section 5.1.).

The problems indicated here could be resolved by a 'strong' concept of form, which we had already encountered in Marx's *critique of political economy*. Marx identified the social and historical specifics of market-capitalism by the 'commodity-*form*', which he considered the 'economic cell-form' of bourgeois society.[178] He submitted the commodity to a sophisticated form-analysis and thereby deciphered it as a *form of praxis* (here, the practice of exchange) that, under the conditions of private and unplanned commodity-production, had been consolidated and ossified into an institutionalised form, which produced its own 'objective thought-forms', attitudes, and, to deploy one of Bourdieu's key-concepts, '*habitus*'. Lucien Sève has generalised this approach with his concept of 'forms of individuality' describing social 'forms of activity', in which concrete individuals have to move.[179] When Marx describes 'ideological forms' as 'legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic' forms, it is clear that there is more at stake than mere ideas. Applying Sève's term, one could understand them more adequately as institutionally fixed 'forms of individuality' developed by ideological powers and apparatuses prescribing ideological 'forms of activity' and thus modelling the individuals' thought-forms and subjectivities.

And finally, the assumption of a 'neutral' concept of ideology contradicts the overall and consistent usage of a critical concept of ideology. It was the separation of manual and intellectual labour, in turn embedded in the emergence of antagonistic classes and the state, which for Marx and Engels made the development of a 'superstructure of ideological strata'[180] a transitory necessity for class-societies. It was this overall arrangement of social, political and 'intellectual' hierarchies that must be overcome from the perspective of a classless society without structures of domination. The same heuristic perspective underlies Marx's critique of fetishism: the 'objective thought-forms' of commodity-, wage-, and capital-fetishism are to be overcome by 'an association of free men, working with the means of production held in common'.[181] According to Herkommer, the 'wide', 'neutral' concept of ideology was not supported by Marx's *critique of*

177. Engels 1890, pp. 34–5.
178. Marx 1976, p. 90.
179. Cf. Sève 1978, p. 275; Sève 2004, p. 287.
180. Marx 1969–71a, p. 287.
181. Marx 1976, p. 171.

political economy, which was an ideology-critique of the objective surface-appearances of bourgeois society and its necessarily inverted forms of thought.[182] Distancing himself from his former usage of a 'neutral' concept to ideology, Thomas Metscher acknowledged that Marx and Engels employed a critical concept, which they derived from the social separation of manual and mental labour, and argued that Marxism, due to its capacities of historical self-reflection, is to be conceived as an epistemological criticism of any ideological world-view and theory.[183]

2.4. Engels's concept of 'ideological powers'

Let us recapitulate the peculiar movement of thought in Marx's critique of religion and ideology in order to examine what was 'left behind'. Beginning as a critique of 'inverted consciousness', Marx's ideology-critique descended to a critique of the underlying social separation of manual and intellectual labour. This shift could be observed particularly in *The German Ideology*, which was only published in its entirety in 1932, not least because according to Marx, it was written mainly for the sake of a philosophical 'self-clarification' with Engels, so that they could leave the manuscript confidently to the 'gnawing critique of the mice'.[184] In a similar movement, the critique of religion taken up from Feuerbach shifted to a critique of law, of politics, and finally to a critique of fundamental economic forms of practice, together with their 'objective thought-forms'. Transformed into a critique of fetishism, Marx's criticism of religion 'arrived' at the inner core of capitalist commodity-production, and it was here that he found its systematic development. The heuristic achievement of this can be observed in the paradigm-shift in the development of Marx's *critique of political economy*. It appeared at the same time, as if the ideological had completely dissolved in the reifications of commodity-production and the 'silent compulsion' of capitalist relations of production. But what about the ideologies which were relatively independent from fetishist economic praxis-forms? Were they not criticised in *The German Ideology* exactly for their separation from the material processes of life?

It was primarily the late Engels who anchored the concept of ideology in a critical theory of the state. For this, he took up the theoretical sketches of *The German Ideology* – in particular those with regard to the state as an 'illusory community',[185] and its in-built separation of manual and intellectual labour, town and countryside, and so on – and brought them into line with more recent

182. Herkommer 2004, pp. 82–3.
183. Metscher 2012, pp. 67, 69; cf. Metscher 2010, pp. 324, 343.
184. Marx 1859, p. 264.
185. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 46.

research, above all with the ethnological works of Lewis Henry Morgan. In *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (1888) he introduced his concept of 'ideological power' [*ideologische Macht*]: 'The state presents itself to us as the first ideological power over man', which means that the fight of the oppressed class against the ruling class 'necessarily becomes a political fight'.[186] This implies that the state, as the first 'ideological power', conditions an ideological form of the political, which is of course not a mere form of consciousness, but a form which social practices and struggles must actually assume. Engels then described the law as a second ideological power, by which 'the economic facts must assume the form of juristic motives in order to receive legal sanction'. He then added philosophy and religion as the 'higher ideologies', i.e. those that are still 'further removed from the economic base'.[187] With this enumeration, he systematised and developed further the remark in *The German Ideology* about the 'series of powers which determine and subordinate the individual, and which, therefore, appear in the imagination as "holy" powers'.[188]

In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1892), Engels similarly described the state as a 'power, having arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it'.[189] The emergence and detachment of such a superior power from society became necessary to prevent class-struggles from tearing society to pieces. The state 'is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that is has split into irreconcilable opposites which it is powerless to dispel'.[190] Its officials now stood 'as organs of society, *above* society', and 'respect for them must be enforced by means of exceptional laws by virtue of which they enjoy special sanctity and inviolability'. Contrary to the gentile chief who stood 'in the midst of society', the state-official was now compelled to 'represent something outside and above it [i.e. society]'.[191]

If one rereads *The German Ideology* through the lens of Engels's concept of ideological powers, one can identify a line of argument that relates ideologies, in the traditional sense of 'inverted' and mystifying thought-forms, to a materialist concept of the ideological, that is, with ideological apparatuses, 'ideological forms', 'ideological estates', and 'conceptive ideologists' that are part of what Gramsci called the 'integral state', which consists of both coercive and hegemonic apparatuses, the 'political state' and 'civil society'. Althusser would take up many of these concepts from Gramsci, while at the same time distancing

186. Engels 1892, pp. 392–3.
187. Ibid.
188. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 245.
189. Engels 1892, p. 269.
190. Ibid.
191. Engels 1892, p. 270.

himself from Marx and Engels, whose ideology theory he erroneously reduced to a speculative critique of 'false consciousness'. The *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (PIT) took a different path and considered Marx and Engels's reflections on ideology to be 'summarised' in the late Engels's concept of ideological powers: 'Marx and Engels's analyses are focused on the connections between state and ideology, their ideology-critique is oriented towards . . . the withering away of the state'.[192]

192. *PIT* 1979, p. 19.

Chapter Three

The Concept of Ideology from the Second International to 'Marxism-Leninism'

3.1. The repression of a critical concept of ideology

It was remarkable that both the 'official Marxism' of the Second International and the 'Marxism-Leninism' of the Third International carried out a 'neutralisation' of the concept of ideology that all but eliminated Marx and Engels's ideology-critique in its different varieties – be it as a critique of 'inverted consciousness' based on the division of mental and manual labour, a critique of fetishism, or a critique of 'ideological powers' linked to the state. This was due, at least in part, to an increased orientation towards state-power, which manifested itself historically either in a reformist paradigm that envisaged a piecemeal transition to socialism based on a combination of electoral politics and trade-unionism, or in a Leninist paradigm as a strategy of the revolutionary conquest of the state, and later, after the failure of a 'permanent revolution' (Trotsky) on an international scale, as the project of building 'socialism in one country'.

It is obvious that the Stalinist combination of authoritarian state-rule and party-dogmatism in the name of a 'correct' class-standpoint was incompatible with Marx's fundamental critique of the state and its authorised ideologues. It rather marked a fundamental turnabout comparable with the historical transition from the oppositional movements of early Christianity to the hierarchical state-church during and after the

Roman Emperor Contstantine. But there was a broader subterranean shift that was by no means restricted to Stalinism, but rather underpinned political positions that were far apart from each other. It can be seen already in the fact that the 1891 Erfurt Programme of the (still predominantly 'Marxist') German Social Democratic Party no longer mentioned the Marxian perspective of the 'withering away of the state.'

The paradigm-shift from a critical to a 'neutral' notion of ideology was facilitated by the fact that *The German Ideology*, published first in 1926 in an abridged form and then in its entirety only in 1932, was unknown to the first generation of Marxists. Only a few theorists took account of the fact that, for Marx and Engels, the *Communist Manifesto*'s goal of 'an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all'[1] implied a society not only without antagonistic classes but also without submission to 'superior' ideological powers connected to state-domination. Apart from Lukács, whose contribution will be discussed in Section 4.1., it was Antonio Labriola in particular who, in 1896, described what he called 'critical communism' as being critical of any 'ideology', including a communist one. According to Labriola, Marxist theory is opposed to 'ideologies of any sort' [*di fronte alle ideologie di ogni maniera*]. It is 'the clear and definite negation of all ideology' [*è la negazione recisa e definitiva di ogni ideologia*].[2] I will discuss some traces of Labriola's fundamental ideology-critique in the chapter on Gramsci, who also adopted the concept 'philosophy of praxis' from Labriola (see Section 5.2.).[3] Labriola was also one of the few Marxist theorists who perspicuously anticipated the danger that 'our doctrine' would become again a 'new inverted ideology', in particular when people 'unfamiliar with the difficulties of historic research' transformed it into 'a new philosophy of systematic history', 'history conceived as schemes or tendencies or designs'.[4]

However, these usages of a critical concept of ideology were only rare exceptions. Franz Mehring still spoke critically of the 'Hegelian ideology',[5] but at the founding conference of the Second International in 1889, the young Russian delegate Georgi Plekhanov invoked 'our revolutionary ideologues'.[6] Kautsky too employed a 'neutral' concept, when he used 'intellectual' [*geistig*] and

1. Marx and Engels 1848, p. 506.
2. Cf. Labriola 1966, pp. 98, 123; Labriola 1964, pp. 77, 91. In regards to 'critical communism' versus premature 'ideologies of communism', cf. Labriola 1966, pp. 73 et sq.; Labriola 1964, pp. 52 et sq.
3. Cf. Labriola's usage of 'philosophy of praxis' in Labriola 1973, p. 702. With regards to the philological genealogy, see the German edition of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci 1991–2002, Vol. 6, p. 556, n. 6b as well as W.F. Haug 1994, p. 1198 and n. 14.
4. Cf. Labriola 1966, pp. 126 et sq.; Labriola 1964, p. 93.
5. Mehring 1963–6a, p. 29.
6. Quoted in Jena 1989, p. 67.

'ideological' interchangeably.[7] It was, however, mainly Lenin who influenced the development of a 'neutral' concept of ideology as a medium for antagonistic class-interests.

3.2. Lenin: bourgeois or socialist ideology?

From Marx's distinction in the *Preface* of 1859 between the economic basis and ideological forms (see above Section 2.3.), the young Lenin of 1894 drew the conclusion 'that social relations are divided into material and ideological [relations]', whereby the latter 'merely constitute a superstructure above the former'.[8] The dichotomy of the 'material' versus the 'ideological' dominated the debates on ideology in 'Marxism-Leninism' until the downfall of state-socialism, and at times even beyond. It contained, as we have seen, the identification of ideology with 'ideas' and therefore overlooked the materiality of the ideological. The equation of 'ideology' and the expression of class-interests further opened the way for a definition of Marxism as the 'ideology of the labouring class', basing itself on 'the facts of . . . history and reality'.[9]

The reference to 'facts' and 'reality' already indicated how Lenin tried to solve the problem of delimiting Marxist 'ideology' from other ideologies, such as, for example, Catholicism. To this end, he introduced the concept of a 'scientific ideology', whose specificity was that it corresponded to an 'objective truth'.[10] Lenin's philosophical 'objectivism', which stood in stark contrast to his extraordinary political capacity to develop concrete strategies of intervention, can best be understood in the context of his polemical struggle against what he perceived as a dangerous subjectivist and agnostic challenge to 'dialectical materialism'. In *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* (1909), he turned on Bogdanov, who had defined truth as an 'ideological form', by which he meant an 'organising form of human experience.' Lenin argued in a peculiar way: 'If truth is *only* an ideological form, then there can be no truth independent of the subject, of humanity'.[11] He thus reacted to Bogdanov's relativism by strictly separating the existence of scientific 'truth' as an 'objective' kind of knowledge from historically determined knowledge. If he had challenged Bogdanov's approach from the perspective of Marx and Engels's critical ideology-theory, he could have criticised his overly general notion of ideology for dissimulating ideology's connections to ideological

7. Kautsky 1906, pp. 128–9.
8. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 1, p. 151.
9. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 1, p. 394.
10. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 14, p. 136.
11. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 14, p. 123.

powers and its specific function in subjugating people to conditions of class-domination. Instead he took up Bogdanov's wide and 'neutral' notion of ideology and confronted it with the notion of 'objective truth', whose correct representation was supposed to guarantee the validity of 'scientific ideologies'.

It is, in part, the enormous and long-lasting influence of this 'objective'-truth claim in Communist Parties and Marxist-Leninist milieux that helps explain in turn the appeal of the postmodernist challenge from the 1970s onwards (see Section 7). But what interests me here is the paradox that the philosophical stance considered to provide the bulwark against all kinds of 'idealistic' and 'subjectivist' deviations itself constituted a serious departure from Marx. Its underlying dichotomy between 'subjective' and 'objective' fell behind the praxis-philosophy of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* and corresponded, instead, to the 'contemplative' materialism which, as Marx criticised, conceived 'reality, sensuousness . . . in the form of the *object, or of contemplation*, but not as *sensuous human activity, practice*, not subjectively'.[12] Gramsci later picked up this thread and explicitly turned the argument against the 'objectivist' position of Bukharin's *The Theory of Historical Materialism. A Popular Manual of Sociology*,[13] but, as Haug noted, he could have applied this critique to Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* as well.[14] The notion of an 'external objectivity' in the sense of an 'extra-historical and extra-human objectivity', was both an 'iron fact of "common sense" ' and 'of religious origin', 'a hangover of the concept of God', because it presupposed that the world was (as in traditional accounts of God's creation) 'ready made, catalogued and defined once and for all'.[15] Since social practice is both real and subjective, the dichotomy of the 'objective' and 'subjective' cannot be maintained: 'Objective always means 'humanely objective' which can be held to correspond exactly to 'historically subjective': in other words, objective would mean "universal subjective" [*universale soggetivo*]'.[16]

In *What Is to Be Done?* (1902), Lenin articulated the notion that the working class could develop spontaneously only a trade-unionist 'seed form' of class consciousness, which was still subordinate to bourgeois ideology, because this 'is far older in origin than socialist ideology, . . . more fully developed, and . . . has at its disposal *immeasurably* more means of dissemination'.[17] He concluded that political class-consciousness 'can be brought to the workers *only from without*', from the 'sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the state . . ., the sphere

12. Marx 1845, p. 3.
13. Published in English with a slightly different title: cf. Bukharin 1925.
14. W.F. Haug 1994, p. 1208.
15. Gramsci 1971, pp. 441, 445; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §17, pp. 1412, 1415; cf. Q11, §37, pp. 1455 et sqq.
16. Gramsci 1971, p. 445; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §17, pp. 1415 et sq.
17. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 5, p. 386.

of the interrelation between *all* classes'.[18] This was in fact a quote from Karl Kautsky, who, in his critique of the Austrian Social-Democratic programme, had insisted that socialist awareness was 'something brought into the class struggle of the proletariat from without'.[19] Lars T. Lih points out that Lenin had most likely inserted the Kautsky passage as 'a last-minute addition' into his 'preexisting text', because Kautsky's authority provided additional support to his general argument. According to Lih's interpretation, this was a mere '*digression*, a parenthetical remark', which 'could be erased from the book without trace', 'with little connection to the warp and woof of his overall argument', and therefore was without theoretical significance.[20] But this conclusion dissimulates a serious theoretical problem: granted that this passage was meant to express the urgency of the connection between the labour-movement and socialist intellectuals, it did so in an extremely one-sided and dualistic manner, which, given the career of this passage, had a disastrous impact on the development of the communist movement.[21] A dialectical analysis should try to tease out both the inherent insights and problematic consequences: it contains on the one hand the realistic observation that a developed class-consciousness needs to be connected to a thorough analysis of a given society, and therefore does not spontaneously 'grow' out of proletarian working conditions and immediate labour-struggles. Class-formation actually needs the 'organic' combination of the workers' daily-life experiences and the work of socialist intellectuals.[22] Gramsci would extensively elaborate on the anti-economistic strengths of Lenin's approach, for example through his concept of 'organic intellectuals' and his reflections on the transition of a class from a corporative to a hegemonic phase, which in his analysis required a 'catharsis' of group-egoisms.[23] On the other hand, while Gramsci proposed to critically elaborate on the 'spontaneous philosophies' of 'bizarrely' composed everyday common sense [*senso comune*], Lenin and Kautsky's notion of 'bringing from without' could be interpreted as a hierarchical and educationalist relation between the working class and a separate layer of professional organisers and ideologues, which later became the '*nomenklatura*'. According to

18. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 5, p. 422; cf. p. 375.
19. '*. . . ein von außen Hineingetragenes*' (Kautsky 1901, pp. 79–80).
20. Cf. Lih 2005, pp. 637, 645–6, 655–6.
21. Lih himself pointed out that Lenin's overall argument 'is botched . . . primarily because of the Kautsky passage' and that his formulation strongly implied that socialist doctrines grew up separately from the working class, which was 'clearly false, from the point of view both of the merger narrative and of elementary historical knowledge' (Lih 2005, pp. 650, 652). His argument that Kautsky's formula was 'widely accepted within Social Democracy' (Lih 2005, p. 656) only confirms my point regarding the common-sense anchoring of this approach in the socialist labour-movement of the time.
22. Cf. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 5, pp. 375–6.
23. Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §6; cf. Peter Thomas's dictionary entry on 'catharsis' (Thomas 2009b).

an early, still 'operaist' analysis by Antonio Negri, Lenin's vanguard-concept was built on the 'technical class-composition' of the Russian industrial working class, characterised by the fact that simple machines needed the professional skills of leading factory-workers who had an 'aristocratic attitude' towards the unskilled laborers.[24] It was this tendency that Rosa Luxemburg had criticised in 1904 as the 'ultracentralism' of Lenin and Trotsky, which in her analysis was 'tying the movement up' instead of drawing it together.[25] She renewed her critique after the Bolsheviks' dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in November 1917: the destruction of popular representation leads to the 'repression of public life in the land as a whole' as well as in the Soviets, 'life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains the active element'.[26]

Since, for Lenin, the working masses cannot develop their own ideology, 'the *only choice* is – either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course'.[27] His proposal of seeking 'out the *interests* of some class or other behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises' corresponds to this dichotomy.[28] Methodically speaking, the postulate was an example of class-reductionism, because, contrary to the 'strong' concept of *form* in Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*, it treated the ideological forms as a mere medium of class-interests without any autonomous functioning of their own. In these definitions, Lenin did not show interest in the specific efficacy of ideological apparatuses, forms, and practices. His critique of religion was for example not interested in the tension between its characteristics as a 'sigh of the oppressed creature' *and* an 'opium of people', as described by the young Marx (see above Section 2.1.3.), but rather clung only to the opium-aspects which he declared 'the corner-stone of the whole Marxist outlook on religion'.[29] In this dogmatised interpretation, 'Marxism has *always* regarded *all* modern religions and churches, and *each and every* religious organisation, as *instruments* of bourgeois reaction that serve to defend exploitation and to befuddle the working class'.[30] Qualifiers like 'all',

24. Cf. the summarising account of Murphy 2012, pp. 71–2.
25. Luxemburg 1904, pp. 250, 256; cf. Luxemburg 1970–5, Vol. 1/2, pp. 425, 433–4.
26. Luxemburg 1918, p. 307; cf. Luxemburg 1970–5, Vol. 4, p. 362. Luxemburg was, of course, aware that rule by terror had also been forced upon the Russian leadership by 'devilishly hard conditions' like the occupation of Russia by the German army, the Civil War, and the impoverished economy. The theoretical mistakes begin, however, when the Bolsheviks 'make a virtue of necessity and want to freeze into a complex theoretical system all the tactics forced upon them by these fatal circumstances and want to recommend them to the international proletariat as a model of socialist tactics': Hudis and Anderson (eds.) 2004, p. 309; Luxemburg 1970–5, Vol. 4, p. 364.
27. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 5, p. 384.
28. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 19, p. 28.
29. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 15, pp. 402–3.
30. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 15, p. 403 (my emphasis – JR).

'always', and 'each and every' indicated the tendency toward a generalisation that contradicted Lenin's own understanding of Marxism's 'very gist' and 'living soul', namely the 'concrete analysis of a concrete condition'.[31] His reduction of religion (and of ideology in general) to a mere 'instrument' of class-interests excluded the analysis of social struggles that take place *in* religious apparatuses and are articulated in and through religious forms and discourses. Instead of following Marx's methodological claim to study the 'inner strife and intrinsic contradictoriness' in order to explain how, in religion, the 'the secular basis lifts off from itself,'[32] Lenin tended towards a theory of manipulation that portrayed ideologists (namely, those who do not represent 'scientific ideologies') as mere deceivers.

3.3. Lenin's 'operative' approach: self-determination and hegemony

Lenin's explicit definitions of ideology were later dogmatised by Stalinism as a component of official 'Marxism-Leninism'. However, this canonisation obscured the fact that Lenin had also developed an 'operative' ideology-theory in the sense of an implicit approach to ideological struggles that was quite different. During the phases of upsurge in the revolutionary movements of 1905 and 1917, which were also the periods of forging a revolutionary-democratic bloc against autocratic rule, the concept of 'bringing' socialist class-ideology 'from without' lost its importance and was replaced with an orientation toward the self-determined activities of the masses.

Paradoxically, this was manifested in Lenin's writings by the fact that the term 'ideology' receded behind that of 'hegemony'. The democratic perspective of the movement against tsarist 'autocracy' strengthened the emphasis on broad alliances and consensus.[33] With the concept of hegemony [*gegemonija*], Lenin was oriented towards driving the movement for democracy against tsarism further forward, towards the 'purging' of the allied strata from undemocratic and nationalistic admixtures, and finally, in his controversy with Trotsky and Bukharin in 1920 and 1921, towards the democratic functioning of the unions.[34] During these periods, Lenin's political interventions in the ideological struggles were directed towards strengthening and organising the self-determined activities

31. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 31, p. 166.
32. Marx 1845, p. 4.
33. Cf. W.F. Haug 2004, p. 10.
34. Cf. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 8, pp. 78–9, 82; Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 17, pp. 79–80; Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 32, pp. 19 et sqq., 70 et sqq. The main dispute with Trotsky regarding the role of the trade unions concerned a question of hegemony, namely, in Lenin's words, the question of 'how to approach the mass, win it over, and keep in touch with it' (Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 32, p. 23).

of the working class and its capacities to build alliances with the peasantry and the progressive intelligentsia. The fact that he articulated this perspective not in terms of ideology, but rather as a question of 'hegemony', could be seen as an indication that his explicit concept of ideology defined in the theoretical framework of objectivism and class-reductionism did not seem useful in this context.

A critical ideology-theory could, in turn, aid an understanding of the dynamics, deformation, and ultimate failure of the Russian Revolution. One of the contradictions that plagued the period during and after the revolution was the one between a fundamental ideology-critique and the establishment of a new ideology. What Rosa Luxemburg criticised as 'ultracentralism' went hand in hand with an attempt to destroy the ideological powers of the tsarist state and to organise workers' associations from the bottom up. In the first period after the revolution, the Bolsheviks tried to carry out a radical anti-ideological project, but they did so to a large degree in and by hierarchical forms developed in the struggle against the tsarist dictatorship. All of this took place in an impoverished economy, in the absence of democratic traditions, civil war, 'war-communism,' and under the threat of Western intervention.[35] Lenin unintentionally expressed the contradiction between this anti-ideological perspective and a hierarchical-ideological form when he highlighted the 'discipline of class-conscious and united working people, who know . . . no authority except the authority of their own unity'. He then immediately went on to include the authority 'of their own, more class-conscious, bold, solid, revolutionary and steadfast vanguard'.[36] The first part seemed to break with all ideology in the sense of an alienated socialisation from above. The second part erected the vanguard-party as a new ideological power that could adequately be described in Engels's terms as a 'power, having arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it'.[37] The problem was aggravated by the fusion between the centralised party and an autocratic state-apparatus, which, as Lenin bitterly remarked in one of his last notes (dated 30 December 1922), 'we took over from tsarism and slightly anointed with Soviet oil'.[38] The Kronstadt rebellion of 1921, the factional in-fights within the party-leadership after Lenin's death, and the ensuing Stalinist repression were symptoms that this contradiction could neither be resolved, nor mediated. Under devastating domestic and international conditions, the

35. Lenin described the common conviction before and after the October Revolution 'that without the support of the international world revolution the victory of the proletarian revolution was impossible. . . . Either revolution breaks out in the other countries, in the capitalistically more developed countries, immediately, or at least very quickly, or we must perish' (Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 32, p. 480).

36. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 29, p. 423.

37. Engels 1886, p. 269.

38. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 36, p. 605.

revolutionary attempts to empower the masses to self-government failed. The Stalinist establishment of a despotic, authoritarian state could be described with Engels's words as an 'admission that this society . . . has split into irreconcilable opposites which it is powerless to dispel'.[39] This led to a full-fledged 're-ideologisation of Soviet society' with long-lasting paralysing effects.[40]

This outcome leads me back to Lenin's paradoxical combination of, on the one hand, a radical claim of replacing the existing state-structures by workers' associations from the bottom up and, on the other, a hyper-centralist organisational form of a party merging with an authoritarian state-apparatus. An ideology-theoretical analysis should not content itself with the criticism that the 'ultracentralist' tendencies took over and defeated the aspirations of council-democracy. In terms of a Marxist theory of the state (and thus of the ideological) the problem lies deeper and concerns the very relationship of both aspects or, more precisely, their lack of mediation. As Nicos Poulantzas argued, Lenin's guiding thread was indeed the 'sweeping replacement of "formal" representative democracy by the "real", direct democracy of workers' councils', but it was exactly this claim that paradoxically helped generate its centralist and statist opposite.[41] Lenin's concept of 'smashing' the state-apparatus and of 'replacing' it with workers' direct democracy relied on a reductionist understanding of the institutions of representative democracy to a simple emanation of the bourgeoisie: 'representative democracy = bourgeois democracy = dictatorship of the bourgeoisie'.[42] What was missing in Marxist theory of the time was a dialectic strategy of *democratising* the existing state-apparatus by 'combining the transformation of representative democracy with the development of forms of direct, rank-and-file democracy or the movement of self-management'.[43]

3.4. Ideology in 'Marxist-Leninist' state-philosophy

It would be a naive fallacy to consider 'Leninism' a more or less adequate summary of Lenin's ideas, or 'Marxism-Leninism' a more or less successful combination of the philosophical and political insights of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. A critical ideology-theory should rather focus on the emergence of a new ideological formation in the transition to, and during the ascent of, Stalinism, and analyse it as a political and discursive construction. 'Marxism-Leninism' was the result of a canonisation-process designed to establish a new state-philosophy,

39. Engels 1882, p. 269.
40. Cf. *PIT* 1979, p. 25.
41. Poulantzas 1978, p. 252.
42. Ibid.
43. Poulantzas 1978, p. 260.

which was in turn an integral part of the fusion of a centralised Communist Party and a despotic-autocratic state-apparatus.

The first elements of the constitution of a 'Leninism' could already be found during Lenin's final illness, when he himself, from his first stroke in May 1922 onwards, was meticulously (and against his will) shielded from the outside world.[44] After Lenin's death in January 1924, the publication of his 'testament', demanding among other things the removal of Stalin from his position as general secretary,[45] was prevented by the then ruling triumvirate Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev. At that time, the canonisation-efforts were however still disputed, as the frontlines in the power-struggle for Lenin's succession were volatile. In April 1924, Stalin delivered a series of lectures at Sverdlov University on 'The Foundations of Leninism', where he proclaimed that Leninism was *not* 'the application of Marxism to the conditions that are peculiar to the situation in Russia', but was rather to be defined in a more general sense as the 'Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution', as 'the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general', in short: 'the further development of Marxism'.[46] This universalist claim was still publicly challenged by the then chairman of the Executive Committee of Comintern, Grigory Zinoviev, who defined 'Leninism' in terms of its specific characteristics in a backward country with a peasant majority.

The canonisation-process proceeded in several interconnected steps.[47] The party-apparatus had been fully under Stalin's control since 1925. The next two years saw the expulsion of the 'Trotskyists' and other parts of the 'Left Opposition', but in 1928–9 the tide turned against the 'Right Opposition' around Bukharin, Rykow, and Tomsky who had tried to maintain Lenin's *New Economic Policy* (NEP) of 1921 as a 'mixed economy' (with the Soviet state in charge of the 'commanding heights' of the economy), and a politics of alliance designed to win the consent of the peasantry. At the same time when Stalin's 'great turn' destroyed the (modest) elements of a politics of hegemony[48] and substituted them with forced collectivisation, a new group of Stalinist ideologues, the so-called 'Bolshevisers of Marxist philosophy', entered the scene to carry through

44. According to Isaac Deutscher, it was 'while Lenin was on his death-bed, that the cult of Leninism was actually initiated', during the heated struggle between Trotsky and the triumvirate of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev towards the end of 1923 (Deutscher 1979, p. 265).

45. Cf. Daniels (ed.) 1984, pp. 149–50.

46. Stalin 1924, pp. 72–3.

47. For the following, cf. Georges Labica's perspicuous analysis of 'Marxism-Leninism' as an ideological construct of Stalinist philosophy (Labica 1984).

48. A few years later (1932–4), Gramsci would pick up Lenin's concept of the NEP and theorise it as a balance of compromise, in which the leading group exerted its hegemony by making 'sacrifices of an economic-corporative kind' (Gramsci 1975, Q13, §18; cf. Thomas 2009a, p. 235).

the 'fusion of philosophy with the state', and to realise the old Platonic dream of a philosopher-king.[49] The 'Moscow Trials' of 1936–8 led to the condemnation and execution of almost all living members of the 'old guard' of Bolsheviks (and many others). The Eighteenth Party-Congress of 1939 condemned Marx and Engels's perspective of a withering away of the state in socialism as a 'harmful and false opinion'.[50] By the end of the 1930s, 'Marxism-Leninism' was nothing but a philosophy of and for the state, a '*raison d'État*'.[51]

It is noteworthy that this philosophical re-ideologisation could neither draw its legitimacy from Marx and Engels's critique of ideology, nor from their concrete political analyses, nor from Marx's main *oeuvre*, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. Instead it referred primarily to Engels's attempts to develop a philosophy of nature, mainly in his *Anti-Dühring* (1878), *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (1886), and *Dialectics of Nature* (1873–83; first published in 1925). Stalin rearranged, generalised and condensed Engels's reflections on nature into universal laws of 'dialectical materialism'. The systematic core of the new state-philosophy was constituted by Stalin's 'principal features' of 1938, which consisted of various definitions of 'nature' – as a 'connected and integral whole', as a 'state of continuous movement and change', as 'onward and upward movement, . . . from the simple to the complex, from the lower to the higher', struggle of opposite tendencies.[52] These principles were then applied to both the natural sciences and to history, so that 'historical materialism' was reduced to a mere 'application' of diamat.[53] As Christian Löser observed, dialectical materialism was 'reduced to an ontology of nature and construed as a First Philosophy'. Through its application to history, it assumed the function of securing 'Stalinist politics by absolute knowledge'.[54]

The two major formations of 'Marxism', the social-democratic one of the Second International and the 'Marxism-Leninism' of the Soviet bloc thus obliterated Marx and Engels's connection of ideology-critique and state-critique, and substituted it with a 'wide' and 'neutral' concept of ideology. This tectonic shift not only informed Stalin's own understanding of ideology, but also became one of the 'ideological' preconditions of Stalinism. The 'neutral' concept of ideology and its axiomatic definition by the respective 'class-content' could already be observed in one of Stalin's early texts, 'Anarchism or Socialism' (1906–7), which began with the assessment that, in the course of class-struggle, 'each class is guided by its own ideology. The bourgeoisie has its own ideology – so-called

49. Labica 1984, pp. 42 et sqq., 51.
50. Labica 1984, p. 21.
51. Labica 1984, p. 58.
52. Cf. Stalin 1940, pp. 7 et sqq.
53. Stalin 1940, p. 5.
54. Löser 1995, p. 698.

liberalism. The proletariat also has its own ideology – this, as is well known, is *socialism*'.[55] Against the backdrop of their historic conditions of struggle against tsarist authoritarianism, the Bolsheviks inherited and actively developed a specific combination of class-reductionism, 'ultracentralism' (Luxemburg) and authoritarianism, which overshadowed and subverted their attempts to develop a hegemonic politics of alliance and self-determination. This provided Stalinism and its 'Marxist-Leninist' state-philosophy with the legitimacy it needed to define 'proletarian ideology' from the standpoint of the Politburo of the 'party of the working class,' and to persecute every contradiction as 'deviation'.

3.5. 'Ideological relationships' in the philosophy of East Germany

This authoritarianism also applied in principle to the post-Stalinist period of administrative state-socialism, even though state-repression became less terroristic. Uwe-Jens Heuer looked back at the German Democratic Republic (GDR) of the 1970s and 1980s and came to the conclusion that for 'Marxist-Leninist' orthodoxy, 'there was no other task than to "bring in" its ideology to the masses'. The predominant conviction was that, 'the party is quasi-automatically in possession of the correct class-consciousness, to which the individual consciousness of even the most revolutionary worker necessarily lagged behind'.[56] This constellation was maintained by a system in which the leading role of the state and party '*nomenklatura*' – protected in turn by repressive apparatuses, in particular the '*Stasi*' (state-security), who defined itself as the 'shield and sword of the party' – was ideologically 'guaranteed' and justified by the predominant role of 'Marxist-Leninist' philosophy. This predominance was, however, not absolute. In the GDR, particularly in its later period, various sections of the humanities had gained an increased autonomy and self-assurance *vis-à-vis* the official philosophy. Disciplines like literary-studies were in part able to obtain and protect free space for critical research on ideology.[57]

However, in all areas in which the official state-philosophy exerted its rule, the framework was in general the following: on the practical-political level, ideology was conceived as a socialist counter-propaganda against the 'psychological warfare' of Western imperialism; on the theoretical level, the problem of ideology was subordinated to the 'materialist' response to the 'fundamental question of philosophy'. All research on ideology had to validate the axiomatic proposition inherited from Marx that people's 'social being' determined their consciousness.

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55. Stalin 1906–7, p. 297.
56. Heuer 2007, p. 210.
57. Cf. for example the works of Barck and Burmeister (1977) and Schröder (Schröder et al. (eds.) 1974).

The 'materialist response' of Marxism-Leninism opposed an economic base – which alone was ascribed the status of 'matter' – to an ideology, which was defined in terms of a philosophy of consciousness as a 'system of social [...] views that express determinant class interests'.[58] Taking up Lenin's formula that social relations 'are divided' into the material and ideological, one could characterise this approach as a 'dividing' or 'dichotomising' method. The observation of ideological phenomena was dominated by the philosophical question of what belonged to the realm of 'material being' and what to the realm of 'social consciousness', and how the two realms were related to each other. The 1978 Soviet book *The Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy* proclaimed: 'No matter what phenomenon we are considering, it can always be placed in the sphere of either the material (the objective) or the spiritual (the subjective)'.[59]

Let us look at an example that demonstrates how this philosophical paradigm impeded the development of substantial research on ideology. The 1974 book Basis und Überbau in der Gesellschaft ('Base and Superstructure in Society'), written by Adolf Bauer (and others) and published simultaneously in the GDR and in West Germany by the publisher of the Communist Party (DKP) there, proclaimed the 'division' of social relations into 'material' and 'ideological' relations as its methodological starting point.[60] That the latter were determined by the former was a logical consequence of the materialist 'application of the fundamental question of philosophy', according to which the 'sphere' of consciousness was determined by people's 'social being'.[61] At the same time, however, the authors also identified ideology with the 'superstructure' of society, so that 'ideological relations' could include both 'forms of consciousness', as well as 'social institutions', in which people 'become aware of their ... interests and ... shape their actions'.[62] The definition, which obviously alluded to Marx's description of 'ideological forms', seemed to reflect the interpretation developed above, that these forms were not merely forms of 'ideas', but had a social reality of their own (see above Section 2.3.). However, this insight could not be further developed, because there was no 'legitimate' ideology-theory that allowed for a conceptual understanding of the materiality of these 'social institutions'. Since the question of ideology had been subordinated beforehand to the 'fundamental question of philosophy', it was reduced to a phenomenon of 'consciousness', and as such became part of a mechanistic 'theory of reflection'. Any approach that tried to account for 'material' aspects of ideological powers and apparatuses was

58. Buhr and Klaus (eds.) 1974, p. 504.
59. Konstantinov et al. 1980, p. 17.
60. Bauer et al. 1974, p. 19.
61. Bauer et al. 1974, p. 26.
62. Bauer et al. 1974, p. 23.

therefore confronted with the logical problem that the respective dichotomies, 'material being versus consciousness' and 'base versus superstructure' did not coincide. Instead of spelling out this contradiction and leaving the philosophical dichotomy, 'being versus consciousness' behind, the authors decided to shift the meaning of 'material', so that it became synonymous with 'economic': the 'material' relationships were identified with the relations of production.[63]

As a result, the dichotomising method of separating 'material' and 'ideological' relations led to the deprivation of the 'economic base' from its constitutive moments of conscious activity, and to the identification of the ideological, sometimes with consciousness in general, sometimes with the superstructure *in se*. Both equations were overly general, and therefore missed the decisive ideology-theoretical question of *what forms* in 'superstructure' and in 'social consciousness' contributed to 'voluntary' submission to the relations of domination, and in *what way*. Some scholars recognised that 'certain appearances cannot be distinguished into the purely material and the purely ideal',[64] or that the idea of ideology 'as product of the reflection of the material' was not adequate to the complicated mediations.[65] But such insights did not lead to a renewal of ideology-theory. The debates remained within the prescribed dichotomy of the material and the ideal and therefore tended to devolve into hair-splitting.

As in other areas of social science, research in the GDR therefore missed the connection to new developments in Marxist ideology-theories like those of Althusser and Bourdieu in France, of Stuart Hall in the UK, or of the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT*) in Western Germany. Instead of organising a theoretical debate on these new approaches, the authorities of 'Marxist-Leninist' philosophy denied the scholars of the GDR access to 'Western' literature. In the case of the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT*), they even launched a propaganda-campaign against what they perceived as a new insidious variation of 'bourgeois ideology" disguised in Marxian discourse, which led to the expulsion of several members from the West Berlin 'Socialist Unity Party' (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Westberlin* – SEW).[66] Ironically, it was the 'neutral' concept of ideology that actually coincided with the mainstream 'Western' concept, predominantly influenced by a supposedly value-free 'sociology of knowledge', which according to one of its

63. Bauer et al. 1974, p. 16.
64. Rogge 1977, p. 1373.
65. Dold 1979, p. 746.
66. After the collapse of the Eastern bloc, Erich Hahn, who had played a leading role in defining the 'legitimate' Marxist-Leninist framework in the GDR and in campaigning against 'heresies', held on to the old formula as if nothing had happened. After admitting that he had underestimated the 'scope' of the new ideology-theories of Althusser, Bourdieu, and the *Projekt Ideologietheory*, he maintained that the 'epistemological distinction between material and ideal' must be at the foundation of every concept of ideology (Hahn 2007, pp. 88, 90).

founders, Karl Mannheim, rested on the identification of ideology and human thought in general.[67] The identification of the concept of ideology with thought and perception in general was arguably one of the main intellectual strategies in bourgeois academia to sanitise and superannuate the challenge of Marx and Engels's ideology theory, namely by taking off the critical edge of the concept of ideology by over-generalising it.[68] A similar roll-back occurred in 'Marxism-Leninism' as well.

The dichotomising approach of 'Marxism-Leninism' missed the constitution of ideological forms and mystified their determinateness. Despite continued reference to the 'ideological class-struggle,' therefore, no theory of it could be developed.[69] Marxist-Leninist ideology 'lost contact with social science and mass consciousness and thus paradoxically became incapable of fulfilling the purpose attributed to it, namely of helping to wage the ideological class-struggle'.[70] The lesson to be drawn from the collapse of the Eastern bloc can be formulated on two levels: administering civil society 'from above' and by repressive and bureaucratic means, instead of helping to develop a socialist hegemony 'from below', in the long run creates a paralysing and dangerous dys-hegemony in socialist society; and a Marxist ideology-theory that is subordinated to a Central Committee of a Communist Party and its 'first philosophy' loses its vital function as a critical analysis of alienation, and, therefore, cannot contribute to overcoming dys-hegemonic constellations.

67. According to Mannheim, who claimed to dissolve ideology-theory (primarily that of Lukács) into a 'sociology of knowledge', 'the thought of all parties and in all epochs is of an ideological character', because it was marked by 'situational determination' [*Seinsgebundenheit*], as well as by an 'essentially perspectivistic element' (Mannheim 1997, pp. 69, 266–7).

68. Cf. Hauck 1992, p. 20.

69. Cf. the critique of *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT* 1979, pp. 83, 87, 91).

70. Heuer 2007, p. 210.

Chapter Four

The Concept of Ideology from Lukács to the Frankfurt School

After the First World-War, it was mainly Lukács who disrupted the marginalisation of Marx and Engels's critical concept of ideology by the 'official' party-Marxism of both Western Social Democracy and Leninism. When he published *History and Class Consciousness* in 1923, he could not have known of Marx and Engels's *German Ideology*. Instead, he started from Marx's critique of commodity- and capital-fetishism and extended it to a comprehensive critique of 'reification'. Lukács was one of the rare figures that became influential in both 'Eastern' Marxism-Leninism and in the strand of 'Western' Marxism influenced by the Frankfurt School.

Lukács was a leading representative of the leftist-communist tendency in the Comintern, and was therefore attacked in 1920 by Lenin, who criticised his Marxism for being 'purely verbal' and providing 'no concrete analysis of precise and definite historical situations'.[1] Later on, his positions permanently oscillated between what was respectively defined as 'Marxist-Leninist' orthodoxy and dissidence. While he was incessantly criticised and condemned by leading party-intellectuals in the GDR,[2] the East-German development of epistemology and literary theory owed much to his influence. The boundaries between his

1. Lenin 1960–70, Vol. 31, p. 165.
2. Erich Hahn criticised Lukács for overestimating the subjective and thus being in opposition with materialism (Hahn 1974, p. 130). According to Hahn, Lukács's theory of class-consciousness was an 'idealistic approach' which proclaimed consciousness to be a product of itself (Hahn 1974, pp. 133 et sq.).

ideology-critique and the 'neutral' concept of ideology could also be fluid. Some proponents of a 'Marxist-Leninist' notion of ideology as a medium of expressing class-interests also integrated Lukács's concept of reification and used it as part of their critique of 'bourgeois ideology'.

I will limit myself to reconstructing a general line that led from Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* to the Frankfurt school. However, it will become clear that this line was not linear but disrupted in several respects. Firstly, Horkheimer and Adorno came to the conclusion that after the experience of fascism and the American 'culture-industry', they could not continue to use their notion of ideology inspired by Lukács. Secondly, Habermas, after identifying 'ideology' with technological progress, abandoned the concept and denounced ideology-critique as an anti-modernist enterprise. I will conclude the chapter by outlining Wolfgang Fritz Haug's critique of *Commodity Aesthetics*, which also began with Marx's analysis of the commodity-form, but was, in my estimation, a possible alternative to both the totalising ideology critique of 'reification' and the resigned turning away from a critical concept of ideology altogether.

4.1. György Lukács: ideology as reification

Even though Lukács sometimes followed the Leninist usage of a 'neutral' concept of ideology,[3] he developed his ideology-theory mainly from the critical category of the 'ideological phenomenon of reification'.[4] He thus sought to explain the defeat of the socialist revolution in the West after the First World-War as a consequence of 'reification', by which capitalism appeared to be self-evident for large parts of the working class. Correspondingly, he defined the aim of revolutionary theory as that of 'destroying the fiction of the immortality of the categories'.[5]

Marx himself only used the term 'reification' [*Verdinglichung*] in *Capital* Volume Three and in the context of the 'trinity-formula'.[6] But the notion was also implicit in the chapter on commodity-fetishism, where Marx explained the 'mysterious character' of the commodity-form by the peculiarity that it 'reflects the social characteristics of men's labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves. . . . It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things'.[7] It was from this passage that Lukács conceptualised 'reification' as the process by which 'a man's own activity, his own labour becomes some-

3. For example Lukács 1971, p. 70.
4. Lukács 1971, p. 94.
5. Lukács 1971, p. 14.
6. Marx 1981, pp. 969, 1020.
7. Marx 1976, pp. 164–5.

thing objective and independent of him, something that controls him by virtue of an autonomy alien to man', both objectively and subjectively.[8] It seemed so far that Lukács's analysis coincided with what Marx described as the 'objective thought-forms' of capitalist commodity-production (see above, Section 2.2.).

What distinguishes Lukács's concept of reification from Marx's analysis of fetishism is, however, that it was defined from the outset as a 'universal category of society as a whole'.[9] With its help, no less than 'the ideological problems of capitalism and its downfall' could be deciphered, and because commodity-fetishism 'penetrates society in all its aspects', there was 'no problem' that would not ultimately lead back to it, as there was 'no solution' that could not be found 'in the solution of the riddle of commodity-*structure*'.[10] The totality of reification was theoretically construed by a combination of Marx's fetish-analysis and Max Weber's concept of 'formal rationalisation', which was supposed to have increased to a point that state and society merged into an 'iron cage' of bondage.[11] From the 'basic phenomenon of reification',[12] Lukács derived the 'ever more reified levels' of social consciousness and characterised the relationships between these levels as 'analogy' and 'expression'.[13] The underlying assumption of this model of expression was that 'the structure of reification progressively sinks more deeply, more fatefully and more definitively into the consciousness of men'.[14]

Differing from Weber, Lukács reinterpreted the process of modern rationalisation from the vantage-point of Taylorism, from the specific rationalisation of industrial production at the turn of the century developed by Frederic W. Taylor. What characterised modern capitalism was the contradiction between the 'instrumental rationality' [*Zweckrationalität*] that ruled in singular sections of the system and the irrationality of the entire process based upon the anarchy of the market.[15] From this he derived the ideological effect of a comprehensive passivity with regards to society as a whole: people's attitudes become 'contemplative', that is, they do not go 'beyond the correct calculation of the possible outcome of the sequence of events (the "laws" of which they find "ready-made") . . . without making the attempt to intervene in the process by bringing other "laws"

8. Lukács 1971, p. 87.
9. Lukács 1971, p. 86.
10. Lukács 1971, pp. 83–5.
11. Weber 1930, p. 181. Through the term 'formal rationalisation', Max Weber described the 'impersonal order' and 'formalistic impersonality' of modern bourgeois domination (Weber 1978, pp. 215, 225) which manifested itself on different levels: economically as the modern system of market-capitalism, on the level of state-politics as bureaucratic administration, and on the ethical level as 'ascetic Protestantism', mainly composed of puritan Calvinism and the religiosity of the sects (cf. Rehmann 2013a, 95 et sqq., 209–11).
12. Lukács 1971, p. 94.
13. Cf. Lukács 1971, pp. 46 et sqq., 95, 97.
14. Lukács 1971, p. 93.
15. Lukács 1971, p. 102.

to bear'.[16] From Kant onwards, bourgeois thought was marked by a dichotomy of 'voluntarism' and 'fatalism'. People's activity was reduced to 'the exploitation . . . of certain individual laws for [their] own (egoistic) interests'.[17]

It is certainly an important task for a critical ideology-theory to look for the avenues by which the reified 'objective thought-forms' of capitalist commodity-production are connected with contemplative and fatalistic attitudes in other areas of bourgeois society. What was problematic in Lukács's approach, however, was the way he conceived of this connection as a homogeneous unity without any frictions and contradictions. Terry Eagleton saw 'a certain essentialism of ideology . . . at play here, reducing the variety of ideological mechanisms and effects to a homogeneous cause'.[18] For Althusser, such an explanation belonged to the Hegelian thought-form of 'totality' that he set in sharp opposition to a Marxist concept: whereas the former assumed 'totality' as a single essence behind the multitude of its phenomena, Marxism conceptualised 'totality' as a 'complex structured whole' with a decentred structure.[19] Lukács's diffusion-model of 'ever more reified levels' steamrolled not only what Ernst Bloch famously described as the 'non-contemporaneities' [*Ungleichzeitigkeiten*] of social development, for example, the coexistence of capitalist and pre-capitalist forms and the different historical layers of systems of domination,[20] but also eclipsed the heterogeneity and contradictoriness of everyday consciousness (*senso comune* in the Gramscian sense).

Notwithstanding Lukács's repeated dissociation from the economism of 'vulgar Marxism', his own explanation was economistic in the sense that it did not account for the reality and relative autonomy of the ideological: integration into bourgeois society appeared to follow automatically from commodity-fetishism and its 'radiation', without requiring ideological powers, hegemonic apparatuses, ideologues, ideological practices and rituals. A similar simplification could be seen with regards to his assessment of overall passivity. An analysis of people's 'contemplative' attitudes in relationship to the functioning of society as a whole was certainly an important subject of a critical ideology-theory. But the assessment of a complete passivisation was too abstract and underestimated the ability of bourgeois society to set free manifold activities, even if predominated by

16. Lukács 1971, p. 98.
17. Lukács 1971, p. 135.
18. Eagleton 1991, p. 87.
19. Cf. Althusser 1979, pp. 193 et sqq. 'The *Hegelian totality* is the alienated development of a simple unity, of a simple principle . . . the self-manifestation of this simple principle, which persists in all its manifestations'. The differences are 'negated as soon as they are affirmed: for they are no more than "moments" of the simple internal principle of the totality' (Althusser 1979, p. 203).
20. Bloch 1990, pp. 97 et sqq.

private-egoistical forms and in the framework of what Macpherson called 'possessive individualism'. Already the basic procedure of buying and selling contains intense activities of demonstration, persuasion, outwitting, speculating on and 'empathising' with the prospective buyer's consumerist desires, etc. These activities are hardly to be subsumed under the headline of 'contemplation' but can be utilised, as the example of neoliberalism demonstrates, for vigorous ideological mobilisations. The 'Do it Yourself of ideology' presents itself as a multiformed and contradictory ensemble of everyday practices, in and by which subjects work on their own disciplining and 'normalisation'.[21] To reduce such an ensemble to a mere 'expression' of commodity-fetishism erases its modes of social practice and agency.

By totalising Marx's critique of fetishism, Lukács tended to bury people's actual social practices under the weight of reification. But how could he then conceptualise fundamental change in society? The proletarian revolution, which he wanted to help bring about with his ideology-critique, was expected to manifest itself as a radical turn from the status of the object to an encompassing understanding of society's totality. Contrary to the middle classes, the proletarians could not have the illusion of being the 'subjects' of their own lives, but were compelled to consider themselves 'the pure *object* of societal events', the victim of a 'slavery without limits', integrated 'as a pure, naked object into the production process'.[22] But as soon as they realised their radical object-status, a new epistemology would emerge that 'force[s] them out of their pure immediacy'.[23] Once they understood that this 'immediacy' was actually the consequence of a multiplicity of mediations, 'the fetishistic forms of the commodity system begin to dissolve', and it would become clear that beneath its quantifying crust lies the 'qualitative, living core' of useful labour.[24] The purely abstract negativity in the life of the workers (their existence as a commodified 'object') thus becomes '*subjectively* the point at which this structure is raised to consciousness and where it can be breached in practice'.[25] This immediacy is surpassed by an '*aspiration towards society in its totality*'.[26]

It is striking that the enormous role which Lukács attributed to the intellectual understanding of one's commodity-status strongly diverges from Marx's cautious remark that the scientific 'discovery' of commodity-fetishism far from banishes its ongoing, mystifying effects, which represent not just an illusory, but also a real and powerful inversion in bourgeois society (see above, Section 2.2.2.).

21. W.F. Haug 1993, p. 227.
22. Lukács 1971, pp. 165–6, 168.
23. Lukács 1971, p. 168.
24. Lukács 1971, pp. 168–9.
25. Lukács 1971, p. 172.
26. Lukács 1971, p. 174.

The dialectical 'turn' from proletarian object-status to revolutionary subject appears to be detached from actual experience in the work place, in organisations, struggle, and daily-life cultures. The concrete ideological constellation under which such a 'turn' might take place (or rather, not) remains unclear, as if it were a mere mysterious and enigmatic 'event' breaking in from the outside in a quasi eschatological way.[27] According to Gerhard Hauck, Lukács's notion of the proletariat as the 'identical subject-object' of history reveals a 'messianistic-mythological' tendency.[28] The formation of proletarian class-consciousness seems to take place in the realm of pure thought, and the role of the Marxist intellectual supposedly consists of revealing and explaining to workers the 'truth' that their existence is defined by a radical object-status. What critics have attributed to Marx and Engels's *German Ideology*, applies with much more justification to Lukács: ideology-critique is reduced to intellectual enlightenment.

But why would such an 'enlightenment' about one's pure object-status not just augment the overall tendency toward contemplation and passivity? One might think that an activating, empowering critique would need to explore the 'active' elements in everyday experiences and common sense that help develop one's agency and thus might support a realistic hope for fundamental change.[29] That Lukács did not venture into these areas was due to a theory of class-consciousness that was marked by a dichotomy between merely 'empirical' forms of consciousness and what he called 'imputed class-consciousness' [*zugerechnetes Klassenbewusstsein*], which is what members of a class *would* have if they were able to fully understand their objective class-situation. In Lukács's words: 'true' and 'objective' class-consciousness is 'neither the sum nor the average of what is thought or felt by the single individuals who make up the class', but rather consists 'of the appropriate and rational reactions "imputed" [*zugerechnet*] to a particular typical position in the process of production'.[30] He would later (in his new preface of 1967) explain that he meant 'the same thing as Lenin when he maintained . . . that socialist class-consciousness . . . would be implanted in the workers "from outside" '.[31] His concept of 'imputed class-consciousness' shared, indeed, the same weaknesses as Kautsky and Lenin's educationalist approach (see above, Section 3.2.). Lukács's critical intellectual, who by his insight into societal

27. In this respect, it would be worthwhile to compare Lukács's 'eschatological' concept of revolution with Alain Badiou's abstract dichotomy between 'being' and 'event' (cf. Badiou 2005).

28. Hauck 1984, p. 66.

29. Lukács stated 'that precisely [the proletarian's] humanity and his soul are not changed into commodities', but this remained an unexplained assertion that contradicted his overall assertion that reification penetrated ever more deeply into the soul (Lukács 1971, p. 172).

30. Lukács 1971, p. 51; cf. Lukács 1971, p. 323.

31. Lukács 1971, p. xviii.

totality was considered capable of making these decisions, became invisible in his theory: it appears as if it is 'not he who expresses something, but rather it is history that is expressed through him, as the deity in the oracle speaks through the mouth of the priest. . . . By modestly stepping back behind the course of history, the intellectual's voice becomes the organ of an undeniable truth'.[32] Confronted with a reified-passified population, critical intellectuals would assume the function of revealing the 'truth' about social conditions. Marx's remark in the third *Thesis on Feuerbach* that 'the educator must himself be educated'[33] seems to have dropped out of sight. This elitist concept would influence Western critical theory in a manner that was not so dissimilar to the way Lenin's implanting 'from without' influenced the Marxist-Leninist tradition in the East. In the case of Lukács, the gap between empirical and 'imputed' class-consciousness[34] would then be increasingly filled by the concept of the Leninist vanguard-party, which was informed, however, by an idealised picture of the Communist Party that had little in common with the existing organisations.[35]

Some of the problematic issues just outlined will be taken up in Lukács's self-critical 1967 preface to the new German edition of *History and Class Consciousness*. As he then declared, his former conception of revolutionary praxis took on 'extravagant overtones that are more in keeping with the current messianic utopianism of the Communist left than with authentic Marxist doctrine'.[36] According to his self-critique, he was unable to progress beyond the notion of an ' "imputed" class consciousness', which he transformed into a 'purely intellectual result': 'in my presentation it would indeed be a miracle if this "imputed" consciousness could turn into revolutionary praxis'.[37] Maintaining his methodological claim 'to explain all ideological phenomena by reference to their basis in economics', he criticised the mistake of narrowing down this economic base, 'because its basic Marxist category, labour as the mediator of the metabolic interaction between society and nature, is missing'.[38] I interpret this as an attempt to modify his praxis-less model of reification by reintroducing 'labour' as an essential part of practice. This reintroduction of practice was, however, restricted to the economic structure. The ideological was still not acknowledged in its own reality, as an ensemble of apparatuses and praxis-forms, but remained a mere derivative of the economy.

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32. *PIT* 1979, p. 57.
33. Marx 1845, p. 4.
34. Kammler spoke of an unbridgeable cleavage, a '*hiatus irrationalis*' (Kammler 1974, p. 178).
35. Cf. Dannemann 2008.
36. Lukács 1971a, p. xviii.
37. Lukács 1971a, pp. xviii–xix.
38. Lukács 1971a, p. xvii.

4.2. Horkheimer's and Adorno's critique of the 'culture-industry'

The Frankfurt School's ideology-critique was deeply influenced by Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness*. But since the late 1930s, in particular since the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1939, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno no longer shared its perspective of socialist revolution.[39] As indicated above, for Lukács, the proletariat became capable, precisely because of the most extreme reification, of recognising the totality of society and thus could break through the reification-structure. For Horkheimer and Adorno, this perspective could no longer be upheld under the conditions of fascism in Europe, the Stalinisation of the Soviet bloc and the emerging hegemony of American Fordism after the Second World-War. What was retained was a concept of ideology developed within the paradigm of the commodity-fetish, which was later declared, however, to be no longer effective.

Horkheimer and Adorno's classic text, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, first published in a mimeographed edition in 1944 under the title *Philosophische Fragmente*, and then in 1947 by the *émigré*-publisher *Querido* in Amsterdam under the title *Dialektik der Aufklärung*,[40] was in the first place concerned with the efficacy of a new positivistic-technocratic ideology based on the 'omnipresence of the stereotype' enforced by technology.[41] Horkheimer and Adorno described it as an ideology that did not appeal to 'truth' any more: truth-talk 'simply arouses impatience to get on with the business deal it is probably advancing'.[42] This makes the ideology emptier, vaguer, less committed, but not weaker, because it is this very vagueness, this aversion to committing itself to anything not verified, that makes it act as an 'instrument of domination'.[43]

How does one analyse an ideology that 'conceals itself in the calculation of possibilities'?[44] For Horkheimer and Adorno, the specifics consisted in the 'duplication' of a 'completely closed existence' that resembled tragic fate.[45] The

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39. Cf. Therborn 1970, p. 85.

40. In order to circumvent the censorship of the American authorities in occupied Germany, the 1947 edition contained numerous terminological changes made to that of 1944: 'The word "capitalism" was changed to "existing conditions", "capital" was changed to "economic system", "capitalist bloodsuckers" became "knights of industry", "class society" became "domination" or "order", "ruling class" became "rulers" ' (Wiggershaus 1994, p. 401).

41. Horkheimer and Adorno 1995, p. 136.

42. Horkheimer and Adorno 1995, p. 147. This diagnosis is obviously opposed to the approach of Michel Foucault, for whom the connection between 'truth' and 'power' will become the core subject of his historical studies on clinics, asylums, modern disciplining and sexuality (see Section 7.4.).

43. Ibid.

44. Horkheimer and Adorno 1995, p. 145.

45. Horkheimer and Adorno 1995, pp. 151–2. Translation altered: to render the German expression '*lückenlos geschlossenes Dasein*' (Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 3, p. 174) as

new ideology 'makes use of the worship of facts by no more than elevating a disagreeable existence into the world of facts in representing it meticulously'.[46] The meaning of these explanations becomes clearer as soon as we relate it to Lukács's concept of reification: the metaphor 'closed existence' refers both to the fetishistic inversion by which the commodity-form rules like fate over producers and consumers, and to the Weberian notion of capitalism as an 'iron cage' (which is in turn also influenced by Marx's analysis of fetishism). It is the function of ideology to uncritically 'duplicate' these reified relations and to elevate them to unchangeable 'facts'. The description of positivistic ideology seems to generalise Marx's critique of 'vulgar economics' for 'translating' objective thought-forms immediately into a doctrinaire language, instead of deconstructing them (see above, Section 2.2.6). In addition to its positivism, ideology is characterised by a manipulative lie: 'Ideology is split into the photograph of stubborn life and the naked lie about its meaning – which is not expressed but suggested and yet drummed in'.[47]

Horkheimer and Adorno's concept of a new ideology thus oscillated between a positivistic reproduction of the given social relations at face-value and manipulation – 'business' and 'lie'. It appears at times as if they unwillingly reproduced in their own ideology-critique the positivistic fatalism they criticised as the predominant ideology. It was, for example, an undisputed given for them that capitalist production confine workers and employees, farmers and the lower middle class so completely, 'body and soul', 'that they fall helpless victims to what is offered them'.[48] Under such conditions, 'personality' scarcely signifies anything more than 'shining white teeth and freedom from body odour and emotions'.[49] The circle becomes even more fatalistic: because the ruled always take the dominant morality imposed on them more seriously than the rulers, 'they insist on the very ideology which enslaves them': 'the malicious love of the common people for the wrong which is done them is a greater force than the cunning of the authorities'.[50] The specific historical conjecture of the 'golden years' of Fordism in the USA and other capitalist centres, where bourgeois

'life in all the aspects' misses the point, which is that this life or existence [*Dasein*] is *closed* [*geschlossen*], and moreover 'without gaps' [*lückenlos*], seamlessly, completely, and therefore resembling tragic fate. Edmund Jephcott translated the expression as an 'unbroken surface of existence' (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, p. 122), but the term 'surface' misses again the sense of '*geschlossen*' (being closed).

46. Horkheimer and Adorno 1995, p. 148.
47. Horkheimer and Adorno 1995, p. 147.
48. Horkheimer and Adorno 1995, p. 133.
49. Horkheimer and Adorno 1995, p. 167.
50. Horkheimer/Adorno 1995, pp. 133–4. Translation modified: 'misplaced love' misses the German expression '*böse Liebe*' (Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 3, p. 155), 'evil' or 'malicious love' or, as Edmund Jephcott translated it, 'pernicious love' (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, p. 106).

hegemony was so efficacious that it appeared to be all-encompassing and total was reproduced in the very theory that aimed at its radical critique. Therborn therefore described Horkheimer and Adorno as 'Marxism's dark thinkers', who nevertheless had the merit of capturing an aspect of the dialectics of modernity in no less important a fashion than the more 'optimistic' thinkers like Karl Kautsky and others.[51]

The apparatus of the new ideology was identified as the 'culture industry', a term which replaced the term 'mass culture' used in the earlier drafts of *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* As Adorno later explained, the terminological change was meant to close off the interpretation that it was a case of a 'culture that arises spontaneously from the masses themselves': 'the masses are not primary, but secondary, they are an object of calculation; an appendage of the machinery. The customer is not king, as the culture industry would have us believe, not its subject but its object'.[52] The description of consumers as an 'object' and an 'appendage'[53] of the culture-industry was widely charged with a 'perfect' manipulation, in which active cultural activity and subversive oppositional decoding were excluded.[54] According to Eagleton, the dominant ideology was comprehended as a 'seamless monolith' devoid of any contradictions, so that society seemed to 'languish in the grip of an all-pervasive reification, all the way from commodity fetishism and speech habits to political bureaucracy and technological thought'.[55] Douglas Kellner argued that the assumed manipulative power of the culture-industry leads to a 'politics of resignation and despair and cannot account for struggles against advanced capitalism'.[56]

But Kellner can also be seen as a case in point for a predominant tendency in cultural studies to evaluate the weaknesses of the culture-industry in a way that advances an illusory concept of 'media-pluralism'. To characterise Horkheimer and Adorno's ideology-critique as 'for the most part denunciatory' and 'remarkably similar to crude Marxian critique of ideology' is more a caricature than a fair description.[57] The same stereotypes are on display when he describes the

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51. Therborn 1996, p. 67.
52. Adorno 1991b, pp. 98–9.
53. The term refers back to the famous passage in *Capital* Volume One, where Marx explained that under capitalist conditions the means for the development of production 'undergo a dialectical inversion' and degrade the individual worker 'to the level of an appendage of a machine' (Marx 1976, p. 799).
54. For example Kausch 1988, p. 92; Hall 1981, p. 232; Hall 1993, p. 516; cf. the summarising account in Napierala and Reitz 2005, pp. 462, 474.
55. Eagleton 1991, p. 46.
56. Kellner 1984–5, p. 197.
57. Cf. Kellner 1984–5, p. 204. In a similar vein, he assumed that the 'concept of ideology set out in the *German Ideology* was primarily denunciatory' (Kellner 1995, p. 57). The 'crude Marxian critique of ideology' allegedly 'restricts cultural analysis to denunciation of ideology' (Kellner 1989, p. 142).

concept of ideology set out in *The German Ideology* as 'primarily denunciatory' or assumes that the 'crude' Marxian critique of ideology 'restricts cultural analysis to denunciation of ideology'.[58] According to his account, after the 1960s the media had become 'much more contradictory, complex, and controversial', they were open to social conflict and cultural diversity, with 'enough novelty and contradiction to splinter the ideological hegemony which was once the fragile accomplishment of the culture industry'. Kellner therefore expects that the culture-industry, 'reflecting' the social struggles it is mediating, 'may deflate or undermine the ideological illusions of their own products and however unwittingly engage in social critique and ideological subversion'.[59] This assessment not only fails to take into consideration the extent to which the enormous economic centralisation of the media-industry seriously impedes its capacity or willingness to 'reflect' these social contradictions,[60] but also shares the illusion that the celebration of differences actually subverts the ideological functioning of cultural apparatuses, instead of (post-)modernising and remodelling them. Kellner's argument clearly underestimates the overwhelming power of audience-ratings and their ideological effects. As Bourdieu demonstrated in his study on television, the race for audience-share amounts to an insidious contest about the scoop, and the 'exclusive' generates the pressure of 'fast-thinking', as well as multiple strategies of 'hiding by showing', a sensationalism that attracts attention but also diverts it. The effect is the 'filling up of precious time with empty air', which 'shunts aside relevant news, that is, the information that all citizens ought to have in order to exercise their democratic rights'.[61]

A more substantial critique was put forward early on by Nicolas Garnham, who supported what he called the Frankfurt School's 'original position', namely 'that under monopoly capitalism the superstructure becomes precisely industrialized; it is invaded by the base'.[62] The weakness of this position was therefore not that they highlighted the importance of the economic base, but rather that they insufficiently took account of the economically contradictory nature of the process they observed.[63] Distinguishing between 'intrinsic contradictions' (capital versus labour, capital-accumulation versus socialisation of the forces of production etc.) and 'extrinsic contradictions' (for example capitalism versus

58. Cf. Kellner 1995, p. 57; Kellner 1989, p. 142.
59. Kellner 1984–5, p. 203.
60. According to Bagdikian, 'five global-dimension firms . . . own most of the newspapers, magazines, book publishers, motion picture studies, and radio and television stations in the United States', which gave each of the five corporations 'more communications power than was exercised by any despot or dictatorship in history' (Bagdikian 2004, p. 3).
61. Cf. Bourdieu 1998b, 17 et sqq., 28, 41, 48 et sqq., 66.
62. Garnham 1986, p. 16.
63. Garnham 1986, p. 17.

non-capitalist areas of the social formation, national and transnational capital), Garnham focused on the 'extrinsic' relationship between pre-capitalist and capitalist forms, which determine the forms of the struggle over the labour-process within the media-industry.[64] As an example, artisanal modes of labour-organisation – from individual craft-production, such as the authorship of a book, to the small group of an independent film-company – 'remain common and important within the cultural sphere' and have produced a 'powerful anti-economic cultural ideology'.[65] It remains difficult, and always risky, to attach exchange-value to cultural goods, which are classic public goods.[66]

In a similar way to Lukács, Horkheimer and Adorno's totalising interpretation was conditioned by the methodological procedure of generalising the categories of Taylorist rationalisation of production and of transferring them immediately onto the domain of culture and ideology. Under the sway of the culture-industry, amusement became a ' "prolongation" of the mechanized work process', a mere continuation of 'what happens at work, in the factory, or in the office into free time, in order [to occupy] men's senses from the time they leave the factory in the evening to the time they clock in again the next morning'.[67] Considering the tendencies toward an 'industrialisation' of superstructure, this description could be fruitful for an investigation of structural analogies that link the organisation of industrial labour to the patterns of cultural and ideological apparatuses. In this generalisation, however, the statement misses not only the contradictions between and within hegemonic apparatuses, but also the efficacy with which ideologies create complementary domains that do not function in the same way as the predominant economic patterns, but are designed to compensate for them.[68] The *Dialectic of Enlightenment* did not acknowledge any of these differences, and proclaimed, instead: 'Under monopoly all mass culture is identical'.[69]

Instead of analysing the contradictions within and across different areas of culture, Horkheimer and Adorno erected a dichotomy between a commodified popular mass-culture and a notion of modernist high art endowed with emancipatory potentials of resistance. They thus overstated both the manipulative power of the culture-industry and the ideology-critical capacities of 'authentic

64. Garnham 1986, pp. 25–6.
65. Garnham 1986, p. 25.
66. Garnham 1986, p. 26.
67. Horkheimer and Adorno 1995, pp. 131, 137.
68. On the 'complementarity' of the ideological, cf. below, Section 9.4. The compensatory function of ideologies that was neglected in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was however well described in the *Minima Moralia* using the example of 'escape' movies: the agents of the culture-industry are exactly aware of the ideological character of their products and 'attempt, by means of mental reservations, to distance themselves from the mischief they cause' (Adorno 1974, pp. 201–2 [No. 130]).
69. Horkheimer and Adorno 1944, p. 121.

art' to resist through its very aesthetic form. The fact that the concept of 'authentic art' was modelled on masters of the avant-garde like Schönberg, Kafka and Beckett further facilitated a wide range of criticism (across the political spectrum) denouncing the Frankfurt School for its 'cultural elitism', its 'arrogant, grandiose gesture of absolute disdain' towards the tastes of the common people, its similarity with conservative critiques of mass-culture, etc.[70] But again, the criticism's populist twist tended to obfuscate many of the insights and analytical potentials of the approach.

Adorno's essay 'On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening' (1938), which was in turn a response to Walter Benjamin's 'The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproduction' (1935), described the 'greatness' of art as a 'force of synthesis' that protects artistic unity from falling apart into diffuse culinary moments and 'preserves the image of a social condition in which . . . the moments of happiness would be more than mere appearance'.[71] The diagnosis was that, under the conditions of capitalist mass-culture, these moments of happiness and enjoyment, which had been, in pre-capitalist periods, productive impulses against authoritarianism and conventionalism, changed sides. They were absorbed into a commodified system of immediate gratification and assumed an alienating, diversionary function. They 'succumb' to capitalist alienation, 'conspire against freedom' and convert the listener, 'along his line of least resistance, into the acquiescent purchaser'.[72] The dialectical reversal of enjoyment's function produced in turn a reversal of its traditional opponent, the concept of the ascetic: 'If asceticism once struck down the claims of the aesthetic in a reactionary way, it has today become the sign of an advanced art', namely, 'by the strict exclusion of all culinary delights which seek to be consumed immediately for their own sake'. Art's 'promise of happiness can no longer be found except where the mask has been torn from the countenance of false happiness'.[73]

Taken at face-value, Adorno's sharp dichotomies of enjoyment and asceticism, 'false' and 'true' happiness, and so on did indeed overlook the critical and subversive aspects of popular culture and foreclosed the possibilities of working with, claiming and redefining the meanings of 'happiness' and the 'good life'. It was furthermore doubtful, as Zuidervaart pointed out, 'that artistic import can have a genuinely political impact unless extra-artistic factors make for appropriate

70. Cf. Kellner 1989, pp. 139 et sqq.
71. Adorno 1991a, p. 32.
72. Ibid. 'The delight in the moment and the gay façade becomes an excuse for absolving the listener from the thought of the whole, whose claim is comprised in proper listening'.
73. Adorno 1991a, p. 33.

receptivity'.[74] But the optimistic sounding-out of popular culture's oppositional themes that became fashionable in cultural studies usually avoided tackling the difficult question raised by Adorno's critique, namely *how* to effectively disentangle the resistive impulses from the diversionary effect of the commodity-form that continuously absorbs and corrodes them. The standard denunciation of critical theory's 'elitism' overlooked that Adorno considered *both* parts of the high culture/popular culture divide as severely damaged and marked by the 'stigmata of capitalism'. As he wrote in a letter to Walter Benjamin in 1935, they 'both are torn halves of an integral freedom, to which however they do not add up'.[75] In his essay, *Fetish Character in Music*, Adorno explained what he meant by 'torn halves': both spheres of music 'do not hang together in such a way that the lower could serve as a sort of popular introduction to the higher, or that the higher could renew its lost collective strength by borrowing from the lower'.[76] It was therefore not just popular culture and the 'duped' masses that were singled out as the site of commercialised manipulation. Adorno's critique was, rather, directed against a comprehensive ensemble of social relations marked by an ideological separation that impeded a fruitful aesthetic combination and re-articulation. The role of the culture-industry is seen as ambivalent in this regard: it 'forces a reconciliation of high and low art, which have been separated for thousands of years', but it is a reconciliation which 'damages them both': 'High art is deprived of its seriousness because its effect is programmed: low art is put in chains and deprived of the unruly resistance inherent in it when social control was not yet total'.[77] Adorno himself was however not able and willing to design an aesthetic programme to overcome this ideological divide. This task was taken up by artists and cultural theorists connected with the communist labour-movement like Bertolt Brecht and Hanns Eisler – notwithstanding the fact that Adorno could 'hardly bring himself to say a polite word about Bertolt Brecht'.[78]

4.3. Abandoning the concept of ideology?

Horkheimer and Adorno did not use the analytical insights of their critique of the culture-industry and the ideological divide between high art and mass-culture to further develop ideology-theory. After the return of the *Institute for Social Research* (ISF) from exile in the USA and its re-opening in Frankfurt in 1951, they

74. Zuidervaart 1991, p. 272.
75. Letter of March 18, 1936; quoted in Cook 1996, p. 105 (also see http://www.scribd.com/doc/11510904/Adorno-Letters-to-Walter-Benjamin).
76. Adorno 1991a, pp. 34–5.
77. Adorno 1991b, pp. 98–9.
78. Eagleton 1990, p. 349.

published a text in which they declared socialisation through ideologies to be irrelevant.[79] The decision to abandon the term appeared to be consistent insofar as they utilised a traditional concept of ideology that was limited to a classically bourgeois-liberal form: ideology was defined as a concept of justice developed from commodity-exchange, as well as an 'objective spirit' reflected in it that had been disconnected from its social basis.[80] According to this understanding, 'ideology can only be meaningfully discussed in terms of how a spiritual dimension [*ein Geistiges*] emerges from the social process as independent, substantial and with its own claims'.[81] Another defining feature was its opaqueness, which Adorno and Horkheimer considered as no longer existing: 'Ideology in its proper sense requires relations of power that are opaque to themselves, mediated and inasmuch also alleviated. Today's society . . . has become too transparent'.[82]

Confronted with 'ideology' in the traditional sense, the task of ideology-critique was to confront 'the intellectual dimension with its realisation'.[83] This immanent critique seemed however to have become obsolete: 'Where the ideologies have been substituted by the *ukase* [a tsar's order – JR] of the officially approved *Weltanschauung*, ideology critique is indeed to be substituted by the analysis of the *cui bono*',[84] that is, by an analysis of what serves the interest of whom. It is of course plausible that a traditional ideology-critique, which is restricted to the rational endeavour of confronting ideas with their own 'truth', becomes ineffective as soon as ideological integration does not proceed primarily by rational arguments and ideas. Tilman Reitz therefore argued that Horkheimer and Adorno's decision had its rationale in the insight that ideology-critique (in the sense they used the term) could only succeed in a constellation where the 'construction of a society "reasonable" for all its citizens is actually put up for debate', but not when ideological socialisation proceeds through 'solidified cultural practices'.[85]

It was the insight into the solidified 'materiality' of the ideological that motivated scholars like Althusser, Stuart Hall, and the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* to elaborate a historical-materialistic *ideology-theory* (as distinct from a mere 'ideology-critique'). From this perspective, some of Horkheimer and Adorno's justifications are questionable. Was it accurate to say that power-relations in the

79. The text 'Ideologie', written by Horkheimer and Adorno, was published in 1956 by the *Institute for Social Research* as the last chapter (Chapter Twelve) of the *Sociological Excursus*, and then taken up in Adorno's *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 8. I quote both versions: IFS (ed.) 1956 and Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 8.
80. IFS (ed.) 1956, pp. 168–9, 176; Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 8, pp. 464–5, 474–5.
81. IFS (ed.) 1956, p. 176; Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 8, p. 474.
82. IFS (ed.) 1956, p. 170; Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 8, p. 467.
83. IFS (ed.) 1956, p. 169; Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 8, p. 466.
84. IFS (ed.) 1956, p. 179; Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 8, p. 477.
85. Reitz 2004, pp. 705, 707.

twentieth century had become more immediate and transparent? The populist appeal of fascism's ideology of '*Volksgemeinschaft*' and the integrative efficiency of US Fordism's institutionalised Keynesian class-compromise spoke against such a diagnosis. The proposal to replace traditional ideology-critique with a *cui bono* analysis that focused unilaterally on the deliberate and instrumental use of manipulation fell back on a traditional Enlightenment concept of 'priestly deception'. The decision to abandon the concept of ideology was based on a dubious and arbitrary methodology: ideology was beforehand reduced to a traditional variety, which by its linkage to relatively petty capitalist market-relations and the 'grand narratives' of idealist philosophy evidently could not be applied to the modern culture-industry. To 'conclude' that the concept was inadequate and had to be dumped was a tautological procedure.

It therefore appears that Horkheimer and Adorno shied away from transcending the limits of their traditional concept of ideology as false consciousness towards an ideology-theory that focused on the institutional arrangement of social relations. They threw in the towel at the very moment when the materials they investigated would require a new framework that took into consideration the fact that the ideological integration of Fordist class-society did not operate primarily through systems of ideas, but rather through 'material' apparatuses, spatial arrangements, and systems of 'ortho-practices.' As Tilman Reitz argued, they could have turned to a modified perspective of ideology-critique that confronted the ideological uniformity from above with an alternative organisation of intellectual and cultural spaces and practices from below.[86] In this way, ideology-critique could undergo a paradigm-shift from mere critique of ideas to building up counter-hegemonic networks from below. That Horkheimer and Adorno had recourse to the traditional Enlightenment notion of a mere instrumental manipulation was not only paradoxical (given their overall project of 'dialectically' revising traditional Enlightenment concepts), but was also a regression from the material richness of their own investigations. A systematic 'translation' of their culture-industry investigations into the terms of ideology-theory still remains to be undertaken.

4.4. The 'gears of an irresistible praxis'

However, the abandonment of the concept of ideology was far from consistent. The same text that announced the abandonment of the concept of ideology continued to use the term. Today's ideology, however, hardly says more than, 'it is the way it is', and its untruth shrinks to the 'thin axiom' that 'it cannot

86. Reitz 2004, pp. 706–7.

be different from what it is'.[87] Recall that Marx had analysed such a fatalistic arrangement as the naturalisation of social relations based on the fetishism of commodities: movements of 'things' as 'natural forms of social life'.[88] As a current example, one could think of neoliberal ideologies that have been summarised by the doctrinaire principle 'TINA', meaning 'There Is No Alternative'. The World Social Forum's decision to counter this officially ordained fatalism with the slogan 'Another World is Possible' can be seen as a demonstration of how much the question of conceivability and feasibility of fundamental alternatives is in itself a crucial issue of ideological struggles. Horkheimer and Adorno's account, however, was not well equipped to conceptualise such ideological struggles. Ideology seemed identical with the overwhelming violence of the social order itself: it was 'no more an integument, but merely the menacing countenance of the world. Not only in virtue of its own enmeshment with propaganda, but also by its own form it turns into terror'.[89]

In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno defended ideology-critique against its destruction from a 'sociology of knowledge'. The sociology of knowledge 'fails before the concept of ideology, which it will stir into its broad beggarly broth', because it drowns out the questions of 'truth' and 'untruth' by an 'indiscriminately total concept of ideology' that 'terminates in nothingness'.[90] Adorno's *Jargon of Authenticity*, written 1962–4, not only referred in its original German subtitle *Zur deutschen Ideologie* ('On German Ideology', omitted in the English edition) to the classic text of Marx and Engels, but also used the concept throughout to characterise Heidegger's ontological jargon of 'authenticity' [*Eigentlichkeit*] and its diffusion in the discourses of the post-fascist intelligentsia in Germany after 1945. Adorno targeted the ideology of a vague universal humanity [*Allmenschlichkeit*], whose 'empty phrase' of 'man' in general hides the unalleviated discriminations of societal power and thereby 'distorts man's relation to his society as well as the content of what is thought in the concept of Man'.[91] He criticised a discourse of 'elevation', which was not a real one, but rather 'the continuing of the old suppressing ideology'.[92] The term 'genuiness' [*Echtheit*] that Nietzsche, according to Adorno, still used 'in an anti-ideological way', could not be used any more 'without becoming ideological'.[93] Even 'fascist ideology', whose existence Horkheimer and Adorno otherwise denied, resurfaced again.[94] Another target

87. IFS (ed.) 1956, pp. 179, 176; Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 8, p. 477.
88. Marx 1976, p. 168.
89. IFS (ed.) 1956, p. 179; Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 8, p. 477.
90. Adorno 2007, pp. 197–8.
91. Adorno 1973, pp. 62, 66–7; translation modified.
92. Adorno 1973, p. 69.
93. Adorno 1973, p. 70.
94. Adorno 1973, p. 131.

was the 'fashion of today's talk about the loss of ideology – talk which tramples down ideology but would like to trample down the truth'.[95] What characterised the jargon of authenticity was that it was 'ideology as language, without any consideration of specific content'.[96]

It seems as though Horkheimer and Adorno tried hard to abandon a traditional concept of ideology as 'false consciousness' without being able to get away from it. Through their oscillating terminology one can identify a tendency that is taken up by later ideology-theories. They wanted to leave the systems of ideas and the level of 'consciousness' behind in order to better search for the efficiency of ideological integration. But instead of locating the ideological in specific institutions and/or as a dimension that runs across different levels of class-societies, they tried to anchor its functioning in the social order (in general), as well as in the subjects it generates: 'The cement that was once produced by ideologies departed from them and on the one hand seeped into the overwhelmingly existing conditions as such, on the other hand into people's psychological formation'.[97] Let us first look at what Adorno called the 'overwhelmingly existing conditions as such'. As he explained in *Prisms*, 'the ideology drones, as it were, from the gears [*Räderwerk*] of an irresistible praxis'.[98] It is 'life' itself that is transformed into the 'ideology of reification – a death mask',[99] and it is the 'material process of production' that is considered to 'finally unveil itself as that which it always was . . .: ideology'. At the same time, consciousness had become increasingly 'a mere transitional moment in the functioning of the whole': 'Today, ideology means society as appearance'.[100] As in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the complex of reifications was conceived as a homogeneous unity without any contradictions: 'In the open-air prison which the world is becoming . . ., all phenomena rigidify, become insignias of the absolute rule of that which is'.[101] And again, the positivistic duplication of an inverted reality was combined with outright deception: instead of ideologies in the 'authentic sense of false consciousness', one finds 'only advertisements for the world through its duplication and the provocative lie which does not seek belief but commands silence'.[102]

On the side of the subjects, the psychological adaptation to social conditions had been 'deposited in them to an extent that the possibility . . . to break out of it even in thought alone is shrinking. They are . . . in their innermost identified with

95. Adorno 1973, p. 153.
96. Adorno 1973, p. 160.
97. Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 8, p. 18.
98. Adorno 1967, p. 29.
99. Adorno 1967, p. 30.
100. Adorno 1967, pp. 30–1.
101. Adorno 1967, p. 34.
102. Ibid.

what happens to them'.[103] It is 'literally the human beings themselves', by being as they are and not otherwise, who are 'ideology'.[104] When Adorno went on by saying that the 'wheel turns full circle',[105] the metaphor could also be applied to his own theoretical mode of production which, by construing an almighty ideological power from above, precluded the perception of elements of resistance or subversion. The theoretical model was such that it makes it impossible to realise a 'determinate negation' famously explained by Marx as a differentiated critical method that is able to identify and to 'set free elements of the new society with which . . . bourgeois society itself is pregnant'.[106] According to Herbert Marcuse, critical theory's weakest point was its 'inability to demonstrate the liberating tendencies *within* the established society'.[107]

4.5. Ideology as 'instrumental reason' and 'identitarian thought'

Whereas Lukács derived the concept of reification from Marx's analysis of commodity- money- and capital- fetishism, Horkheimer's *Eclipse of Reason* (published first in 1947 in English) defined reification as a 'process that can be traced back to the beginnings of organized society and the use of tools'.[108] The 'disease' that affects reason, that is, its instrumental character, is, therefore, 'inseparable from the nature of reason in civilisation as we have known it', because it was born from 'man's urge to dominate nature'.[109] One could even say that the 'collective madness that ranges today, from the concentration camps to the seemingly most harmless mass-culture reactions, was already present in germ . . . in the first man's calculating contemplation of the world as a prey'.[110] Horkheimer justified this linear connection with the argument that, as long as man does not understand his own reason, the subjugation of nature reverts into the subjugation of man, and *vice versa*.[111] The result of this twofold history of domination is a disastrous polarisation with on the one hand, the subject as an 'abstract ego emptied of all substance except its attempt to transform everything in heaven and on earth into means for its preservation', and on the other hand, an 'empty

103. Adorno 1973–86, 8, p. 18.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Marx 1871, p. 335.
107. Marcuse 1966, p. 254.
108. Horkheimer 1974, p. 40.
109. Horkheimer 1974, p. 176.
110. Ibid. Cf. Adorno's similar trajectory in *Negative Dialectics*: 'No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb' (Adorno 2007, p. 320).
111. Horkheimer 1974, p. 177.

nature degraded to mere material, mere stuff to be dominated, without any other purpose than that of this very domination'.[112]

Even if Horkheimer portrayed instrumental reason as having penetrated and determined reason entirely, he felt compelled to also appeal to reason in order to overcome instrumental reason. He pinned his hope on a 'self-critique' of reason that enables it to 'remain faithful to itself'. By becoming aware of the tendency of domination inherent in every thought, a person could transform it into an 'instrument of reconciliation', which thus would be more than an instrument.[113] Horkheimer conceptualised this alternative way of thinking by taking up the Platonic and Aristotelian concept of 'mimesis' (Greek μίμησις [*mímēsis*], imitation or representation, cf. *mīmeîsthai*). The concept was usually defined as the capacity to imitate nature and human behaviour and described an archaic comportment that even preceded image-making. It was in particular Walter Benjamin's 'On the Mimetic Faculty' (1933) that influenced both Horkheimer's usage in *Eclipse of Reason* and Adorno's usage in his aesthetic theory. Similar to Benjamin's account of humans' mimetic faculties,[114] Horkheimer described children's 'mimetic impulse' to imitate everybody and everything as a fundamental means of learning which determines general behaviour-patterns.[115] If it is repressed and cut off from adequate social and linguistic expression, it 'lie[s] in wait, ready to break out as a destructive force' in a regressive and distorted form that is exploited by fascism and other reactionary formations.[116] But it can also be enlightened by a critical philosophy that is characterised by the effort 'to knit all our knowledge into a linguistic structure in which things are called by their right names'.[117] Such philosophy could enable language to fulfil 'its genuine mimetic function'. By expressing both the plight of nature and the longing of the oppressed, it could 'reflect passion through language and thus transfer it to the

112. Horkheimer 1974, p. 97.
113. Horkheimer 1974, p. 177.
114. 'Nature produces similarities. One need only think of mimicry. The highest capacity for producing similarities, however, is man's. . . . There is perhaps not a single one of his higher functions in which his mimetic faculty does not play a decisive role' (Benjamin 1986, p. 333). David McNally interpreted Benjamin's text from the perspective of a materialist concept of language that worked with 'the idea of a sort of *linguistic unconscious*, a hidden dimension of language which does not manifest itself in the ordinary course of communicative interaction' (McNally 2001, p. 187; cf. McNally 2001, pp. 222–3). *Mimesis* requires sophisticated 'neural maps of the body', which seems to be the basis of gestural communication and hominid social organisation (McNally, pp. 102–3), as well as of speech-development (McNally 2001, p. 106).
115. Horkheimer 1974, p. 114.
116. Horkheimer 1974, pp. 116–17, 179.
117. Horkheimer 1974, p. 179.

sphere of experience and memory', so that potentially regressive and nihilistic-destructive energies were put to work for reconciliation.[118]

The fact that, without such a rational translation, mimetic impulses could break through in a destructive and potentially fascistic way, highlights the importance Horkheimer ascribed to an alternative kind of rationality. But it is here that the critique of 'instrumental reason' becomes entangled in a paradox. As Jürgen Habermas observed, Adorno and Horkheimer could not explicate this alternative kind of reason they were invoking because they would then have to rely on a reason 'that is before reason (which was from the beginning instrumental'). They would have to put forward 'a *theory* of mimesis, which, according to their own ideas, is impossible'.[119] According to Habermas, it was Adorno's unfinished *Aesthetic Theory* of 1969 that particularly 'seal[ed] the surrender of all cognitive competence to art in which the mimetic capacity gains objective shape'.[120] Eagleton argued that 'emancipatory thought' could only be an 'enormous irony' for Horkheimer and Adorno, an 'indispensable absurdity in which the concept is at once deployed and disowned, no sooner posited than surmounted, illuminating truth only in the dim glare of light by which it self-destructs'.[121]

A defining feature of 'instrumental reason' was that it commanded and controlled its objects by 'equalising' what was different, by 'excising' the incommensurable, by squeezing what is non-identical into a fixed identity.[122] This notion led to another shift in Horkheimer and Adorno's concept of ideology, which now characterised an 'identitarian thinking' [*Identitätsdenken*] that was opposed to dialectical analysis. When, in *Prisms*, Adorno explained the differences between a 'traditional transcendent critique of ideology' and his concept of immanent critique, he described the latter according to the dialectical insight 'that it is not ideology in itself which is untrue but rather its pretension to correspond to reality'.[123] What the *Negative Dialectics* wanted to see criticised was the 'hubris' of claiming identity as a 'correspondence of the thing-in-itself with the concept'.[124] Ideology does not necessarily coincide with explicit idealist philosophies, but rather 'lies in the implicit identity of concept and thing',[125] to the effect that a mediated reality is submitted to a 'surreptitious acquisition' by an immediacy 'vested with the authority of absolute, unimpeachable, subjectively evident

118. Horkheimer 1974, p. 179.
119. Habermas 1984, p. 382.
120. Habermas 1984, p. 384.
121. Eagleton 1990, p. 347.
122. Horkheimer and Adorno 1995, p. 12.
123. Adorno 1967, pp. 32–3.
124. Adorno 2007, p. 149.
125. Adorno 2007, p. 40.

being-in-itself'.[126] Identity is thus the 'primal form [*Urform*] of ideology', which is relished as 'adequacy to the thing it suppresses'.[127]

It is this complicity with identifying thought that explained for Adorno 'ideology's power of resistance to enlightenment'.[128] Ideology-critique was therefore not peripheral, but rather 'philosophically . . . central', namely as a 'critique of the constitutive consciousness itself'.[129] From this passage, one can see a twofold move: at the same time that Adorno elevated ideology-critique to a key component of philosophy, he enlarged its target and scope to an extent that risked robbing it of any specifics. His critique of 'identifying thought' was simultaneously a critique of 'thought large,'[130] which, by definition, could not operate without identifications. But, in yet another paradoxical turn, it was in these very identitarian characteristics of thinking that Adorno also saw a meeting point between ideology and utopia: hidden in the 'supposition of identity' lies ideology's 'truth moment', namely, 'the pledge that there should be no contradiction, no antagonism', a 'utopian element' that makes ideas work as 'negative signs' against a reality ridden with inner strife – signs that point to a 'togetherness of diversity'.[131]

Critical theory intersected here in an interesting way with Althusser's concept of 'ideology in general', which was described as representing 'the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence'.[132] Both theories have in common that they argued against the traditional understanding of ideology as 'false consciousness' and looked for an underlying and more fundamental 'identitarian' procedure. Whereas Horkheimer and Adorno identified 'identitarian ideology' with mechanisms of thinking in general, Althusser approached the ideological evidence of 'identity' by means of Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytical theory of the 'imaginary', which emerged from a particular 'mirror-stage' in childhood-development (see Section 6.5.). This meant, however, that both approaches shared the weakness of an over-generalised concept of ideology, that, by its identification with human acting, thinking and feeling in general, risked losing its connection to specific alienated structures of antagonistic class-societies.

126. Adorno 2007, p. 82 (translation modified).
127. Adorno 2007, p. 148.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid.
131. Adorno 2007, pp. 149–50.
132. Althusser 2001, p. 162; Althusser 1995, p. 296.

4.6. From Marcuse to Habermas – and back to Max Weber?

Both the basic continuities and discontinuities between the first and the second generation of the Frankfurt School could be observed in Jürgen Habermas's early text *Technology and Science as 'Ideology'* (written in 1968, translated into English in 1970), which was dedicated to Herbert Marcuse on his seventieth birthday and dealt with his critique of 'technological rationality'. The fundamental continuity can be seen in the relationship between the 'new ideology' and what in the Marxist tradition is usually subsumed under the concept of 'productive forces'. In *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse turned against what he considered to be Soviet Marxism's uncritically positive evaluation of the 'technological apparatus' which was to be retained and, through socialisation, freed from its fetters. Against the division between the forces and relations of production, he argued that 'technical rationality' was in fact 'embodied in the productive apparatus', including the 'mode of labour', and that neither nationalisation nor socialisation 'alter *by themselves* this physical embodiment of technological rationality'.[133] Since for Marcuse it was not just the application of technology, but rather technology itself, which causes the domination of nature and of people, he could draw the conclusion that in an advanced industrial society, 'the ideology is in the process of production itself', so that 'the rational rather than the irrational becomes the most effective vehicle of mystification'.[134]

It is a widespread interpretation in secondary literature that it was Habermas who opened up the Frankfurt School's monolithic concept of 'instrumental reason' by introducing his concept of 'communicative reason'. This interpretation however overlooks the paradox that in this early text he was completely in agreement with Marcuse as long as Marcuse's diagnosis moved within Horkheimer and Adorno's paradigm of 'instrumental reason'. When Habermas argued, for example, that the productive forces 'no longer function as the basis of a critique of prevailing legitimations in the interest of political enlightenment, but become instead the basis of legitimation', he articulated a general consensus: 'technocratic consciousness' not only became a 'substitute ideology for the demolished bourgeois ideologies',[135] but also 'today's dominant, rather glassy background ideology, which makes a fetish of science', and thus penetrates the consciousness of the depoliticised mass of the population.[136]

However, Habermas took issue as soon as Marcuse moved out of this paradigm and looked for alternative concepts *within* technological 'progress' and science. Marcuse's approach to technology contained, in fact, different and partly

133. Marcuse 1966, p. 22.
134. Marcuse 1966, pp. 11, 189, cf. 234.
135. Habermas 1970, pp. 84, 115.
136. Habermas 1970, pp. 105, 111.

contradictory arguments: at the same time as he identified, like Horkheimer and Adorno, technology with 'domination (of nature and men)', he also defined it (*pace* Max Weber) as a 'historical-social *project*', in the sense that 'in it is projected what a society and its ruling interests intend to do with men and things'.[137] This implied, however, that a new society could develop and 'project' an alternative design of technology. In *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse differentiated two kinds of 'mastery of Nature', 'a repressive and a liberating one'.[138] Going beyond Horkheimer's vague reference to 'mimetic' reason, he advocated a 'change in the direction of progress', which might sever the fatal link between rational and social hierarchy. It thus would 'affect the very structure of science', whose hypotheses could develop in an 'essentially different experimental context', that of a 'pacified world', and would thus arrive 'at essentially different concepts of nature and establish essentially different facts'.[139] Marcuse's outlook of a new science and technology in turn implicitly echoed Ernst Bloch's concept of an 'alliance technique' [*Allianztechnik*] capable of building 'alliances with nature' [*Naturallianzen*]. Whereas technology hitherto 'stands in nature like an army of occupation in enemy territory', a 'Marxism of technology' had to design a new technology that was 'mediated with the co-productivity of nature'. It would bring about 'the end of the naive application of the standpoint of the exploiter and animal tamer to nature' and set free and mediate the creations slumbering in the womb of nature.[140]

Before Habermas even set out to describe Marcuse's tentative inquiries into possible alternatives, he portrayed them as a romantic outgrowth of 'Jewish and Protestant mysticism', which he saw radiating from 'Swabian Pietism' through the young Marx's promise of the 'resurrection of fallen nature' to Bloch, Adorno and Horkheimer.[141] His response to these 'utopias' was basically that there is, with regards to the nature of technology and science, no alternative. Based on Arnold Gehlen, Habermas argued that technological development 'follows a logic that corresponds to the structure of purposive-rational action regulated by its own results, which is in fact the structure of *work*'. He concluded that it is, therefore, 'impossible to envisage how, as long as . . . we have to achieve self-preservation through social labor and with the aid of means that substitute for work, we could renounce . . . to *our* technology, in favor of a qualitatively different one'.[142] The

137. Marcuse 1968, pp. 223–4.
138. Marcuse 1966, p. 236.
139. Marcuse 1966, pp. 166–7.
140. Cf. Bloch 1986, pp. 686, 690–1, 695–6; cf. the dictionary entry Zimmermann 2012.
141. Habermas 1970, pp. 85–6.
142. Habermas 1970, p. 87.

notion of a new science would therefore 'not stand up to logical scrutiny any more than that of a New Technology'.[143]

It is not evident why Habermas considers the development of an alternative concept of work and technology as precluded by the mere fact that he himself had subsumed them under the category of 'purposive-rational action' [*zweckrationales Handeln*]. If one holds onto the literal meaning of the term (without its Weberian baggage), one would rather agree with Marcuse's concept of a societal project, and conclude that the direction of the action in question depended on how the respective 'purpose' was socially defined and negotiated. Habermas's invocation of human 'self-preservation' would immediately take on another meaning as soon as one considered the term in the context of late capitalism's ecological crisis: is it not precisely human 'self-preservation' that urgently demands a fundamental re-orientation of social production, reproduction, and consumption? It seems that in this regard it is not Habermas, but rather Marcuse who speaks to the urgent issues of today's ecological movements.

It is important to take into account that Habermas had forcefully closed down such alternative paths of 'rationality' before opening up his own. He announced his concept of communicative reason in an interpretative shift that seemed slight at first: what Marcuse really had in mind was not a new technology, but an 'alternative attitude' [*Einstellung*] to nature, one of 'communicating' with her instead of 'merely processing her', which then meant, in Habermas's interpretation, an attitude on the level of 'symbolic interaction in distinction to purposive-rational action', framed as an alternative project of 'language' rather than of 'work'.[144] This was definitely *not* what Marcuse 'had in mind', whose alternative design for technology and science found itself suddenly substituted by Habermas's new 'starting point', namely, 'the fundamental distinction between *work* and *interaction*'.[145] Based on this distinction, Habermas established the dichotomy between, on the one hand, work and 'purposive-rational action', which was governed by '*technical rules* based on empirical knowledge', as well as by '*strategies* based on analytical knowledge', and, on the other hand, 'symbolic interaction' or 'communicative action'. These were governed by 'binding *consensual norms*' objectified in ordinary language-communication.[146] Alongside this separation, he distinguished what would later be known as 'system world' and 'life-world', namely subsystems such as the economic system and the state-apparatus, in which primarily sets of purposive-rational action were institutionalised, and

143. Habermas 1970, p. 88.
144. Habermas 1970, pp. 87–8.
145. Habermas 1970, p. 91.
146. Habermas 1970, pp. 91–2.

subsystems 'such as family and kinship structures, which are . . . primarily based on moral rules and interaction'.[147]

Before considering some of the implications of Habermas's concepts of communicative action and life-world, I will look at how Marcuse and Habermas dealt differently with the concept of 'purposive-rational action', which was a key concept of Max Weber's 'interpretive sociology'. Even if, in *Economy and Society*, Weber claimed to construe his concept of 'formal', purpose-oriented rationality as a value-free 'ideal type', this conceptual construct had an obvious 'teleology'. While it was politically oriented toward a 'legal', impersonal-bureaucratic form of state-authority, it was economically tailored to money and capital-accounting, as well as toward a 'free' 'market struggle of economic units'.[148] As Weber explained, the superior 'rationality' of market-economies could be described as an effective economic domination based on the 'unequal distribution of wealth, and particularly of capital goods', which 'forces the non-owning group to comply with the authority of others', because otherwise, 'they run the risk of going entirely without provisions'.[149] What Marx had criticised as 'silent compulsion of economic relations'[150] became in Weber's sociology the *telos* of formal rationality. Contrary to much of the secondary literature, Weber himself spoke bluntly about his own class-perspective, such as in his famous *Inaugural Lecture* in Freiburg in 1895:

> I am a member of the bourgeois classes. I feel myself to be a bourgeois, and I have been brought up to share their views and ideals. Yet it is precisely that vocation of our science to say things people do not like to hear – . . . also to our own class.[151]

Expressed in Gramsci's terminology, Weber could be portrayed as an 'organic intellectual' of a bourgeoisie which had not yet found itself and was in need of political and ethical education. With his educational project of enlightening his class about its own ethico-political origins and prospects (e.g. ascetic Protestantism), Weber worked on the modernisation of bourgeois hegemony that was oriented to the most advanced type of Fordist capitalism in the US.[152]

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147. Habermas 1970, p. 93.
148. Weber 1978, pp. 91, 107 et sqq., 217 et sqq.
149. Weber 1978, p. 110.
150. Marx 1976, p. 899.
151. Weber 1994, p. 23.
152. For a Gramscian analysis of Max Weber's project of modernising bourgeois hegemony and of the Fordist perspectives in his *Protestant Ethics* and his sociology of religion more generally, cf. Rehmann 2013a, pp. 33 et sqq., 81 et sqq., 209 et sqq., 237 et sqq., 290 et sqq.), as well as Rehmann 1999b (79 et sqq.). With regards to recent Weber research, see Sara Farris's review (Farris 2010). For a critique of the "orientalist" orientation of Weber's sociology of religion, cf. Farris 2013.

'Whatever capitalism may do to man, it must, according to Weber, first and before all evaluation, be understood as necessary reason', observed Marcuse,[153] who was in fact the only theorist of the Frankfurt School to systematically decipher the capitalist tailoring of Weber's modernisation-theory. According to Marcuse, Weber's supposedly value-free sociology took 'into its "pure" definitions of formal rationality valuations peculiar to capitalism'.[154] Generalising the 'blindness of a society which reproduces itself behind the back of the individuals, of a society in which the law of domination appears as objective technological law', Weber made a 'pledge not to reason, but to the reason of established domination': 'reification of reason, reification *as* reason'.[155] It was against this fusion of technical reason with bourgeois capitalist reason that Marcuse developed his own concept of technology as a project that could be (and needed to be) redesigned.

However, this ideology-critical insight into the specific capitalistic orientation of Weber's concept of rationalisation became lost in Habermas's interpretation. Whereas Marcuse questioned the capitalistic design of production, technology, and science by confronting it with an alternative purpose (for instance, 'pacification' of society, reconciliation with nature), Habermas left the entire domain of 'purposive-rational action' intact and instead confronted it with another rationality 'outside' the 'instrumental' logic of production. He did not criticise Weber for narrowing his concept of reason to a capitalist perspective, but rather for giving the purposive-rational type priority over and against the 'value-rational' type, so that norm-oriented 'communicative action' was sidelined.[156]

The methodical consequences were far-reaching. Firstly, the dialectical method of 'determinate negation', which found the starting point of its critique *within* the respective phenomenon to be criticised, was substituted by a criticism from without. Secondly, the Weberian blending of purposeful rationality and capitalist class-interests was left unchallenged, and thus became tacitly incorporated into the theoretical arrangement of the new paradigm of the Frankfurt School. Habermas's theory no longer allowed for criticism of the way the apparatus of production was shaped by hegemonic interests, but only as far as it overextended its purpose-rationality into communicative domains.

153. Marcuse 1968, p. 202.
154. Marcuse 1968, p. 223.
155. Marcuse 1968, pp. 214 et sqq.
156. Habermas 1984, pp. 281 et sqq., 284.

4.7. Taking the sting out of critical theory

Let us first look at the motives that illustrate why Habermas's new paradigm became attractive for scholars who felt connected to the impetus of 'critical theory' in the widest sense of the term. The main reason for Habermas's appeal was the weakness of his predecessors, in particular the over-general concepts of 'instrumental reason' and 'identitarian thought', which prevented Horkheimer and Adorno from identifying a perspective within 'modern' society from which to formulate a 'determinate negation' of the capitalist and industrialist domination of humans and nature. As we have seen, the notion of an alternative rationality capable of liberating the 'mimetic impulses' repressed by modernity could not consistently be developed within this paradigm (see Section 4.5.). As soon as one adopted the basic 'technocracy thesis', i.e. the assumption that technology and science provided the predominant ideology of late capitalism (and of state-socialism, for that matter), Habermas's proposal looked plausible. By anchoring his alternative perspective in 'communicative reason', he seemed to have found a valid perspective from which to challenge the increasingly overwhelming power of the 'system-world'. Opposing the systemic rule of money and the state-bureaucracy by invoking the principle of mutual understanding and social consensus further corresponded to widespread common-sense perceptions. Habermas's perspective of an 'unrestricted communication about the goals of life activity'[157] seemed to contain much of the emancipative pathos of self-determination. If it could be shown, as Habermas claimed, that 'the utopian perspective of reconciliation and freedom . . . is built into the linguistic mechanisms of the reproduction of the species',[158] the critique seemed finally to gain solid ground in human universals. It appeared possible, at last, to overcome an ideology-critique, which got stuck in a frontal and totalising attack against reason in general (and paradoxically dependent on 'reason' as well) and to target more precisely the 'colonisation of the lifeworld', namely the 'penetration of forms of economic and administrative rationality into areas of action that . . . remain dependent on mutual understanding'.[159] Bolstered by, and being an integral part of, the linguistic turn in social theory, this new approach could assume to have moved out of the leftist margins and to be rooted in the 'middle' of society, in its core values of discursive ethics. What was promised was a differentiated critique on the basis of 'the normative contents of bourgeois culture [*bürgerliche Kultur*], of art and of philosophical thought'.[160]

157. Habermas 1970, p. 120.
158. Habermas 1984, p. 398.
159. Habermas 1987, pp. 330–1.
160. Habermas 1987, p. 397.

One has, furthermore, to take into account that Habermas's claim to differentiate modern 'reason', taken as such, intersects in part with the endeavour of developing a critical ideology-theory which leaves the traditional opposition of 'ideology' (as 'false consciousness') and 'truth' behind. Instead of proclaiming that reason was based on a homogeneous essence (be it 'positive' or 'negative'), ideology-theory conceives of reason primarily as an ambivalent and antagonistically structured force-field. Reason 'may stride out toward building a society of solidarity, and it may appeal to the individuals to be "reasonable" in the sense of submitting themselves to the ruling order.'[161] Whoever intervenes into ideological struggles concerning the people's 'common sense' is immediately drawn into a struggle about what is 'reasonable'. It would, therefore, be unreasonable to abandon the concept of 'reason' and to hand it over to the powers that be. Critical theory is bound to work out its emancipative content and potential so that it can target their restrictions by capitalist class-interests and their reversals into outright irrationality. Without the perspective of a comprehensive and sustainable societal rationality, it would be impossible to criticise as 'irrational' a system which, by its economic crises, destroys huge quantities of wealth, lengthens working hours in the midst of mass-unemployment, and which, as Marx famously formulated, 'only develops the techniques and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth – the soil and the worker'.[162]

The problem is, however, that Habermas's binaries of communicative and instrumental reason, 'life-world' and 'system-world,' 'interaction' and 'work' are not able to adequately grasp the predominant bourgeois restrictions of 'reason'. As we have seen, Habermas derived these oppositions from Weber's distinction between 'purposive-rational action' and 'value-rational action'. By developing the concept of 'communicative action', he hoped to 'capture in action-theoretical terms the complex concept of rationality that Weber did employ in his cultural analyses'.[163] He thereby left the teleological orientation of 'purposive-rational action' to money- and capital-accounting unchallenged, and thus implicitly adopted the capitalist tailoring of Weber's concept of 'rationality' into his own framework. The specifically capitalistic modelling of modern 'reason', namely the 'fetishistic' inversion which means that the concrete labor oriented to creating use-values in cooperation is systematically subordinated to the valorisation of abstract labour and to surplus-extraction, cannot be adequately analysed in the framework of a dichotomy between 'instrumental' and 'communicative' reason. Both use-value perspectives and profit-making perspectives are

161. Jehle 2004, p. 1531.
162. Marx 1976, p. 638.
163. Habermas 1984, p. 284.

'instrumental' in the general sense that they follow patterns of purposeful rationality, except that these purposes are diametrically opposed. However, both are 'communicative' as well: in whatever way, the purposeful organisation of social labour needs to be coordinated through numerous acts of communication. Its specific capitalistic form, structured by the goal of extracting surplus-value, is not merely a silent arrangement either, but needs communicative practices for its implementation. It cannot function without generating symbolically mediated social identities and employing manifold ideological discourses that explain the 'inevitability' and 'fairness' of profit-making, thereby aiming at what Habermas would describe as 'normative consensus'. As Therborn observed, Habermas's 'scheme of 'labour' and 'interaction' can circumscribe no structural contradictions'.[164]

The theoretical arrangement became somewhat more complicated by the fact that Habermas at times used the opposition between instrumental and communicative reason as a merely *analytical* distinction that runs through the different areas of 'system-world' and 'life-world', and also cuts across the divide between 'work' and 'interaction'. The same empirical phenomenon could thus be differentiated in an 'instrumental' dimension oriented toward 'success', and a 'communicative' dimension oriented to mutual agreement. In this sense, Habermas split 'labour-power' into its 'abstract performance' [*abstrakte Leistung*] belonging to 'systemic integration' and into 'concrete actions and cooperative relationships', which belonged to 'social integration' and the 'life-world' of the producers.[165] Contrary to this approach, he explained explicitly that he did *not* 'use the terms "strategic" and "communicative" only to designate two analytic aspects under which the same action could be described', but rather as an empirical device by which 'social actions can be distinguished according to whether the participants adopt either a success-oriented attitude or one oriented to reaching understanding'.[166] Gerhard Hauck observed that Habermas oscillated back and forth between a 'procedural' and a 'substantial' distinction. The former described communicative action as a 'threefold relation to the world', namely to the objective world, the social world, and the subjective world.[167] The latter identified it with 'life-world', and thereby excluded people's economic life from communal-communicative reproduction.[168] In a similar way, Nancy Fraser pointed out that Habermas used this distinction sometimes in a 'pragmatic-contextual' way, which allowed him to look at a given set of social actions from the standpoint of symbolic reproduction (for a specific analytical purpose), and an interpretation designed to separate the

164. Therborn 1971, p. 78.
165. Habermas 1987, p. 335.
166. Habermas 1987, p. 286.
167. Cf. Habermas 1984, p. 96; Habermas 1987, p. 120.
168. Hauck 1992, p. 81.

two functions as 'two objectively distinct "natural kinds" '. From her perspective, it was the latter that was 'conceptually inadequate and potentially ideological'.[169] According to Axel Honneth, the 'social-theoretic dualism' between 'labor' and 'interaction' that was developed in Habermas's early writings and in the context of the 'technocracy thesis' reappeared again and again in his later writings and, by assuming an actual distinction (instead of an analytical one), constituted a 'reifying tendency'.[170]

As far as Habermas tied his distinction of 'instrumental' and 'communicative' reason to the opposition of 'work' and 'interaction', both sides of the juxtaposition lost crucial parts of their substance. By lumping together labour and 'instrumental reason', Habermas robbed the basic domain of social life of its fundamental cooperative and therefore communicative dimensions. Crucial questions of production such as what was to be produced ('swords' or 'ploughshares'?), of how divisions of labour were to be arranged in a democratic and just way, how the end-results of production should be distributed and the ratio of investment and consumption decided, and so on, were thus taken out of the communicative competence of associated producers.[171] Given the current threat of climate-change and ecological destruction, there is hardly a more urgent task than to invest our intellectual and communicative skills into the question of how to transform the human relationship with nature in a sustainable way. To fend off the 'systemic' core areas of social production against requirements of a 'communication free of domination' is self-defeating for any emancipatory strategy of transformation.[172]

In contrast, the 'life-world' appeared to have an innocence that systematically concealed the manifold hierarchical structures that traversed it. This is best illustrated with the example of the family, which for Habermas was the prototype of 'social' and 'normative' integration, as opposed to the 'system-world' of (among other things) institutionalised wage-labour. Nancy Fraser criticised this dualism for 'direct[ing] attention away from the fact that the household, like the paid workforce, is a site of labor, albeit of unremunerated and often unrecognized labor'.[173] Child-rearing practices certainly comprised language-teaching and initiation to social mores, 'but also feeding, bathing, and protection from physical harm'.[174] Both the capitalist economy and the nuclear family are 'mélanges of consentuality, normativity, and strategicality'.[175] A framework of categories that

169. Fraser 1989, p. 115.
170. Honneth 1991, pp. 291 et sqq., 301.
171. Cf. Hauck 1992, pp. 80–1.
172. Habermas 1970, p. 93.
173. Fraser 1989, p. 119.
174. Fraser 1989, pp. 115–16.
175. Fraser 1989, p. 118.

placed these areas on opposite sides was not useful for a feminist critical theory, since both family and official economy 'appropriate our labor, short-circuit our participation in the interpretation of our needs, and shield normatively secured need interpretations from political contestation'.[176] Axel Honneth criticised Habermas for not only giving up on 'the possibility of a justified critique of concrete forms of organisation of economic production and political administration', but also for losing the insight that, as long as power was asymmetrically distributed, the communicative relation between groups 'takes place through the medium of social struggle'.[177]

Using Habermas's distinction between instrumental and communicative reason as an analytical distinction, one could indeed develop an ideology-critique that focuses on the mechanisms by which a predominant ideology invades the domain of 'communication free of domination'[178] and overwhelms the communicative rule that only the better argument prevails. But this was not what Habermas proposed. Based on Weber's assessment of an increasingly 'disenchanted' culture, he came to the conclusion that the time for ideologies (and therefore for an ideology-critique) has ended. Marx's concept of ideology still referred to a classic bourgeois culture, whose idealistic and universalistic ideologies had a 'utopian-ideological double character' in that their normative contents were 'overshooting the existing social realities'.[179] The nineteenth and twentieth centuries then experienced a 'second generation of ideologies' that Habermas saw as stretching from fascism to socialism and anarchism, and was marked by the '*form* of totalising conceptions', as well as by mostly nostalgic reactions to the deprivations of modernity.[180] But late capitalism's rationalised and disenchanted life-world increasingly lost its structural possibilities for ideology-formation and instead developed a functional equivalent: 'In place of the positive task of meeting a certain need for interpretation by ideological means, we have the negative requirement of preventing the emergence of efforts at interpretation onto the level of the integration of ideologies'.[181] Given that everyday knowledge is now 'diffuse' and 'hopelessly splintered', people are in a situation where 'false consciousness' is replaced with 'fragmented consciousness'. Instead of a 'critique of ideology', which was caricatured as hunting after the scattered traces of

176. Fraser 1989, p. 138. Cf. Fraser's criticism of Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, where Habermas is charged with idealising the bourgeois concept of the 'public sphere' that rested on multiple systems of social exclusions (gender, race, class) and purporting 'to bracket, rather than to eliminate, structural social inequalities' (Fraser 1997, pp. 73 et sqq., 76–7, 79).
177. Honneth 1991, p. 303.
178. Habermas 1970, p. 93.
179. Habermas 1987, p. 352.
180. Habermas 1987, pp. 353–4.
181. Habermas 1987, p. 355 (translation altered).

revolutionary consciousness, Habermas proposed an analysis of cultural modernity, which explained 'the cultural impoverishment and fragmentation of everyday consciousness' and examined the conditions for 're-coupling a rationalized culture with an everyday communication dependent on vital traditions'.[182]

Habermas's historical account of ideologies is however astonishingly simplistic and superficial. His description of Marx's ideology-theory misses all the productive insights that are easy to be unearthed by a close reading. A careful discussion of Marx and Engels's analysis on the separation of mental and manual labour or on the function of 'ideological powers' and 'ideological superstructures' to model class-societies from above could have cautioned against the rash conclusion that their concept of ideology was restricted to the classic bourgeois culture of the eighteenth century. Instead of adopting Weber's diagnosis of modern 'disenchantment', Habermas could have considered the much more dialectical insight of Marx's analysis of fetishism that capitalist market-society systematically engenders its own religion-like inversions and mystifications – a 'religion of capitalism' (Benjamin) that is both disenchanted and continuously re-enchanted. The fact that he reduced 'ideologies' to mere systems of ideas was certainly due in part to a similar view that motivated Horkheimer and Adorno in the 1950s to abandon the concept. But to repeat this questionable argument more than twenty-five years later was all the more untenable as the ideology-theories of Gramsci, Althusser, Stuart Hall, and the *Projekt Ideologietheorie*, which the first generation of the Frankfurt School could not have known, became easily accessible since then. To define 'ideology' beforehand in a way that it did not fit 'late capitalism', and then to declare it outdated, was again a tautological procedure. As soon as the ideological is no longer identified with specific 'universalising' and 'totalising' world-views, but considered as an ensemble of ideological apparatuses, practices, and discourses that help reproduce class-society by manufacturing 'consensus' from above, it becomes obvious that the period of ideologies (and of their critique) is far from over. The idea that in late capitalism there is only 'fragmented consciousness' without any attempts to work on its ideological cohesion, is an unrealistic fantasy. If this were so, a whole series of institutions would immediately close down and innumerable ideologues would lose their jobs. Of course, the 'fragmentation' of everyday consciousness is not an argument against the importance of 'ideology', but rather an integral part of its functioning. It was primarily Gramsci who demonstrated how the 'incoherence' of people's common sense was engendered and exploited by ideologies, so that the critique of common sense's 'fragmentation' was not an alternative to

182. Habermas 1987, pp. 355–6.

'ideology-critique', but rather a way to put it to work in a concrete and differentiated way (see Section 5.3.).

Habermas himself engaged in the questionable project of eliminating the ideology-theoretical potential of his approach. Instead of elaborating the project of a differentiated ideology-critique that identified the strategies by which 'vertical' patterns of domination in class-, gender- and race-relations invade, subvert and instrumentalise 'horizontal' and consensual patterns of communication, he abandoned the subject of ideology and its critique altogether. In the framework of his 'substantial' dichotomy between 'instrumental' and 'communicative' reason, 'system-world' and 'life-world,' 'work' and 'interaction,' he carried out two additional strategic modifications in relation to ideology. On the one hand, following Weber's concept of 'value-rationality', he reintroduced a positive, neo-Kantian revaluation of moral values and norms, which became component parts of the 'life-world' as against the 'system-world'. On the other hand, and complementarily to the first move, ideology-critique increasingly became a deprecatory term, by which he characterised Horkheimer and Adorno's approach as an anti-modernist and potentially totalitarian 'rebellion against everything normative', a rebellion which questioned the 'achievements of Occidental rationalism' (as diagnosed by Weber) and the 'rational content of cultural modernity'.[183] To this end, Habermas associated the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* with the philosophy of Nietzsche, who demonstrated 'how one totalizes critique', and, therefore, became the 'great model for the critique of ideology's totalising self-overcoming'.[184] This association was in turn made possible by a superficial interpretation of Nietzsche, which reduced his philosophy to little more than an all too critical critique of modernity. Instead of pointing out that Nietzsche formulated his critique from a radically aristocratic, elitist, and anti-democratic perspective, Habermas merely held on to Nietzsche's hyper-radical 'gesture'. In a fashion not dissimilar to the postmodernist Nietzscheans he so vigorously criticised as 'Young Conservatives', he sanitised Nietzsche's 'Master anarchism' (Eduard Bernstein) in such a way that the 'master' dropped out of the equation.[185]

By construing substantial equivalences between right-wing and leftist positions (from Heidegger to Peter Weiß), Habermas prepared the terrain indignantly to distance himself from the ideology-critical heritage of Horkheimer and Adorno. Although he accurately pointed out some of the dead-ends of the Frankfurt School's first generation, and, in some respects, differentiated its analytical tools, he took the ideology-critical sting out of critical theory, thereby

183. Habermas 1987b, pp. 121, 123, 131 et sqq.
184. Habermas 1987b, pp. 107, 119–20.
185. For a critique of Habermas's interpretation of Nietzsche, cf. Rehmann 2004a, pp. 70 et sq. For a careful analysis of Nietzsche and Marx in terms of their concepts of 'ideology-critique', cf. Losurdo 2004, Chapter 14.1.

all but reversing critical theory's main achievement, namely, to have, in all its one-sidedness and abstract negation, 'preserve[d] the integrity of Marx's libertarian impulse at a time when Stalinism was rampant'.[186]

To conclude this chapter, I will discuss a more 'modest' approach that does not claim to establish an all-encompassing theory of social totality, but rather contents itself with analysing *one* particular mode of socialisation, namely 'commodity-aesthetics'. This methodical restriction allows Wolfgang Fritz Haug's *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics*, among others, to avoid the unproductive alternatives between an all-encompassing denunciation of modern 'reason' and a resigned abandonment of ideology-critique altogether.

4.8. 'Commodity-aesthetics' as ideological promise of happiness

W.F. Haug's approach was similar to Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* in that it found its starting point in Marx's analysis of the commodity. It started from the problem that each commodity is confronted with an existential realisation-problem, namely that it can only realise its embodied value if it actually succeeds in being sold. According to Marx, a commodity has to perform its '*salto mortale*',[187] a death-defying leap, which carries the risk that it might break its neck. This urgent need has created a complex ensemble of mechanisms with enormous ideological efficacy. For an understanding of its basic functioning, Haug coined the concept of 'commodity-aesthetics'. Its critique was far from a denunciation of purported sinister intentions or 'fraudulent' excesses in advertising. Firstly, the concept of commodity-aesthetics is much larger than the concept of advertising – it applies already to the surface-appearance of the commodity, to its taste and odour, then to the packaging and showcasing of the commodity, to the sales-talk, and finally to the development of trademarks and advertising. Secondly, commodity-aesthetics is not to be understood as a particular and exceptional excess, but rather constitutes a basic and necessary anticipatory strategy of the commodity-seller, and therefore belongs to the 'normal' functioning of commodity-production.

Marx described the realisation-problem of the commodity in terms of a paradox: 'Hence commodities must be realized as values before they can be realized as use-values. On the other hand, they must stand the test as use-values before they can be realized as values'.[188] But how could commodities 'stand the test' [*sich bewähren*] as use-values before they were even purchased? There is obviously a missing element in Marx's formulation that could help resolve the

186. Jay 1973, p. 295.
187. Marx 1976, p. 200.
188. Marx 1976, p. 179.

paradox: what triggers the exchange or the purchase is not, as Marx seemed to suggest, the *real* use-value of the commodity, which obviously could only be tested after the purchase, but only the 'use-value' as *promised* by the appearance of the commodity and as expected and imagined by the potential buyer. What triggers the purchase is, therefore, the 'commodity's aesthetic promise of use-value',[189] or more precisely the process by which the 'objective' promise of use-value is actually taken over by the subject as a subjective promise of use-value.[190]

It was primarily in the transition to Fordist mass-production that commodity-aesthetics gained autonomy from the body of the commodity. An 'aesthetic abstraction' detaches the commodity's surface, sensuality and meaning in a way that its aesthetic 'second skin' becomes completely disembodied and 'drifts unencumbered like a multi-coloured spirit of the commodity into every household, preparing the way for the real distribution of the commodity'.[191] Corporations are compelled by competition to permanently manufacture aesthetic distinctions, which, if successful, are interiorised and reproduced in the consumers' systems of desires. The need for aesthetic distinctions is all the more urgent in periods when the market is swamped by similar commodities that can hardly be distinguished. The distinctions among competing brands can be achieved by different strategies ranging from a permanent innovation of images to an image-conservatism designed to establish the 'faithfulness' of the consumer to the specific brand.

'Commodity-aesthetics', therefore, works both as a functional necessity of capitalist commodity-production, and, most notably from the late nineteenth century onwards, as a powerful apparatus of socialisation that reproduces and enforces the fetishistic rule of commodities over their producers by inscribing it into the subjects' desires. A commodity which does not 'catch on' turns into a non-seller, and such a 'catching on' in turn depends to a large degree on whether its aesthetics can link up with the desiring structures of the addressees. To this end, corporations hire specialists who spy out potential costumers' desires and longings, identifying them and condensing them into *images*. Remember that the etymology of Destutt de Tracy's neologism 'ideology' refers to *eidos*, the Greek term for image (see above, Section 1.1.). The targeted subjects can be cajoled and courted on the basis that these images had been 'stolen from them'. They are, therefore, deeply rooted in their sensuality and seem to express and satisfy the unsatisfied parts of their being.[192]

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189. W.F. Haug 1986a, p. 17; cf. W.F. Haug 1971, pp. 16–17.
190. W.F. Haug 1987, p. 122; W.F. Haug 1980, p. 51.
191. W.F. Haug 1986a, p. 50; W.F. Haug 1971, p. 61.
192. W.F. Haug 1986a, pp. 96, 98; W.F. Haug 1971, pp. 126, 128.

A case in point is the molding of sensuality according to the idols of 'youthfulness'. For many commodity-types, the new aesthetic designs are being tested in youth subcultures, in particular in 'oppositional' cultures that make questions of appearance in lifestyle a point of critique of (or distinction from) the 'establishment'. The manifestations of cultural protest against traditional norms are observed, integrated into new 'youthful' advertisement-strategies and transformed into a new 'fashion'.[193] Naomi Klein described how in youth-cultures of the 1990s qualities like 'cool', 'alternative', 'young' and 'hip' provided the perfect identity for corporations, which were looking to become 'transcendent image-based brands'.[194] A new industry of 'cool hunters' promised to 'cool the companies from the outside in. . . . They would search out pockets of cutting-edge lifestyle, capture them on videotape and return to clients like Reebok, Absolut Vodka and Levi's'.[195] Such 'cooling' strategies however tend to go far beyond molding the subjectivities of youngsters. They coincide with the fact that, in capitalist labour-relations, masses of people are being rendered 'obsolete' and superfluous. Markers of 'youthfulness' therefore link up with everyday life-experiences, which tend to place a high value on 'youth' across the whole society. Its glamour is buttressed by the secret fears of being aged under capitalism, by anxieties pushing one's expectations to drift back to an idolised 'youth', which 'becomes a stereotype not only for commercial success but also for sexual attraction, and thus for what appears to be happiness and success'. The elderly must run after a fetishised youthfulness, lest they be seen as outdated and boring. They must join a youth-cult which demands bodies without fat, wrinkles, or deficiencies. The threat of ' "sexual ageing" and thus social isolation urges people to ' "cosmeticize" both themselves and the interiors of their homes'.[196]

Through 'rejuvenation', the aesthetic distinction intervenes into subjects, reinforces particular segments of desire that push towards consumerist satisfaction and thereby leads to a permanent molding of sensuality. Capital thereby becomes an 'anthropological' power. Sustained advertising campaigns against body-odour contributed, for example, to displacing our social levels of disgust over time, and the mixing of foodstuffs with artificial aromas has actually altered our sense of taste.[197] That the development of the senses, such as taste and smell, is predominantly organised and mediated by capital and its commodity-aesthetics

193. W.F. Haug 1980, p. 155 et sqq. 'For in a subculture "submarkets" open up. The companies observe these as trial-markets, and the commodities there sold as pilot-merchandise. Particularly effective designs are abstracted from this subcultural basis and reworked to become "youth-fashion." ' (W.F. Haug 1987, p. 126)

194. Klein 2000, p. 68.

195. Klein 2000, p. 72.

196. W.F. Haug 1986a, pp. 90–1; 1971, pp. 117–18.

197. W.F. Haug 1980, pp. 52–3, 83–4.

has enormous alienating consequences, which Haug considered to be in some aspects even more detrimental to the body than the traditional Christian aversion towards the flesh. The body adopts the compulsory traits of a brand-named product. Each commodity 'fills one gap while opening up another' and thereby creates a 'totalitarian tendency'.[198]

At this point, a short preliminary glance at Althusser's concept of ideology may illustrate the importance of commodity-aesthetics for a critical ideology-theory. If we follow his proposal and understand ideology (in general) as the capacity to transform individuals into 'subjects' who recognise themselves in an exemplary image [*eidos*] and thereby 'voluntarily' subjugate themselves to it (see Section 6.4.), we can see immediately that commodity-aesthetics plays an important role in such ideological subjection. It has developed manifold strategies to court consumer-subjects through estranged and idolised images and to cajole them into imitating them. The fact that Althusser himself was not interested in considering commodity-aesthetics' extremely efficacious mechanisms of subjection is in turn an indication of the limits of his ideology-theory. His neglect was partly due to his methodological decision to restrict ideologies to the workings of ideological *state*-apparatuses, and partly to his abnegation to Marx's theory of fetishism, which led him to borrow his concept of the *imaginary* from the ahistorical strand of Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis (see Sections 6.5. and 6.6.), instead of analysing the specific forms of imagination linked to the self-mystification of bourgeois society. Through these restrictions, Althusser overlooked how commodity-aesthetics in Fordism and high-tech capitalism had become the 'most powerful agency of "secondary socialisation"',[199] whose aesthetic 'technologies of the imaginary' created a powerful consumer-ideology and therefore played a decisive role in the downfall of state-socialism in Eastern Europe.[200]

The specific efficacy of commodity-aesthetics consists in the promise of happiness and satisfaction by the possession and consumption of merchandise. This promise could either be combined with ideological values, such as values of the 'tradition' of aesthetic distinction ('good taste'), of the religious or morality, or it could also be endowed with attributes of the irreligious, the immoral and the obscene. What alone counts is the attraction to enhance the purchase and consumption of the commodity in question. In this regard, commodity-aesthetics has a *parasitic* relationship to specific ideologies, in particular to those that take their own values seriously. It also has a parasitic relationship to anti-ideological

198. W.F. Haug 1986a, pp. 83, 91; 1971, pp. 107, 118.
199. W.F. Haug 1980, p. 113.
200. Cf. Haug's follow-up analysis of the development of commodity-aesthetics in high-tech capitalism, based on the 'digitalisation of appearance' (W.F. Haug 2009, pp. 216 et sqq., 222 et sqq.).

impulses that it usually corrupts by robbing them of their ideology-critical edge. Due to its blunt goal of consumptive happiness, traditional ideological apparatuses like churches and schools often consider commodity-aesthetics a subversive threat to their own ideological values.

However, the picture becomes more complicated by the tendency of the same ideological apparatuses (or, at least, their 'modernising' factions) to adopt the patterns and techniques of commodity-aesthetics for their own purposes. Marketing-strategies have transitioned from the economy to manifold ideological spheres. In politics, competition between different parties is primarily carried out through the aesthetic manufacturing of an attractive image of a politician. Brands and logos have long occupied a stable position in schools, universities and research-institutions.[201] Already in his early book, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (originally published in 1962), Habermas observed that 'the threshold between the circulation of a commodity and the exchange of communications among the members of a public was leveled'.[202] Since advertisement 'pervades the mass media's integration-oriented culture as a whole', the resulting consensus has nothing to do with a 'public sphere' in the sense of 'mutual enlightenment', but rather 'coincides with good will evoked by publicity'.[203] According to Eagleton, capitalism is bound to permanently oscillate between an expanding market-logic that subverts and deconstructs 'higher' ideological values (and, we might add, it does so not least through commodity-aesthetics) and a systematic demand for compensating ideologies that are mobilised against the 'decline in moral standards' caused (among other things) by the market.[204]

Even if commodity-aesthetics has a parasitic relationship to particular ideologies, it functions by itself in an ideology-like form. I would like to illustrate this ideological functioning with the help of Roland Barthes's concept of 'myth'. By 'myth' he meant a particular 'second-order semiological system' grafted upon the primary system of language.[205] As an example he described the cover of the revue, *Paris Match*, that showed a young black man in French uniform saluting, looking up with his eyes fixed on the French national flag. On the primary semiological level, there is a signifier and a signified building a sign together, namely a black soldier giving the French salute. This sign now becomes the signifier of the

201. According to Naomi Klein, the brands in the US succeeded in the 1990s 'over the course of only one decade, to all but eliminate the barrier between ads and education' (Klein 2000, p. 88).

202. Habermas 1991, p. 181.

203. Habermas 1991, pp. 181, 190. Unfortunately, Habermas interpreted this observation in the inadequate framework of a 'refeudalisation of the public sphere': inasmuch the public sphere in bourgeois society is shaped by 'public relations', it 'again takes on feudal features' (Habermas 1991, p. 195).

204. Eagleton 1996, p. 132.

205. Barthes 1972, p. 114.

superimposed mythical system and creates (together with the respective signified) the mythical sign, namely 'that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag'.[206]

It seems that such an oscillation between a primary and a secondary 'mythical' system is a basic characteristic of both the functioning of ideological systems that need to be linked to everyday life-experiences and to the way in which advertising aesthetically 'signifies' the satisfaction of desires. By associating the image of the commodity (first system) with a signifying image for happiness and satisfaction (secondary system), this mythical sign signifies 'something higher', and thereby constitutes a 'super-sign for what is desirable in an encompassing social sense'.[207] The subject is addressed – or 'interpellated' [*interpellé*], 'called upon', as Althusser would say – in a way that he or she strives to represent these imaginations, to reproduce these exemplary images. He or she thereby moves within the framework of an ideological identity: 'I am the image [*Bild*] of that exemplary image [*Vorbild*]'.[208] Identity-formation in the 'imaginary spaces of commodity-aesthetics' therefore becomes a crucial part of an ideology of everyday life, which could be described by the 'trinity-formula' of privatisation, consumerism and subalternity.[209]

206. Barthes 1972, p. 116.
207. W.F. Haug 1980, pp. 182–3.
208. W.F. Haug 1980, p. 184.
209. W.F. Haug 1993, p. 112.

Chapter Five

The Concept of Ideology in Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony

Gramsci's reflections on hegemony, common sense and ideology, written in his *Notebooks* during his incarceration in fascist prison, can be seen as an alternative to the main concepts of both 'Marxism-Leninism' and Critical Theory. In relation to the former, Gramsci's approach is characterised by a clear, though mostly implicit, anti-Stalinist perspective, in particular in opposition to the Comintern's so-called 'left-turn' politics from 1928 onwards, which replaced Lenin's *New Economic Policy* (NEP) with forced collectivisation of agriculture in the USSR. On the international level, this 'left-turn' abandoned the 'united-front' policy towards social-democratic parties. It was mainly Gramsci's fundamental opposition to economism and class-reductionism that enabled him to understand the ideological not in terms of mere ideas, but rather as a material ensemble of hegemonic apparatuses in civil society. In contrast to Horkheimer and Adorno's monolithic concept of a 'Tayloristic' culture-industry and its effects of reification, Gramsci was mainly interested in the internal contradictions of ideologies, civil society, and common sense. The difference is not least of practical political relevance: all oppositional politics from below needs to scrutinise the contradictions within a given ideological framework (and in particular within the ruling power-bloc) in order to identify points of intervention. Wherever social movements or leftist parties try to counter the hegemony of the bourgeoisie with an alternative project, they are

confronted with the task of overcoming the fatalistic implications of a totalising ideology-critique, as well as the paralysing tendencies of determinism.

5.1. A significant shift in translation

Gramsci, who was not acquainted with *The German Ideology* (published in 1932), and did not show much interest in Marx's critique of fetishism, started out his work on the *Notebooks* in prison by translating two texts, namely Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* and his *Preface* to the *Critique of Political Economy* of 1859.[1] The translation of this second text already displayed a particular interest in the specific reality of the ideological: where the original text spoke of the 'ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out',[2] Gramsci translated 'in which' [*worin*] as 'on which terrain [*nel cui terreno*]'.[3] The fact that he added the term 'terrain', which was not in the German text, suggests that he intended to avert the common misunderstanding of mere forms of consciousness from the outset. The 'ideological terrain', which from now on will continually accompany the treatment of ideologies, expressed an understanding that these 'are anything but illusions and appearance', but rather, an 'objective and effective reality', the terrain of 'superstructures'.[4]

Already at this point one can recognise an approach to ideology that was fundamentally different from the dualistic separation of the 'material' and the 'ideal' in Marxism-Leninism. Societal determination was no longer theorised in a way that an 'objective' reality was then reflected in human thought, but rather in terms of a philosophy of praxis, which started from what Marx's first thesis on Feuerbach entitled 'sensuous human activity, practice'.[5] According to Gramsci, the human being was to be conceived as a 'process of his/her actions' [*processo dei suoi atti*] and a 'series of active relations' [*una serie di rapporti attivi*], which are not mechanical, but conscious.[6] These expressions were in turn directly adopted from Gramsci's translation of Marx's sixth thesis on Feuerbach, according to which the human essence was in its actuality '*l'insieme dei rapporti sociali*', 'the ensemble of the social relations'.[7] Referencing Marx's 'concrete

1. Cf. Gramsci 1975, pp. 2355 et sqq.
2. Marx 1859, p. 263; '. . . ideologischen Formen, worin sich die Menschen dieses Konflikts bewusst werden und ihn ausfechten' (Marx 1859a, p. 9).
3. Gramsci 1975, p. 2359.
4. Gramsci 1996, pp. 156–8; Gramsci 1975, Q4, §15, pp. 436–7; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §41.XII, p. 1319; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §64, p. 1492; Gramsci 1975, Q13, §18, pp. 1595–6.
5. Marx 1845, p. 3.
6. Gramsci 1971, p. 352; Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §54, pp. 1344–5.
7. Gramsci 1975, p. 2357; Marx 1845, p. 3.

political and historical works', such as the *Eighteenth Brumaire*,[8] *The Civil War in France*,[9] *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*,[10] Gramsci argued that the 'assumption . . . that one can present and explain every political and ideological fluctuation as a direct expression of the structure must be combated on the theoretical level as a primitive infantilism'.[11] For example, the *Eighteenth Brumaire* showed that Marx gave the immediate economic factors only 'relative significance', whereas the concrete study of 'ideologies' played an important role.[12]

Gramsci's opposition to the treatment of ideology as an immediate expression of the economic, as illusion and mere appearance was pervasive. The use of the term itself, however, oscillated between different and partly opposed meanings, whose range was often overlooked in the secondary literature. Since the predominant interpretation tended to reduce the different meanings to a 'positive' or 'neutral' concept of ideology, I will bend the stick in the other direction and first focus on Gramsci's ideology-critical approach.

5.2. Gramsci's critical concept of ideology

As mentioned before, Antonio Labriola, from whom Gramsci adopted the term 'philosophy of praxis', was also one of the few Marxists who did not follow the overall transition to a 'neutral' concept of ideology. He instead insisted that 'critical communism' needed to be the 'negation' of any ideology, including a communist one, in particular when it transformed history into dogmatic schemes or designs (see above, Section 3.1.). Gramsci defended Labriola against Trotsky's criticism of 'dilletantism' and praised him as 'the only man who has attempted to build up the philosophy of praxis scientifically.' As Labriola has found no resonance in Marxist literature, it is necessary to bring him back into circulation and 'to make his way of posing the philosophical problem predominant'.[13]

It is, therefore, no coincidence that Gramsci's critical concept of ideology was particularly clear when he used the term in opposition to the concept of the philosophy of praxis, which 'freed itself (or is trying to free itself) from every one-sided and fanatical ideological element'.[14] Similarly to Labriola, Gramsci was well aware that Marxism was not exempt from slipping back into an 'ideology in the worst sense of the word, that is to say a dogmatic system of eternal

8. Marx 1852.
9. Marx 1871.
10. Engels 1896.
11. Gramsci 1971, p. 407; Gramsci 1975, Q7, §24, p. 871.
12. Gramsci 1975, Q13, §18, p. 1596.
13. Gramsci 1971, pp. 386–8; Gramsci 1975, Q3, §31, p. 309; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §70, pp. 1507–9; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q4, §3, 421–2.
14. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §62, p. 1487; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q16, §9.

and absolute truths'. Gramsci here referred to Bukharin's *Theory of Historical Materialism: A Popular Manual of Marxist Sociology* (1922),[15] an internationally well-known handbook, which Gramsci criticised for confusing Marxism with vulgar materialism and its 'metaphysics of "matter" '.[16] For this critique, he could, however, have taken other examples from the emerging formation of 'Marxism-Leninism' as well, including Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* (see above, Section 3.2.).

Gramsci observed such a relapse into ideology not only when it occurred in an elaborate philosophical form, but also on the level of popular common sense: it was the 'subaltern' character of certain social strata which necessarily created a 'direct ideological "aroma" emanating from the philosophy of praxis', namely in the form of 'mechanical determinism': 'I have been defeated for the moment, but the tide of history is working for me in the long term'.[17] Such a determinism had the historical merit of becoming 'a tremendous force of moral resistance, of cohesion and of patient and obstinate perseverance', but at the same time it functioned as a 'substitute for the Predestination or Providence of confessional religions', which meant that the 'activity of the will' was present 'only implicitly, and in a veiled and, as it were, shamefaced manner', lacking 'critical unity'. Such fatalism was the 'clothing worn by real and active will when in a weak position'. Determinism had intrinsic strength as a 'naive philosophy of the mass' and 'religion of the subaltern', but as soon as it was elevated by intellectuals to a thought out philosophy, it became a cause of passivity and 'idiotic self-sufficiency'.[18]

It was against the backdrop of these continuous tendencies of re-ideologisation that Gramsci emphasised the ideology-critical perspective of the philosophy of praxis: whereas other ideologies aim at 'reconciling opposing and contradictory interests', the philosophy of praxis is the 'very theory of these contradictions'. Instead of functioning as an 'instrument of government of the dominant groups in order to gain the consent of and exercise hegemony, it is the expression of these subaltern classes who want to educate themselves in the art of government and who have an interest in knowing all truths, even the unpleasant ones'. For this they needed to dismantle not only the deceptions of the upper class, but also 'and – even more – their own'.[19] Marxist philosophy could realise its ideology-critical potency by its capacity to think through its own historical conditions of existence: Not only does the philosophy of praxis 'claim to explain . . . the entire past, but also to explain . . . itself historically'. Gramsci called this a '*maximum*

15. Cf. Bukharin 1925.
16. Gramsci 1971, pp. 406–7; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §62, p. 1489.
17. Gramsci 1971, p. 336; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, p. 1388.
18. Gramsci 1971, pp. 336–7; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, pp. 1388–9.
19. Gramsci 1995, pp. 395–6; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §41 XII, pp. 1319–20.

'historicism', the total liberation from any abstract 'ideologism', the beginning of a new civilisation'.[20]

Gramsci's threefold description of a philosophy of praxis as an 'absolute "historicism" ', an 'absolute secularisation and earthliness of thought', and an 'absolute humanism of history',[21] became a contested issue of theoretical debate. For Althusser, the combination of humanism and historicism (or 'historicist humanism') did nothing more than introduce some history into the speculative notion of a 'human nature' – 'making men the contemporaries of the historical effects, whose subjects they are', and thus 'restor[ing] Marx to the stream of an ideology much older than himself'.[22] This criticism was part of Althusser's concept of 'theoretical antihumanism', which relied on a sharp division of Marx's works into a young humanist part and a mature scientific part, which, instead of theorising human-praxis relations, supposedly focused on objective structures that produced 'subjects' as their effects (I will discuss Althusser's theory of the subject in Section 6.4.). The validity of this dichotomy is, however, questionable. Marx's *Capital* analysed such 'objective' forms and structures as objectified and ossified praxis-relations (see above, Section 2.2.). Moreover Gramsci did not proceed, as Althusser assumed, from 'human nature' as the 'real subject of the history which transforms it',[23] but instead followed Marx's sixth thesis on Feuerbach that 'the human essence is no abstraction inherent to the single individual', but is 'in its reality . . . the ensemble of the social relations'.[24] It is obvious that such an 'essence' is no fixed *essence* any more. The philosophical term '*menschliches Wesen*' had been critically subverted and 'translated' into the contradictory relations of the particular society in question.[25]

As Peter Thomas has shown, Gramsci's concept of subject is not unitary. Each individual is like a 'living archeological site' with different historical layers and endowed with a 'common sense' as a contradictory arrangement of different and often conflicting tendencies. It is, indeed, an interesting philological finding that Gramsci rarely used the concept of 'subject' (traditionally connected to the classical humanistic terms of authorship, intentionality, and self-consciousness), but the much older category of the 'person', which, from its Latin meaning of

20. Gramsci 1975, Q16, §9, p. 1864; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q4, §24, p. 443.
21. Gramsci 1971, p. 465; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §27, p. 1437.
22. Althusser and Balibar 2009, pp. 154–6.
23. Althusser and Balibar 2009, p. 155.
24. Marx 1845, p. 3.
25. It is interesting to observe that Gramsci hesitated in translating 'human essence' [*das* '*menschliche Wesen*'] in the sixth thesis on Feuerbach. The literal translation '*essenza umana*' was inserted between the lines, but Gramsci decided to translate it as '*realtà umana*' (Gramsci 1975, p. 2357), which took out the essentialist connotation. In other passages, he also used the term '*natura umana*' (such as Gramsci 1975, Q4, §45, p. 471; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §62, p. 1488).

'mask' or 'character' in a dramatic play, is more focused on the imposition of an exterior network of social relations and therefore on the 'non-identity of the individual'.[26] Similarly, Gramsci's 'absolute historicism' was not derived from a Hegelian grand narrative (the alienated spirit returning to itself), but was rather inspired by Marx's historicising ideology-critique.[27] Characteristic for Gramsci's historicism is its 'self-reflexive capacity':[28] it must be able to apply its 'demystifying critique to itself, providing an account to the historicity of its own propositions and descriptions'.[29] Rather than relapsing into a humanist and historicist 'ideology', as Althusser assumed, Gramsci outlined the philosophical project of a fundamental and permanent critique of ideology.

Let us finally consider Althusser's assumption that Gramsci did not understand the 'epistemological break' between ideology and Marxist theory and dissolved science into ideology, thereby reducing 'theoretical practice' to 'historical practice' and robbing it of all specificity.[30] At first glance, Althusser's observation seems to be confirmed by Gramsci's refusal to confront ideology with the 'objective' truth-claim of science: any scientific attempt to identify what is 'objective', that is, independent from any particular standpoint of a certain group, is itself a 'particular world view, an ideology'.[31] By this, he meant that science was a 'historical category', a 'movement in continuous development': 'If the scientific truths were definitive, science as such, as research, as new experimentation would have ceased to exist and scientific activity would be reduced to the popularization of something already discovered'.[32] In addition, Gramsci questioned the concept of an 'objective reality' itself, which becomes a 'meaningless abstraction' without the activity of human beings: 'A chaos, therefore nothing, the void, if one can even speak like that, because in reality, if one imagines the human being as non-existing, one cannot imagine language and thinking'. A philosophy of praxis could not therefore 'separate the being [*essere*] from thinking, the human being from nature, the activity from matter, the subject from the object'.[33]

However, this did not mean that Gramsci collapsed science into ideology altogether. The same paragraph that portrayed science as 'a superstructure, an ideology' (that is, historically and socially determined) also set it apart by a 'specific process of abstraction inherent to its scientific methodology', which enabled it to 'separate the objective knowledge from the system of hypotheses so that one can

26. Thomas 2009a, pp. 394, 397–8.
27. Thomas 2009a, pp. 246 et sqq.
28. Thomas 2009a, p. 249.
29. Thomas 2009a, p. 253.
30. Althusser and Balibar 2009, pp. 148–9; cf. pp. 99, 168.
31. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §37, p. 1456.
32. Ibid.
33. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §37, p. 1457; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §17, p. 1416.

appropriate the one while rejecting the other'.[34] This allowed a specific social group (such as the working class) to appropriate the science of another (such as the bourgeoisie) 'without accepting its ideology'. In this regard, Gramsci did *not* identify science with ideology, but more carefully described it as an area and activity that was 'always coated by an ideology' [*rivestita da una ideologia*].[35]

In the context of his critique of Bukharin's *Popular Manual*, Gramsci reflected on some 'general criteria' of a 'scientific' approach, namely to be self-critically aware of the 'gaps that exist in knowledge acquired', instead of covering them up. Science required to recognise 'the possibility of error', not to combat the stupidest and most mediocre arguments of one's opponents, but to be 'fair to one's enemies' in the sense of making 'an effort to understand what they really meant to say and not maliciously stop short at the superficial immediate meaning of their expressions'.[36] Althusser's critique is one-sided in that it misses Gramsci's complex controversy with an 'objectvist' understanding of science, and in particular that it overlooks his insistence on science's obligation to critically scrutinise and overcome its own ideological entanglements.

For Gramsci, a striking example of an 'ideological' attitude was the tendency to comprehend a debate on historical-critical problems as a 'lawsuit, in which there is an accused and a prosecutor, who, on the basis of his official function, must prove that the accused is guilty and deserves to be taken out of circulation'.[37] In contrast to this, he demanded a scientific approach that took seriously the validity of an opponent's claim and built it into one's own construction, if only as a subordinate moment. To understand the opponent's rationale in a 'realistic way', and to argue 'from a 'critical' perspective', means to free oneself from the 'prison of ideologies (in the negative sense of blind ideological fanaticism)'.[38]

The political context of this paragraph makes it most likely that this criticism was directed against Stalinism and its transformation of theoretical debates into ideological show-trials. Belonging to *Notebook 10*, which was written between 1932 and 1935, it referred to the so-called 'left turn' of international communism from 1928 onwards. The policy of allying with the peasantry during the 'New Economic Policy' (NEP) was abandoned and supplanted by a forced collectivisation of agriculture, with disastrous consequences. When Gramsci wrote in late 1932 or 1933 about the necessity of a leading social group to find a 'certain balance of compromise' in which it exerted its hegemony by making 'sacrifices of an economic-corporative kind', he seemed to refer back to and reiterate

34. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §38, p. 1458.
35. Ibid.
36. Gramsci 1971, p. 439; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §15, pp. 1404–5.
37. Gramsci 1971, pp. 343–4; Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §24, p. 1263.
38. Ibid.

Lenin's NEP.[39] Bukharin, the main proponent of NEP politics after Lenin's death, who in 1926–1927 was in an alliance with Stalin against the 'United Opposition' around Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev, was in turn excluded in 1928 (and then executed in 1938). On the international level, the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International declared social democracy to be 'social fascism' and prohibited any anti-fascist alliance with social-democratic and 'bourgeois' parties, because this would impede the imminent proletarian revolution. The Communist Parties consequently started to purge from their ranks the supporters of united-front politics as a 'right-wing opposition', which led to heavy infighting in the leadership of the Communist Party of Italy.

It was in this context that Gramsci developed his opposition to the official line of the Comintern and the Communist Party of Italy. Under the conditions of Gramsci's imprisonment and Stalinism's grip on party-life, this opposition could however not show in the open. In June 1930 Palmiro Togliatti, the leader of the PCd'I, sent Gramsci's brother Gennaro to Gramsci's prison to inform him of the expulsions of Leonetti, Tresso and Ravazzoli and to ask Gramsci about what he thought of this. Although Gramsci unambiguously condemned the expulsions and rejected Comintern's new policy, Gennaro reported back to Togliatti that Gramsci was in complete agreement with him. He later justified his action to Gramsci's biographer Fiori: 'Had I told a different story, not even Nino [Gramsci] would have been saved from expulsion'.[40]

In his deliberations on the relationships between economic infrastructure and superstructures, Gramsci struggled on two fronts, namely against an 'economism', which overvalues mechanical causes, and an 'ideologism' which is fixated on great individual personalities and absolutises the 'voluntaristic and individual element'.[41] Both tendencies skip what is most important in politics, namely the task of organisation and education: while the 'realistic politician' knows how difficult it is to create a collective will, the ideologue is like a cuckoo that 'deposits his eggs in an already prepared nest and is incapable of building any nests by himself': 'he thinks that collective wills are naturalistic facts, which blossom and develop by causes that lie in the things themselves'.[42]

Under the headline 'The Concept of "Ideology"', Gramsci returned to the original meaning of the term as developed by the group of 'ideologists' around

39. Gramsci 1975, Q13, §18; cf. Thomas 2009a, pp. 234 et sqq.

40. Quoted in Fiori 1990, p. 253. See the reports of Athos Lisa and others on Gramsci's opposition and his attempt in prison to start an education-programme designed to form new, non-sectarian cadres in Fiori 1990, pp. 254–8 and in the Introduction of the *Selections* (Gramsci 1971, pp. xc–xcii.).

41. Gramsci 1971, p. 178; Gramsci 1975, Q13, §17, p. 1580; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q19, §5, pp. 1983–4.

42. Gramsci 1975, Q15, §35, p. 1789.

Destutt de Tracy, namely as a 'science of ideas' that breaks down ideas into their original elements, which could be nothing other than 'sensations'. In this sense, Sigmund Freud could be considered 'the last of the Ideologues', an observation that referred to the physiological foundations of the Freudian theory of drives, which were later criticised in Lacanian-influenced psychoanalysis as 'biologism' (see Section 6.6.). Whereas De Man, Croce, and Bukharin remained 'trapped in Ideology', the philosophy of praxis 'represents a distinct advance and historically is precisely in opposition to Ideology' so that the term implicitly contains a 'negative value judgment' in Marxist philosophy: instead of seeking the origins of ideas in physiology, ' "ideology" itself must be analyzed historically, in the terms of a philosophy of praxis, as a superstructure'.[43]

'Ideological' in a different sense was also Croce's teleological understanding of a 'preconceptualised history' [*storia a disegno*], which tended to 'enervate the antithesis' and thus reduce dialectics to a 'process of reformist "revolution-restoration" evolution, to break it up into a long series of moments'.[44] Gramsci took up the term 'revolution-restoration' from Quinet, and used it as an equivalent to his concept of 'passive revolution'. By this he described, for example, the formation of the national states of continental Europe that took place after 1815 both as a 'reaction' to the French Revolution and its 'national transcendence' [*reazione-superamento nazionale*].[45] These nation-states emerged 'by successive small waves of reform rather than by revolutionary explosions like the original French ones'. The old feudal classes were not expropriated but just 'demoted from their dominant position to a "governing" one', so that they became a ' "caste" with specific cultural and psychological characteristics, but no longer with predominant economic functions'.[46] In this context, the 'ideological' character of Croce's approach was illustrated by the fact that he started his book *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*[47] with the victory of the Restoration in 1815, without an 'organic treatment of the French Revolution', that is to say, in a fashion that 'excludes the moment of struggle . . . in which the conflicting forces are formed' and a new ethico-political system emerges. Croce's approach thus captured no more than 'the "passive" aspect of the great revolution which started in France in 1789'.[48]

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43. Gramsci 1971, pp. 375–6; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §63, pp. 1490–1.
44. Gramsci 1995, pp. 376–7; Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §41.XVI, pp. 1327–8.
45. Gramsci 1971, p. 117; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §150, p. 133; Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §61, p. 1361.
46. Gramsci 1971, p. 115; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §150, p. 133; Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §61, p. 1358.
47. Croce 1933.
48. Gramsci 1971, p. 119; Gramsci 1975, Q10.I., §9, p. 1227. Taking up Gramsci's critique of Croce, I have tried to show that Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic* (and with it, his entire comparative study of world-religions that has the capitalist ethic of ascetic Protestantism

Gramsci thus tied his critique of ideology to a critique of 'passive revolution', which became a key concept in his theory of hegemony. The concept can be defined as a modernisation from above, that takes place in periods characterised by a 'lack of popular initiative'. The ruling power-bloc plays the active role, which enables it to absorb some 'progressive', modernising aspects. Development proceeds as a 'reaction of the dominant classes to the sporadic, elementary and non-organic rebelliousness of the popular masses', as a 'restoration' that accepts a 'certain part of the demands expressed from below'.[49] This also expresses a relation of forces, in which the hegemony of the subaltern classes is blocked. As we can see in the critique of Croce's neutralised version of dialectics and of his 'liberal' historiography, Gramsci described as 'ideology' those interpretations and explanations that reproduce such a domestication of popular movements in an uncritical way by justifying it or rendering it invisible or 'natural'.

5.3. The critique of common sense as ideology-critique

The importance of common sense and its critique for Gramsci's overall theory can hardly be overestimated.[50] Against Bukharin's *Popular Manual*, which was exclusively fixated on a critique of systematic philosophies, Gramsci argued that for a philosophy of praxis, 'the starting point must always be that common sense, which is the spontaneous philosophy of the multitude'.[51]

Gramsci's methodological claim has far-reaching implications. As soon as one starts to develop them, one discovers a remarkable distance from contemporary 'Marxist-Leninist' philosophy, which based itself on a 'materialistic response to the fundamental question of philosophy' (namely, the alternative of 'idealism or materialism'). Again, this distance can be observed only in a slightly displaced manner, namely with the example of his critique of Bukharin's *Popular Manual*, who himself became a prominent victim of Stalinism. When Gramsci criticised Bukharin for splitting Marxism into a systematic philosophical doctrine on the one hand, which was still 'metaphysical or mechanical (vulgar) materialism', and on the other hand a historical materialism, which was actually reduced to 'sociology' and constructed according to the methods of natural science,[52] he targeted a fundamental tenet of Stalinism, namely the dichotomy between a 'dialectical materialism' canonised by Stalinism's 'laws' and functioning as a prime

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as its *telos*) took its starting point in the post-revolutionary and therefore individualistic and politically 'passive' manifestations of Protestantism, and in this sense practiced a similar method of 'passive revolution' as Croce (cf. Rehmann 2013a, 242 et sqq., 290 et sqq.).

49. Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §41.XIV, p. 1325.
50. Cf. Jehle 1994a and 1994b.
51. Gramsci 1971, p. 421; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §13, pp. 1397–8.
52. Gramsci 1971, pp. 434–5; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §22, pp. 1425–6.

philosophy, and a 'historical materialism', which was reduced to a mere 'application' of this philosophy (see above, Section 3.4.). Gramsci's argument was that this division missed the significance of the dialectic by downgrading it to 'subspecies of formal logic and elementary scholastics': 'Separated from the theory of history and politics, philosophy cannot be other than metaphysics, whereas the great conquest in the history of modern thought, represented by the philosophy of praxis, is precisely the concrete historicisation of philosophy'.[53] The separation of dialectical and historical materialism led to the philosophical construct of an 'objective reality of the external world', supposedly independent from human beings, which for Gramsci was nothing but a secularised religious myth according to which 'the universe was created by God before the creation of man, and therefore man found the world all ready-made, catalogued and defined once and for all'.[54] When Gramsci insisted on starting from people's common sense, he did so in the framework of an anti-objectivist praxis-philosophy that based itself on 'human activity (history-spirit) *in concreto*, which is connected to a certain organized (historicised) matter, to nature transformed by humans'.[55]

For Gramsci, common sense is defined by its contradictory and incoherent composition, of which people are usually unaware. It is a battlefield of contradicting tendencies. One of them is the discrepancy between words and deeds, 'intellectual choice' and 'real activity', a practical and a verbal consciousness: The 'active man-in-the-mass' has on the one hand a consciousness which is 'implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with all his fellow-workers in the practical transformation of the real world', and on the other hand one which he had 'inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed'. This contradictory state could ultimately preclude any action and decision and lead to 'moral and political passivity'.[56]

Gramsci introduced his explanation of common sense with the statement that 'we are all conformists of some conformism or other, always man-in-the mass'. The question is therefore, to *what* kind of mass-humanity one belongs. This might sound provocative for anyone who believes in the 'singularity' of each individual, but I would turn the argument around and argue (with Pierre Bourdieu) that the individualistic distinction from others (by taste, good education, originality, and so on) is itself a widespread social pattern in bourgeois society and as such a highly conformist attitude. Gramsci went on: 'When one's conception of the world is not critical and coherent but disjointed and episodic, one belongs simultaneously to a multiplicity of mass human groups. The personality

53. Gramsci 1971, p. 436; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §22, p. 1426.
54. Gramsci 1971, pp. 440–1; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §17, pp. 1411–12.
55. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §64, p. 1492.
56. Gramsci 1971, pp. 326, 333; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, pp. 1378–9, 1385.

is strangely composite [*composita in modo bizarro*]: it contains Stone Age elements and principles of a more advanced science, prejudices from all past phases of history . . . and intuitions of a future philosophy which will be that of a human race united the world over'.[57]

Gramsci's common sense could be compared to a quarry consisting of several layers of different geographical periods deposited upon each other. These 'layers' are the raw materials to be processed and transformed by ideological apparatuses and ideologues. Almost at the same time and with a congenial intuition, Ernst Bloch described in *Heritage of Our Times* (1932) such historic discrepancies as contradictions of 'non-contemporaneity' [*Ungleichzeitigkeit*] and demonstrated how the Nazis were able to mobilise them against the labour-movement and democracy in the Weimar Republic. By this he meant, for example, medieval thought-forms among peasants and the middle classes, the antagonism between town and country, young and old, and so on.[58] According to Bloch, the socialist labour-movement has to learn to deal with these contradictions as well. What is needed is a 'multi-layered dialectic' that is able 'to release those elements even of the non-contemporaneous contradiction which are capable of aversion and transformation, namely those hostile to capitalism, homeless in it, and to remount them for functioning in a different connection'.[59]

Gramsci's diagnosis and conclusions were similar, although he worked with different historical materials and used a different theoretical language. The ideological investment in (and occupation of) common sense was primarily analysed through the example of religion, which in Italy was determined by the extraordinary position of the Catholic Church: 'The principal elements of common sense are provided by religion, and consequently the relationship between common sense and religion is much more intimate than that between common sense and the philosophical systems of the intellectuals'.[60] He added an important caveat by saying that one must make some 'critical distinctions' within religion, because every religion, and in particular Catholicism, 'is in reality a multiplicity of distinct and often contradictory religions: there is one Catholicism for the peasants, one for the *petit-bourgeois* and town workers, one for women, and one for intellectuals which is itself variegated and disconnected'. In addition, contemporary Catholicism was also influenced by previous religious forms, for example by popular heretical movements that remained components of common sense,

57. Gramsci 1971, p. 324; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, p. 1376.
58. Bloch 1990, pp. 97 et sqq.
59. Bloch 1990, p. 113.
60. Gramsci 1971, p. 420; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §13, pp. 1396–7.

and by ' "realistic", materialistic elements', which were perfectly compatible with religious belief.[61]

Gramsci's distance from contemporary Marxism's usual treatment of religion was remarkable. Instead of launching a frontal attack on 'religion' as if it were a homogeneous 'essence', Gramsci portrayed it (as well as its relationship to common sense) as a structured field of multiple interactions that needed to be analysed concretely. This enabled him to differentiate and to specify his ideology-critique: what a philosophy of praxis and the Catholic Church have in common (and what, in turn, distinguishes them from idealist philosophies) is that they affirm the 'need for contact between intellectuals and simple', but they do so from antithetical positions. Whereas the Catholic Church tries to restrict scientific activities by imposing an iron discipline on intellectuals and tends to 'leave the "simple" in their primitive philosophy of common sense', a philosophy of praxis aims at elevating people's common sense to a higher cultural life and at constructing an 'intellectual-moral bloc which can make politically possible the intellectual progress of the mass and not only of small intellectual groups'.[62]

Gramsci's critique of the Catholic Church is not to be confused with a critique of 'religion' as such, which in certain historic periods and conditions 'has been and continues to be . . . a necessary form taken by the will of the popular masses', and a specific way of making sense of the world and real life. As Gramsci remarked with reference to Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic*,[63] religion (here, Calvinism) could also become the form of an expanding 'spirit of initiative'.[64] The philosophy of praxis was in Gramsci's understanding the 'crowning point' of an 'intellectual and moral reform' which comprised the 'nexus Protestant Reformation plus French Revolution'.[65] He took up the concept of an 'intellectual and moral reformation' from Ernest Renan, and utilised it in a way that cuts across 'religious' and 'secular' tendencies alike, encompassing both the 'vast national-popular movement' created by the Lutheran Reformation and Calvinism and the 'great popular reformation' of the Enlightenment and French Revolution. One of the urgent tasks of a philosophy of praxis was, therefore, to continue this popular 'nexus' of 'intellectual and moral reform' and to make it part of a new dialectic of popular culture and high culture.[66]

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61. Ibid.
62. Gramsci 1971, pp. 331–3, 397; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, pp. 1383–5.
63. Weber 1930.
64. Gramsci 1971, pp. 337–8; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, p. 1389.
65. Gramsci 1971, p. 395; Gramsci 1996, II, 143–4; Gramsci 1975, Q4, §3, p. 424; Gramsci 1975, Q16, §9, p. 1860.
66. Gramsci 1971, pp. 394–5; Gramsci 1975, Q4, §3, pp. 423–4; Gramsci 1975, Q16, §9, pp. 1859–60. Cf. Rehmann 1991, pp. 181–2. Gramsci's differentiated approach to religion is exemplified by Cornel West who uses his theory of hegemony as a mediator between black theology, Latin-American theology and Marxist theory (2002, pp. 118–27).

The construction of such a new 'intellectual-moral bloc' requires a critique of common sense that does not proceed from without, but rather needs to find its anchorage-points within: 'Philosophy of praxis must be a criticism of "common sense", basing itself initially, however, on common sense in order to demonstrate that "everyone" is a philosopher and that it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's individual life, but of renovating and making 'critical' an already existing activity'.[67]

Let us take a closer look at the apparently paradoxical notion of a critique *of* common sense *based on* common sense. What it rejects is the idea of 'introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's individual life'. What it advocates, instead, is that criticising common sense means 'making "critical"' an activity that 'already exists' in common sense, combined with the fundamentally democratic and anti-elitist approach that 'everyone' is a philosopher. It is not far-fetched to argue that Gramsci's approach clearly marks a departure from Kautsky and Lenin's statement that social-democratic consciousness could only be brought to workers only 'from without', which suggested an 'educationist' relationship between Marxist intellectuals and the labour-movement (see above Section 3.2). To 'critically elaborate' common sense and to make it a 'coherent unity' on the basis of a critical 'consciousness of what one really is'[68] is quite different from the idea of bringing an elaborate class-consciousness from without. It requires taking practical everyday life-experiences and insights seriously as a 'spontaneous philosophy' of the people which needs to be developed further. Gramsci's approach was much more akin to Ernst Bloch's dialectical proposal 'to release' elements from opposite ideologies and to 'remount them for functioning in a different connection'.[69] It also redefined the role of the 'organic intellectuals' of the working class: instead of proclaiming a pre-construed 'truth', organic intellectuals are confronted with the task of listening attentively to people's common sense, to identify both its wisdom and its contradictions and to develop adequate strategies toward greater coherence and collective agency.

The stronghold for such a critical intervention can be found in what Gramsci called 'good sense' [*buon senso*].[70] He defined good sense as common sense's 'healthy nucleus', which was characterised by a sense of 'experimentalism' and of 'direct observation of reality, though empirical and limited'. It described an attitude that did not let itself be distracted by 'fancy quibbles and pseudo-profound, pseudo-scientific metaphysical mumbo-jumbo'.[71] As an example, he quoted

67. Gramsci 1971, pp. 330–1; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, p. 1383.
68. Gramsci 1971, p. 324; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, p. 1376.
69. Bloch 1990, p. 113.
70. Cf. the HKWM dictionary-entry by Peter Jehle (Jehle 2001b).
71. Gramsci 1971, pp. 328, 348; Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §48, pp. 1334–5; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, p. 1380.

Manzoni's account of 'good sense' that, unlike 'common sense', did *not* blame the plague on people poisoning the wells, but was driven into hiding out of fear of people's common sense.[72] Another example referred to the 'good sense' of peasants, who after a while discovered the superficiality of 'brilliant' speeches that seemed fascinating at first.[73] Again, a similar distinction could be found in Ernst Bloch's philosophy: nothing is further from marxistically practised sobriety than 'that not all so sound, not all so human element in common sense, which . . . may be full of petit-bourgeois prejudices' and is 'typically undialectical'. But, in turn, nothing is closer to it than the 'bon sens, so different from common sense, . . . this hallmark, mark of fullness', which 'does not rule off or rule out any perspective except that which could lead to things which bring no blessing'.[74]

For Gramsci, 'good sense' was the starting and anchorage-point for a philosophy of praxis that worked on the coherence of common sense:

> Philosophy is criticism and the superseding of religion and 'common sense'. In this sense it coincides with 'good sense', which is opposed to 'common sense'.[75]

This passage shows an arrangement that consists of four dimensions: 1) a *senso comune*, incoherent and disjointed, 'strangely composite' of different historical layers and opposite social perspectives; 2) the weight of *ideologies* (here religion) upon and within *senso comune*, coopting and exploiting its incoherencies; 3) a 'good sense' [*buon senso*], characterised by 'experimentalism' and openness to new experiences and therefore in opposition to common sense; and finally 4) a philosophy of praxis that needs to 'coincide' with *buon senso*, taking it as a stronghold from which it works to render common sense more coherent.[76]

Gramsci's critique of common sense is, therefore, simultaneously an ideology-critique. However, this does not mean that it rejects the criticised object *en bloc*. Neither is religion as such treated as an 'inverted' and illusionary world-view, nor is common sense denounced as the passive effect of a 'culture-industry', as suggested in some passages in Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.[77] What we see here, rather, is an ideology-critique in the sense of a differentiated and intervening criticism that tries to push back the overwhelming impact of ideologies on common sense and to strengthen the inherent potentials of realistic experience and capacity to act.

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72. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §56, p. 1483.
73. Gramsci 1975, Q16, §21, p. 1889.
74. Bloch 1986, p. 1368.
75. Gramsci 1971, p. 326; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, p. 1378.
76. Cf. Gramsci 1975, Q15, §22, p. 1780.
77. Horkheimer and Adorno 1995.

5.4. Gramsci's concept of 'organic ideology'

Gramsci used the concept of ideology positively when a philosophy went beyond the limited bounds of the intellectuals and was diffused into the broad masses.[78] In this respect, the philosophy of praxis and the Catholic Church, despite their antithetical perspectives, shared the common strength of seeing the need for uniting an 'entire social bloc', whereas the 'immanentist' philosophies of Italian idealism (such as Croce) were not able to create an 'ideological unity between the bottom and the top, between the "simple" and the intellectuals'.[79] In Gramsci's positive usage, ideology signified the 'mass element of any philosophical conception', its conforming 'moral will' and 'norm of conduct'.[80] The terminology became somewhat blurred by the fact that Gramsci described the same connection between world-view and conforming 'norm of conduct' with Croce's wide notion of 'religion',[81] as well as with terms like 'faith', 'politics', 'culture', 'ethics' or 'intellectual and moral reform'.[82] Another problem was that he often put ideology in quotation marks as if he wanted to refer to a certain usage that may not necessarily have been his own. The fact that philosophy becomes a 'cultural movement' and brings forth a 'practical activity and a will', could also be described as 'ideology', he argued, namely under the condition that the term was ascribed with 'the higher meaning of a conception of the world which is implicitly manifested in art, in law, in economic activity in all individual and collective expressions of life'.[83] When philosophies become 'ideologies', they assume the 'fanatical granite compactness' of the 'beliefs of the people', which take on the same energy as 'material forces'.[84]

Gramsci himself referred to a polysemy of the concept of ideology, which was applied both to 'arbitrary elucubrations of particular individuals' as well as to the 'necessary superstructure of a particular structure'. Consequently, one must distinguish between 'historically organic ideologies, which . . . are necessary to a given structure, and ideologies that are arbitrary, rationalistic, or "willed" '. Whereas the latter only created individual 'movements' and polemics, the former ' "organise" human masses and create the terrain on which men move, acquire

78. Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §41.i, p. 1292.
79. Gramsci 1971, 328–9; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, pp. 1380–1.
80. Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §2, p. 1242; Q10.II, §31, p. 1269.
81. Ibid.
82. Cf. Gramsci 1975, Q10.I, §5, p. 1217; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, pp. 1378, 1380; Gramsci 1975, Q17, §38, p. 1941; Gramsci 1975, Q23, §1, pp. 1285–6.
83. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, p. 1380.
84. Gramsci 1971, p. 404; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §62, p. 1487. Gramsci referred here, of course, to the famous quote of the young Marx that theory becomes a 'material power as soon as it has gripped the masses' (Marx 1843, pp. 182–3).

consciousness of their position, struggle'.[85] It is important to identify carefully the frontlines Gramsci was dealing with. The 'negative' notion of ideology he was dismissing is of course not to be conflated with the critical concept developed by Marx and Engels, who considered the ideological as both 'necessary' for class-societies (potentially 'organic' in Gramsci's sense) *and* as part of an alienated socialisation from above (see above, Section 2.1. and 2.4.). To interpret this passage as a rebuttal of Marx's ideology-critical approach would, therefore, be erroneous and misleading. When Gramsci talked about 'arbitrary elucubrations', he implicitly tapped into Napoleon's negative concept of ideology as mere illusion or chimera. He particularly referred to contemporary Marxism, which in his view had degenerated into mechanical materialism and economism. As soon as the economy was understood as the only 'real' reality, everything else and in particular 'ideology' was reduced to mere appearance and expression or became a continuous '*marché de dupes*' (fool's bargain), a game of illusions and tricks.[86]

The predominant reception of a 'neutral' concept of ideology in the secondary literature was facilitated by the fact that Gramsci combined two different moves: at the same time as he developed his positive concept of 'necessary' and 'organic' ideologies, he also proceeded to conceptualise the ideological as a material arrangement of superstructural institutions and apparatuses. To characterise political ideologies as 'practical instruments of action' was not specific enough, he argued against Croce, because in a philosophy of praxis they were rather to be understood as the 'entire ensemble of superstructures'.[87] The 'ideological terrain', which Gramsci had already inserted in his translation of the *Preface* to the *Critique of Political Economy* of 1859, was defined as an 'objective and effective reality'.[88] Marx's statement in the *Preface* that men become conscious of their conflicts on the 'ideological terrain of the juridical, political, religious, artistic, philosophical forms', had to be developed 'with the entire ensemble of the philosophical doctrine of the meaning of the superstructures'.[89] This meant that 'ideological forms' were not to be reduced to mere forms of ideas and consciousness in which class-interests were expressed (as in Marxism-Leninism's dichotomy of 'material' and 'ideal'), but were rather to be understood as social forms anchored in the superstructures of class-societies.

The efficiency of these ideological forms can perhaps be better grasped if we associate them with what Marx described as 'socially valid, and therefore . . . objective thought-forms' (see above, Section 2.2.2.). Whereas Marx had

85. Gramsci 1971, pp. 376–7; Gramsci 2007, p. 171; Gramsci 1975, Q7, §19, pp. 868–9.
86. Gramsci 1971, p. 164; Gramsci 1975, Q13, §18, p. 1595.
87. Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §41.I, p. 1299.
88. Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §41.XII, p. 1319.
89. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §64, p. 1492.

analysed these 'objective thought-forms' as integral part of the capitalist commodity-economy, the ideological forms were to be investigated as part of different hegemonic apparatuses in civil society where they functioned as 'objective' arrangements engendering certain forms of thinking and feeling. This was what Gramsci seemed to point to when he argued that Marx's thesis, which asserted that people become conscious of fundamental conflicts on the 'terrain of ideologies', was not to be understood as 'psychological or moralistic in character, but organic and epistemological'.[90]

5.5. 'Ideology' as a category of transition toward a theory of hegemony

The heterogeneous usage of the concept of ideology, the fact that it was employed sometimes in a critical, and sometimes in a positive sense, sometimes for ideas, philosophies and common sense, and sometimes for the superstructures of class societies, is an indication that Gramsci was not mainly concerned with developing a systematic ideology-theory, or at least not under this name. This was further confirmed by the observation that he articulated the 'mass-element' of world-views not only through the concept of 'organic ideology' but also through 'religion', 'faith', 'politics', 'culture', 'ethics', 'moral will', and by the 'intellectual and moral reform' taken up from Renan (see above, Section 5.4.).

I infer from this heterogeneous usage that the concept of ideology represented for Gramsci a transition to the elaboration of the more specific categories of his theory of hegemony, by which he tried to close a problematic gap in contemporary Marxism (and also in Marx himself). Whereas many contemporary Marxists presumed that winning the support of the majority of the population could only succeed after the proletarian conquest of state-power – did not even the *German Ideology* assume that ruling ideas were in every epoch those of the ruling class?[91] – Gramsci explained already in his first notebook, in which he for the first time used the concept of hegemony: 'There can and there must be a "political hegemony" even before assuming government power, and in order to exercise political leadership or hegemony one must not count solely on the power and material force that is given by government'.[92] He thus placed at the centre of his theoretical project what the development of state-socialism had neglected with dys-hegemomic and ultimately self-defeating consequences.

90. Gramsci 1971, p. 164; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q13, §18, p. 1595 (translation corrected).
91. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 59.
92. Gramsci 1992, p. 137; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §44, p. 41.

Gramsci picked up the concept of hegemony from Lenin, where it was connected with the periods of broad democratic alliances against autocratic rule in 1905 and 1917, and therefore played a more productive role in his approach than the concept of ideology (see above Section 3.3.). However, we must bear in mind that Gramsci's theoretical elaboration of the concept was, above all, provoked by the devastating defeat of socialist movements after the First World-War. Every attempt at a revolution in Western Europe failed and was cruelly crushed. In Germany, the leaders of the new Communist Party, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, were assassinated in 1919 by right-wing militias (connected to the military apparatus and even to a department of the Social-Democratic government) and thrown into the river. The split between social-democratic and communist parties deepened, which not only weakened the struggle of the labour-movement, but also the legitimacy of the new democracies. In Italy, the Fascist movement came to power in 1922, only two years after the spectacular occupations of car-factories by the workers' council-movement in Turin (October 1920), in which Gramsci played a crucial role. Gramsci himself was arrested in 1926 and sentenced to twenty years in jail. 'His years in prison were literally an eleven-year death-agony. His teeth fell out, his digestive system collapsed . . ., his chronic insomnia became permanent . . .; he suffered from headaches so violent that he beat his head against the walls of his cell'.[93] In 1935, he was allowed to move to a clinic where he died, aged forty-six, from a brain-haemorrhage on 27 April 1937.

When Gramsci looked for a theoretical explanation of revolutionary defeat, his response went beyond the usual accusations of the 'betrayal' of reformist leaders – not because such betrayal did not happen, but because denouncing this betrayal did not explain the mass-support for reformist strategies of cooptation. Gramsci put forward an analysis that could be understood as a strategic self-critique: the revolutionaries had thought they could conquer state-power in a similar way as the Bolsheviks did in Russia, by armed insurgency, frontal attack on the power-centers, by a strategy that Gramsci described in military terms as a 'war of manoeuvre'. By applying this strategy, they underestimated the sturdy structure of 'civil society' in the centres of capitalism and therefore the inner stability of bourgeois hegemony:

> In the East the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks.[94]

93. Introduction to Gramsci 1971, p. xcii.
94. Gramsci 1971, 238; Gramsci 1975, Q7, §16, p. 866.

According to Peter Thomas, this passage was a 'rhetorically exaggerated formulation' and should not be understood as a simple juxtaposition of 'East' and 'West,' but rather as describing a complex dialectic between a hegemonic centre and its respective peripheral zones.[95] Despite military defeat (in Germany and Italy), economic crisis and horrendous poverty after the First World-War, the 'war of manouvre' failed in the most developed capitalist centres because of an elastic constellation that engendered sufficient consent to fend off a frontal attack on the system. We can see in the passage quoted above how Gramsci differentiated between the 'state' (in the narrow sense) as an 'outer ditch', and 'civil society' as its sturdy system of 'fortresses' and 'earthworks'. In the most developed capitalist countries, the system is maintained in two complementary ways: by the state in the narrow sense, that is, the predominantly repressive apparatuses like the army, the police, the judiciary-system and the prison-system, which control mainly through force and laws. The system that Gramsci called 'political society' [*società politica*] is usually highly centralised and hierarchical, and it enforces state-power primarily by coercion. It is complemented by a 'civil society' [*società civile*] that consists of institutions like schools, churches, and associations down to sport-clubs and private associations, which are usually not controlled by the government, but formally independent. It is in and by these institutions or associations that the dominant classes succeed in producing a sort of consent, usually without resorting to force, but not without contestation from other social forces. Gramsci called the institutions, by and in which this consent is constructed 'hegemonic apparatuses'.[96]

The decision to localise the ideological in 'superstructures' and to analyse it from this angle was, therefore, to be understood against the backdrop of Gramsci's wide concept of the 'integral state', with which he brought together the two decisive functions, usually separated, of 'political society' and 'civil society', 'hegemony protected by the armour of coercion'.[97] Against a widespread misunderstanding, it is important to note that Gramsci did not oppose 'civil society' to the state in general, but considered it a component of his wide concept of 'integral state', designating the modalities by which intellectuals connected to different classes and class-fractions compete about the active and passive consent of the population. To avoid the danger of a positivistic reification, W.F. Haug suggested that 'civil society' should not be considered a clear-cut empirical location, but rather as a functional *dimension* inherent in different social fields, where

95. Thomas 2009a, pp. 200, 203. Thomas infers from the early debates in the Comintern about the different constellations in the East and the West that the 'war of position' was for Gramsci not a specifically 'Western' issue, but had implications for the Russian revolutionary process as well (Thomas 2009a, p. 234).

96. Gramsci 1971, pp. 228–9, 246, 264, 365.

97. Gramsci 1971, p. 263; Gramsci 1975, Q6, §88, pp. 763–4; cf. §155, pp. 810–11.

the struggles about hegemony take place, with hegemonic apparatuses as their major anchorage-points.[98]

Gramsci proposed abandoning the failed strategy of a 'war of manoeuvre' and substituting it with a 'war of position'. This was what the late Lenin 'understood' when he proposed the politics of a 'united front', without however having the time 'to develop his formula'.[99] In considering Gramsci's proposal, one has to bear in mind that he used the military term as a metaphor: 'comparisons between military art and politics, if made, should always be taken *cum grano salis* [with a pinch of salt] – in other words, as stimuli to thought'.[100] 'In politics, the war of position is the concept of hegemony'.[101] In a parliamentary regime the 'normal' exercise of hegemony is characterised 'by a combination of force and consent which balance each other so that force does not overwhelm consent but rather appears to be backed by the consent of the majority.... Between consent and force stands corruption-fraud..., that is, the procurement of the... antagonists' debilitation and paralysis by buying... their leaders in order to create confusion and disorder among the antagonist ranks'.[102]

In this trench-system of civil society, in its institutions and associations, the socialist labour-movement has to take up its position as well and try to gain political acceptance and cultural hegemony. In a war of position, an 'unprecedented concentration of hegemony is required'. One of the particularities of politics is that 'the siege is reciprocal'.[103] However, in this confrontation it is important not to 'ape the methods of the struggle of the ruling classes', unless one falls into easy ambushes.[104]

The theory of hegemony increasingly became the framework into which the treatment of ideology was integrated. Gramsci wanted the 'value of ideologies' to be treated in a treatise of political science, which meant in the context of a 'war of position' and 'civil hegemony'.[105] He proposed to study the 'forms of cultural organization which keep the ideological world in movement within a given country, and to examine how they function in practice', by which he meant, for example, the ratio of cultural professionals and population, the school-system in its different levels, the churches, newspapers, magazines.[106] The study of ideology, for Gramsci, thus seemed to coincide with a comprehensive mapping of

98. W.F. Haug 2004, p. 20.
99. Gramsci 2007, pp. 168–9; Gramsci 1971, pp. 237–8; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q7, §16, p. 866.
100. Gramsci 1971, p. 231; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §133, p. 120.
101. Gramsci 2007, p. 267; Gramsci 1975, Q8, §52, p. 973.
102. Gramsci 1992, p. 156; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §48, p. 59.
103. Gramsci 1971, pp. 238-9; Gramsci 1975, Q6, §138, p. 802.
104. Gramsci 1992, p. 217; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §133, p. 121.
105. Gramsci 1975, Q13, §7, pp. 1566–7.
106. Gramsci 1971, pp. 341–2; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, p. 1394.

the hegemonic landscape. The topic of ideology also immediately transitioned to a concept of organic intellectuals of the popular masses: the 'ideological panorama' of an epoch can only be changed if one succeeds 'to produce élites of intellectuals of a new type which arise directly out of the masses, but remain in contact with them to become, as it were, the whalebone in the corset'.[107] When Gramsci described the achievement of 'organic ideologies' to connect structure and superstructure, he described this as an 'ideological bloc', which did however not escape the workings of dialectics: 'Once the dominant class has exhausted its function, the ideological bloc tends to disintegrate, and then "spontaneity" is followed by "constraint" in forms which are less and less disguised and indirect, ending up in downright police measures and coups d'état'.[108] The extreme case of such a disintegration was a state of 'domination' without 'leadership' [*dirigenza*], a 'dictatorship without hegemony'.[109]

The fact that Gramsci then successively replaced the term 'ideological bloc' with 'historical bloc'[110] confirms the interpretation of ideology as a category of transition to a theory of hegemony. In particular, it was Gramsci's notion of 'organic ideology' that was integrated into his concept of a 'historical bloc'. It was defined by its function of maintaining 'organic cohesion' between people and intellectuals, and in a wider sense between structure and superstructure, a cohesion that helps to bring about the 'passage from knowing to understanding and to feeling and vice versa from feeling to understanding and to knowing'.[111] When Gramsci conceived the human being as 'an historical bloc of purely individual and subjective elements and of mass and objective or material elements with which the individual is in an active relationship',[112] he also applied his theory of hegemony to the inner relations of forces in each individual. This could in turn be fruitfully taken up as a contribution to a theory of the subject. According to Stuart Hall, 'it should be clear . . . how much [Gramsci] anticipates – albeit in a language not yet reconstructed through loans from structuralism, discourse and linguistic theory, or psychoanalysis – many of the actual advances in theorizing these later developments have brought'.[113]

In terms of a dialectical understanding of socialist politics in the most developed capitalist countries, it was primarily Rosa Luxemburg who, with her concept of 'revolutionary *Realpolitik*,'[114] tried to capture and to mediate

107. Gramsci 1971, p. 340; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §12, p. 1392.
108. Gramsci 1992, p. 138; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §44, p. 42.
109. Gramsci 1975, Q15, §59, p. 1823.
110. For example, Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §41.I, pp. 1300–1.
111. Gramsci 1971, p. 418; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §67, p. 1505. On the different usages of 'historical bloc', see Bollinger 2001, pp. 440 et sqq.
112. Gramsci 1971, p. 360; Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §48, p. 1338.
113. Hall 1988, p. 56.
114. Luxemburg 1970–5, Vol. 1/1, p. 373.

the contradictions between reform and revolution, extra-parliamentary action and participation in parliament, and long-term and immediate goals. The similarities between her approach and Gramsci's theory of hegemony have been widely overlooked because of a contemporary barrier of reception: Gramsci, who had only read two of Luxemburg's texts, namely *Stagnation and Progress in Marxism*[115] and *The Mass Strike, the Political Party, and the Trade Unions*,[116] described the latter as 'one of the most significant documents theorising the war of manoeuvre' and criticized it for 'disregard[ing] the "voluntary" and organisational elements' in the Russian Revolution of 1905.[117] However, the validity of this criticism, although accurate with regards to certain economistic tendencies in Luxemburg's text, was limited. As Frigga Haug has shown, Gramsci was not acquainted with Luxemburg's actual political interventions, which corresponded to a large degree with his own concept of politics under the conditions of a 'war of position'.[118] What Gramsci thematised as struggles about hegemony was also 'the core of Luxemburg's revolutionary *Realpolitik*', which, however, she did not consistently conceptualise in terms of a theory of the integral state.[119] Studying both in interaction has an 'important effect of synergy, which strengthens political hope and agency'.[120] Haug therefore reproposed what Peter Weiss described as the 'Luxemburg-Gramsci line' in his preparatory notes to his *Aesthetics of Resistance*[121] – a concept, which was picked up primarily in Germany after the collapse of Eastern state-socialism in 1989 and became a strategically important topic in the refoundation of the German Left.[122]

5.6. The critique of corporatism and Fordism

Gramsci's theory of hegemony also helped criticise the ideological nature of an arrangement that in bourgeois society is usually considered a 'normal' and

115. Luxemburg 1903.
116. Luxemburg 1906.
117. Gramsci 1971, p. 233; Gramsci 1975, Q13, §24, pp. 1613–14.
118. F. Haug 2007, p. 82.
119. F. Haug 2007, pp. 84, 171 et sqq.
120. F. Haug 2007, p. 180.
121. Weiss 1981, p. 608.
122. A conference-book with the title *Die Linie Luxemburg-Gramsci, Zur Aktualität und Historizität marxistischen Denkens*, was published by the Argument-Verlag in 1989 (cf. Argument-Redaktion 1989). The concept also became a reference-point for the publication of Gramsci's *Quaderni* in German (cf. Gramsci 1991–2002, Vol. 1, p. 9). Intellectuals around the Party for Democratic Socialism (PDS) and its successor *Die Linke* reformulated Luxemburg's concept of 'revolutionary *Realpolitik*' as 'radical *Realpolitik*' and made it a focus of theoretical and strategic debates; see, for examble, the contributions of Michael Brie, Frigga Haug, Thomas Seibert, Frieder Otto Wolf and others in Brie (ed.) 2009.

'healthy' representation of working-class interests, namely 'corporatism', i.e. a social group's limitation to its immediate economic goals, cut off from any wider perspective of social emancipation and transformation. Such a corporatist limitation allows the ruling bloc to pit the different fractions of the working and middle classes against each other and to foreclose broad class-alliances that could lead to the construction of a new hegemony.

Gramsci analysed the corporatist obstacles to such an alliance in the *Southern Question* (1926), where he criticised the 'bourgeois ideology among the northern proletariat', the racialised narrow-mindedness of industrial workers in Northern Italy who despised the poor migrants from rural Southern Italy. According to widespread perception, nourished by a popular literature against 'brigands' in the South and the Islands (sometimes also supported by the Socialist Party), the South was 'the ball and chain that prevents a more rapid progress in the civil development of Italy'.[123] The Southern enemy-image helped stabilise a Northern bloc of industrial capitalists and workers,[124] both of whom perceived themselves to be in a united front against a lazy and parasitic 'other'. Gramsci analysed the fabric of Southern society as a 'large agrarian bloc made up of three social strata: the large peasant mass, amorphous and disintegrated; the intellectuals of the petty and medium rural bourgeoisie; and the large landowners and the great intellectuals'.[125] This had two interrelated ideological consequences, namely, for one, that the Southern peasant was 'bound to the large landowner through the mediation of the intellectual'; and secondly, that the entire agrarian bloc 'functions wholly as intermediary and overseer for Northern capitalism and the large banks'.[126] Gramsci's political perspective was to disintegrate both blocs and to replace them with a 'political alliance between the Northern workers and the Southern peasants'.[127] For this to happen, the Northern proletariat 'has to shed every residue of corporatism, every syndicalist prejudice or incrustation', which meant not only overcoming the traditional splits among different trades, but also prejudices against the Southern peasants and 'some semi-proletarian categories within the cities'.[128]

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123. Gramsci 2004, p. 20.
124. Gramsci 2004, p. 29.
125. Gramsci 2004, p. 35.
126. Gramsci 2004, pp. 38–9. Gramsci's reflections on the Northern 'capitalist/worker industrial bloc' in the *Southern Question* (Gramsci 2004, p. 29) were then taken up in the *Prison Notebooks*, when he dealt with a Northern ' "urban" (capitalists-workers) bloc which would provide a base for the protectionist state to strengthen Northern industry, for which the South is a semi-colonial market' (Gramsci 1992, p. 131; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §43, p. 36).
127. Gramsci 2004, p. 17; cf. pp. 46 et sqq.
128. Gramsci 2004, p. 27.

Gramsci's critique of corporatism was embedded in a complex analysis of 'relations of force' stretching over different levels: 1) The development of the material forces of production provides the basis for the emergence of social classes and constitutes 'a refractory reality' that helps check the 'degree of realism and practicability of various ideologies': 'nobody can alter the number of firms or their employees, the number of cities or the given urban population';[129] 2) The 'political' relations of force refer to the degree of self-awareness and organisation of the different social classes and contain different sub-levels, namely: a) unity on an 'economic-corporate' level, restricted to a professional group, b) solidarity of interests among a social class, but only in the economic field and 'within the existing fundamental structures', and c) intellectual and moral unity that 'transcend[s] the corporate limits of the purely economic class' and is able to articulate the common interests of other subordinate groups on an ethico-political and "universal" plane';[130] 3) The military relations of force are not to be restricted in a 'technical military sense', but are also 'politico-military', i.e. they comprise questions of hegemony like the inner cohesion of an army, the 'social disintegration' of the oppressed people, and so on.[131]

The major difficulty of the labour-movement, and therefore the main task of socialist politics, is to organise the passage from the corporatist to an 'ethico-political' level (that is, from 2a/b to 2c), which coincides with the 'superior elaboration of the structure into superstructure in the minds of men'. Gramsci described this transition as a moment of 'catharsis' (purification), a turning point that liberates the movement from its egoistical-corporatist restrictions and thereby helps the subaltern class-transition from 'objective to subjective' (meaning here from being a passive 'object' of social conditions to becoming an active historical subject), and from 'necessity to freedom'. 'To establish the "cathartic" moment becomes therefore . . . the starting-point for all the philosophy of praxis'.[132]

By submitting to the ideological separations between the 'economic' and the 'political', corporatism blocks the cathartic moment that is necessary for the development of a hegemony from below and becomes a constitutive part of a 'passive revolution'. As an example from Italian history, Gramsci distinguished mainly two periods, namely a '"molecular" transformism' from 1860 to 1900, which incorporated individual political figures of the opposition into the ruling political class and, from 1900 onwards, a more collective kind of transformism,

129. Gramsci 1971, pp. 180–1; Gramsci 1975, Q13, §17, p. 1560.
130. Gramsci 1971, pp. 181–2; Gramsci 1975, Q13, §17, pp. 1560 et sqq.
131. Gramsci 1971, p. 183; Gramsci 1975, Q13, §17, p. 1562.
132. Gramsci 1971, pp. 366–7; Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §6, p. 1244. On Gramsci's concept of 'catharsis', cf. Thomas 2009b.

which co-opted 'whole groups' of the antagonistic camp.[133] Gramsci was mostly interested in what he described as 'syndicalist phenomenon' or 'Caesarism without Caesar', a modern type of co-optation based on compromise-solutions on the level of party-political coalitions and trade-unions.[134]

It was particularly the new capitalist formation of 'Fordism' that created a historical bloc between the most advanced fractions of industrial capital and the higher echelons of the working class. Taking up Gramsci's analysis of Fordism, Buci-Glucksmann and Therborn described this as 'corporatism-reformism: the Fordist-Keynesian state accepts and organizes the representation of the dominated classes within the state, but solely on the base of corporatism'.[135] In this context, the social-democratic parties became increasingly corporatist, technocratic, and clientelistic.[136] The integrated working class 'defends . . . its interests within the existing political framework, without transcending their own economic and class base through a process of hegemonic unification of the different revolutionary subjects'.[137] One of the most influential intellectuals to anticipate and to advocate such a Fordist bloc between the industrial bourgeoisie and the labour-aristocracy was Max Weber, who also accepted the concept of 'class-struggle' on a strictly corporatist level as an 'integrating component of today's social order'.[138]

Gramsci analysed the Fordist formation in the USA as a new type of society, in which the economic structure determined the superstructures more directly than in Europe: 'Hegemony here is born in the factory and requires for its exercise only a minute quantity of professional political and ideological intermediaries'. This new kind of hegemony produced a 'forced elaboration of a new type of man', which brought about a 'psycho-physical adaptation to the new industrial structure'.[139] In this context, Gramsci looked at the role of 'puritan ideologies' mobilised by corporate and state-campaigns against sexual promiscuity and excessive drinking habits:

> the new industrialism wants monogamy: it wants the man as worker not to squander his nervous energies in the disorderly and stimulating pursuit of occasional sexual satisfaction. The employee who goes to work after a night of 'excess' is no good for his work. The exaltation of passion cannot be reconciled

133. Gramsci 2007, p. 257; Gramsci 1975, Q8, §36, p. 962.
134. Gramsci 1971, pp. 220–1; Gramsci 1975, Q13, §27, pp. 1619–20; Gramsci 1975, Q15, §59, p. 1824.
135. Buci-Glucksmann and Therborn 1982, pp. 121 et sqq.
136. Buci-Glucksmann and Therborn 1982, p. 124.
137. Buci-Glucksmann and Therborn 1982, pp. 131, 135.
138. Weber 1984–, Vol. I/4, p. 329; cf. Rehmann 2013a, 102–26.
139. Gramsci 1971, pp. 285–6; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §61, p. 72; Gramsci 1975, Q22, §2, p. 2146.

> with the timed movements of productive motions connected with the most perfected automatism.[140]

It is important to notice that Gramsci did not oppose 'force' and 'ideology', but rather looked at their interconnection: psycho-physical adaptation had come about 'through unprecedented brutality, hurling the weak and the unruly into the hell of the underclasses', and the contribution of Puritanism consisted in giving 'an external form of persuasion and consent to the intrinsic brutal use of force'.[141]

5.7. A new type of ideology-critique on the basis of a theory of hegemony

How could it be explained that Gramsci used the term ideology in a contradictory way and that he successively transferred it, in particular its 'positive' meaning, to the concept of hegemony? According to the *Projekt Ideologietheorie*, Gramsci was predominantly interested in the productive and organising functions of ideologies, and therefore neglected the structures of alienated socialisation from above, which Marx and Engels had proposed as the core of the ideological.[142] From a different perspective, Stuart Hall summarised Gramsci's concept of ideology as 'the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy'.[143] Similarly, Peter Thomas concluded that in Gramsci's 'most significant formulation of this concept…, ideology is conceived in a neutral sense, as the form in which humans know a world wracked by the "real" contradictions of class struggle'.[144] One could object right away that forms of thought 'wracked' by class-contradictions were not a good example for a 'neutral' concept of ideology, since Marx and Engels saw class-antagonisms (and their ideological representations) as a transitory 'necessity' that is to be overcome in a classless society.[145] Thomas complemented his interpretation with the assumption that the difference between the philosophy of praxis and ideology, as well as between philosophy and common sense, was only a quantitative one, a difference of degree and gradation, a continuum rather than a rupture.[146]

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140. Gramsci 1971, pp. 304–5; Gramsci 1975, Q4, §52, p. 491.
141. Gramsci 1971, p. 299; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §158, p. 138.
142. *PIT* 1979, p. 80.
143. Hall 1996, p. 26.
144. Thomas 2009a, p. 281.
145. For a critical evaluation of Peter Thomas's reading of Gramsci's concept of ideology, cf. Rehmann 2013c.
146. Thomas 2009a, pp. 277–8, 291–2, 298, 377.

He based his interpretation mainly on two arguments: 1) on Gramsci's criticism that Croce could not uphold his sharp distinction between philosophy and ideology, because what he claimed to be his philosophy of freedom was, in fact, a bourgeois ideology,[147] and 2) on Gramsci's recurring argument that ideologies were not mere illusions, but coincided with the 'entire ensemble of superstructures'.[148] Starting with the latter argument, one could again argue that this was in no way proof of a 'neutral' concept of ideology, since Gramsci was clearly talking about the superstructures of class-societies, their 'integral state', which was supposed to 'wither away' in a classless society, or, as Gramsci reformulated it, to be 'subsumed into regulated society'.[149] And when Gramsci criticised Croce's distinction between philosophy and ideology, he was dealing primarily with Croce's philosophy and in a wider sense with traditional philosophies in general, whose ideological functions were obvious.

The prioritisation of a 'neutral' concept of ideology is one-sided in that it tends to suppress Gramsci's critical usage of the concept in connection with his definition of a philosophy of praxis, his critique of common sense, 'passive revolution', and corporatism. A reductionist reading thus flattens out Gramsci's specificity with regard to the 'official Marxism' of the Second International and the ' Marxism-Leninism' of the Third International, which both carried out a 'neutralisation' of the concept of ideology that all but eliminated the ideology-critical approach of Marx and Engels. As we have seen, Labriola's 'negation of ideology' was one of the rare exceptions. What is, therefore, remarkable and astonishing is that Gramsci did *not* altogether abandon Marx and Engels's critical concept of ideology. If one resists the temptation rashly to homogenise Gramsci's contradictory usages of ideology and instead maintains the dialectical tension between them,[150] one can see that they constitute a particular theoretical strength: they indicate that Gramsci tried to do both: on the one hand, to understand, long before Althusser, the materiality of the ideological – its existence in apparatuses and practices, its efficacy – and, on the other hand, to maintain that a philosophy of praxis has to operate as a permanent ideology-critique, not least in relation to one's own ideologies. Every Marxist political project has to deal with the contradiction that 1) it must intervene into the ideological forms of existing class-society and is thereby necessarily co-determined by them, forced to become an 'ideology' of its own, and therefore 2) needs a strong ideology-critical philosophy

147. Cf. Gramsci 1975, Q10.I, §10 (Gramsci 1995, pp. 351–4) and Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §31i (Gramsci 1995, pp. 383–9).

148. Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §41.I.

149. Cf. Gramsci 1975, Q6, §65, §88; Gramsci 1975, Q7, §33; Gramsci 1971, p. 263.

150. Cf. Joseph Buttigieg's warnings of a reading that tried to homogenise or schematise Gramsci's deliberately fragmented and open-ended method (Buttigieg 1992, pp. 26, 63–4; Buttigieg 2006, pp. 38, 41).

of praxis that helps to think through what it is doing and to historicise its own ideological involvements. To obscure or to neglect a theoretical understanding of this contradiction would only lead to a *passive* dialectics that produces endless splits and defeats.

Instead of pitting Gramsci's theory of hegemony against the tradition of ideology-critique, it would be more productive to consider both as complementary approaches that can be 'translated' into each other, without however coinciding entirely. As proposed in the introduction, a critical ideology-theory has the task of explaining the 'voluntary' submission to the alienated structures of domination and to the corresponding restricted conditions of practice. This corresponds to what Gramsci (in the context of Hegel's doctrine of associations) described as 'government by consent of the governed', conducted by a state that 'demands' and 'educates' consent in the interest of a ruling class.[151] The production of this 'government by consent of the governed' and the ensuing stability of the dominant class-system is what both the concepts of ideology and hegemony try to capture. But whereas the concept of ideology highlights the aspect of a voluntary subjection to the 'integral state' of bourgeois society, the concept of hegemony points to the aspect of consensual efficiency. Another difference is that Gramsci replaced the Marxian language of 'alienation' with one of 'subalternity'. It would be interesting to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these respective theoretical discourses.

From the perspective of the emancipation of the subaltern classes however, these two concepts drift apart, because the weight of the ruling power-bloc's ideologies is opposed to the development of a coherent hegemony from below, and usually prevents it. This is in fact the ideology-critical perspective through which Gramsci analysed the impact of the Catholic religion upon common sense and the phenomena of corporatism and passive revolution (see above, Section 5.4. and 5.6.). 'Ideological' are those mechanisms that keep the popular classes in submission to 'foreign hegemonies',[152] a submission which impedes the passage from subalternity to an ethico-political level. Such a constellation of 'subaltern-passive hegemony' defines the condition of possibility of a passive revolution, which also means that each oppositional force that tries to overcome its subalternity must also break with 'foreign hegemony'.[153]

It becomes clear that Gramsci's theory of hegemony does not only not impede the formulation of a critical ideology-theory, but actually enables it to overcome its traditional fixation on 'false consciousness', and to free it from totalising tendencies. According to Gramsci, 'the critique of ideologies, in the philosophy of

151. Gramsci 1996, p. 153; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §47, p. 56.
152. Gramsci 2007, p. 30; Gramsci 1975, Q6, §38, p. 713.
153. Cf. W.F. Haug 2004, pp. 14, 21.

praxis, involves the ensemble of the superstructures'.[154] It attempts to intervene in this structure effectively, in order to induce a 'process of differentiation and change in the relative weight': 'What was previously secondary and subordinate, or even incidental, now . . . becomes the nucleus of a new ideological and theoretical complex. The old collective will dissolves into its contradictory elements'.[155] Stuart Hall developed these thoughts in terms of a discourse-theory as the 'disarticulation' and 'rearticulation' of ideological formations.[156] Ideology-critique becomes, then, effective as an 'interruptive discourse' that does not primarily unmask the ideological bloc of the opponent from outside, but intervenes in it so as to decompose it, reshape it and build effective elements into a new order.[157]

Confronted with idealistic philosophies, Gramsci proposed and practiced a method that I think is best characterised as one of dialectical 'translation': historical materialism, in its theory of superstructures, 'poses in realistic and historicist language what traditional philosophy expressed in a speculative form'.[158] He demonstrated this method with the example of 'subjectivist' philosophies: instead of 'poking fun' at a 'subjectivist conception' from the point of view of an 'objectivist' common-sense materialism, one has to show first its merits, namely its usefulness as a criticism of both the 'philosophy of transcendence' and the 'naive metaphysics of common sense and of philosophical materialism', and second to demonstrate that it can 'find its truth and its historicist interpretation', not in its speculative form, but only 'in the concept of superstructures'.[159] What is called 'spirit' in idealistic philosophies is not rejected, but translated into another discourse: it is 'not a point of departure but a point of arrival, it is the *ensemble* of the superstructures moving towards concrete and objectively universal unification'.[160]

However, there remains an important gap in Gramsci's combination of ideology-critique and theory of hegemony, namely, the absence of Marx's critique of fetishism. Gramsci's lack of interest is astonishing, since the 'objective thought-forms' emerging from commodity-, wage-, and capital-fetishism constitute a dimension of common sense that is relevant with regards to understanding its contradictory composition. In order to overcome this one-sidedness, it would be worthwhile to combine Gramsci's approach with Henri Lefebvre's approach in a *Critique of Everyday Life*, which started from Marx's analysis of alienation and fetishism.[161]

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154. Gramsci 1995, p. 396; Gramsci 1975, Q10.II, §41.XII, p. 1320.
155. Gramsci 1971, p. 195; Gramsci 1975, Q8, §195, p. 1058.
156. Cf. Hall 1988, p. 56.
157. Cf. Laclau 1981; evaluated in *PIT* 2007, p. 57; *PIT* 1980, p. 37.
158. Gramsci 1971, p. 442; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §17, p. 1413 (translation corrected).
159. Gramsci 1971, pp. 441, 444; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §17, pp. 1412, 1415.
160. Gramsci 1971, pp. 445–6; Gramsci 1975, Q11, §17, p. 1416.
161. Cf. Lefebvre 2008.

Chapter Six

Louis Althusser: Ideological State-Apparatuses and Subjection

6.1. The relationship to Gramsci

It is obvious that Althusser based his ideology-theory on essential aspects of Gramsci's analyses of civil society and hegemonic apparatuses.[1] As he himself indicated, his distinction between repressive and ideological state-apparatuses is formed according to the model of Gramsci's differentiation of 'political society' and 'civil society', coercion and hegemony.[2] The ideological state-apparatuses reproduce the relations of production under the 'shield' [*bouclier*] of the repressive state-apparatuses.[3] Even the treatment of the ideological apparatuses as *state*-apparatuses would not be comprehensible without Gramsci's enlargement of a traditional narrow concept of the state to the wider concept of the 'integral state'. Both Gramsci's 'integral state' and Althusser's ideological state-apparatuses include those institutions and associations that are usually considered to be 'private', and Althusser consequently refers to Gramsci when he declares that the distinction between 'public' and 'private' institutions is secondary because what matters is 'how they function'.[4] The 'plurality' of the ideological

1. I quote Althusser's foundational text 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus' as Althusser 2001b. The pages refer to the English and the French edition, the former according to the Monthly Review Press edition of *Lenin and Philosophy* (Althusser 2001) the latter according to *Sur la reproduction* (Althusser 1995).
2. Althusser 2001, p. 95, n. 7; Althusser 1995, p. 281, n. 133.
3. Althusser 2001, p. 101; Althusser 1995, p. 287.
4. Althusser 2001, p. 97; Althusser 1995, pp. 283–4.

state-apparatuses emphasised by Althusser presupposes Gramsci's pluralisation of the 'superstructures' (in opposition to the usual usage at the time, of a singular 'superstructure'). Althusser's insight that the resistance of the subalterns can gain a hearing in the ideological state-apparatuses by exploiting the contradictions that exist there, or by conquering 'combat positions',[5] in turn implicitly takes up elements from Gramsci's considerations on the 'war of position'.

Nevertheless, 'it quickly became clear that Althusser had come not to praise Gramsci, but to bury him'.[6] This can already be seen by the gesture indicating that Gramsci's reflections were no more than unsystematic 'intuitions' and fragmentary notes,[7] which implies that it is only now, thanks to Althussser himself, that they have been elevated to the systematic level of an ideology-theory. We have already seen how Althusser criticised Gramsci for a 'historicism' that would eliminate the distinction between ideology and science (see above, Section 5.2.). In addition he asserts that Gramsci deals with the question of the material base of ideologies in a 'mechanistic' and 'economistic' way.[8] The criticism culminates in the assessment that Gramsci's humanist and historicist materialism ' "relapses" into the ideological concept of history' and even reproduces the 'basic theoretical principles of the Second International's economistic and mechanistic interpretation'.[9] Given Gramsci's continuous struggle against the economism and mechanicism of both the Second and the Third International, this reproach seems far-fetched at best. Althusser's attitude to Gramsci is characterised by a peculiar combination of deference to his achievements and polemical attempts to pigeonhole him in a way that makes it easy to take his distance from him. This strategy corresponds to Althusser's general tendency to assimilate the most disparate figures in Western Marxism, for example Lukács, Korsch and Gramsci, Sartre and Goldmann, Della Volpe and Coletti, within 'a single problematic of historicism, derived from Hegel, reworked by Feuerbach and the young Marx', a typology, which, according to Elliot, 'borders on travesty': 'Althusser's panorama of the contemporary scene bears a strong resemblance to the "expressive totality" he reprehended in the leading representatives of West-European Marxism'.[10]

Leaving aside Althusser's rhetoric exaggeration, which was co-determined at least in part by the mechanisms of distinction imposed by the 'market of ideas', I think the main theoretical differences could be identified as follows: whereas Gramsci was primarily interested in the possibilities of how subaltern classes develop the hegemonic capacities to occupy the tiers of the superstructures,

5. Althusser 2001, p. 99; Althusser 1995, p. 284.
6. Thomas 2009a, p. 2.
7. Althusser 2001, p. 95, n. 7; Althusser 1995, p. 281, n. 133 (translation modified).
8. Althusser 1994, p. 499.
9. Althusser and Balibar 2009, p. 153.
10. Elliot 2009, p. 30.

Althusser's main attention was directed to the ways in which the ideological state-apparatuses achieve ideological subjection under the bourgeois state. He justified this with the primacy of the bourgeois class-struggle in relation to that of the workers' movement and with the asymmetrical relations of force implied by this.[11] Hegemony unfolds despite its spontaneous origins into forms that are integrated and transformed into ideological forms. New in comparison to Gramsci are particularly the concepts of the subject and the voluntary subjection [*assujettissement*] that Althusser developed on the basis of the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan. Psychoanalytical categories enabled him to understand the ideological as an unconscious, 'lived' relationship and to illustrate the dynamic and active character of ideological subjugation. At the same time, the integration of Lacanian psychoanalysis exposed Althusserian ideology-theory to the tension between the historically specific concept of ideological state-apparatuses and an unhistorically conceived 'ideology in general' – a contradiction which led to divided receptions and finally contributed to the disintegration of the Althusser school.

6.2. The theory of ideological state-apparatuses (ISA)

The methodological point of departure for the ideological state-apparatus essay, first published in 1970, was the question concerning the 'reproduction of the conditions of production,'[12] that is, on the one hand, of the commodity of labour-power, on the other, of the relations of production. Althusser was interested in particular in the point at which both of these overlap: the reproduction of labour-power proceeds not only by means of wages, but also by means of 'qualification', which is predominantly produced outside the apparatus of production in the school-system and involves rules of 'good behaviour', 'rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour' and the 'rules of the order established by class domination' – in short, subjection to the ruling ideology.[13]

On this basis, Althusser comprehended the system of public and private schools as the dominant ideological state-apparatus. An 'empirical list' of ideological state-apparatuses included, beyond this, the religious ideological state-apparatus (churches, sects, different kinds of religious associations), the familial ideological state-apparatus, the juridical ideological state-apparatus, which belongs both to the repressive state-apparatus and the system of ideological state-apparatuses, the political ideological state-apparatus, which comprehends all political parties, regardless of their political orientation, including the oppositional socialist

11. Althusser 1995, p. 266.
12. Althusser 2001, p. 85; Althusser 1995, p. 269.
13. Althusser 2001, pp. 88–9; Althusser 1995, pp. 273–4.

or communist parties, the 'syndicalist ideological state-apparatus', which comprises both employers' associations and trade-unions, the communications ideological state-apparatus (television, radio, press) and the cultural ideological state-apparatus.[14] Althusser derived the dominant position of the educational apparatus from the fact that, unlike any other apparatus, it can draw upon an obligatory attendance of the 'totality of the children in the capitalist social formation, eight hours a day for five or six days out of seven'.[15] Whereas the political ideological state-apparatus occupies the 'front of the stage' [*le devant de la scène*], the school-system plays the dominant role in the concert of ISAs, 'although hardly anyone lends an ear to its music: it is so silent!'[16] It has taken over the leading role from the Church, which had been the previously dominant ideological state-apparatus during the Middle Ages and had taken on almost all educational and cultural functions and exerted its hegemony in conjunction with the family ideological state-apparatus: 'The School-Family couple has replaced the Church-Family couple'.[17] Althusser is aware that repressive state-apparatuses produce ideological effects as well, and that repression also plays a role in the ideological state-apparatuses, but he sees the specificity of the ideological state-apparatus in the fact that they 'predominantly' aim at the voluntary subjection of those addressed. Unlike with the repressive state-apparatuses, unification does not occur by way of centralisation and command but rather through the 'ruling ideology', which ensures a '(sometimes teeth-gritting) "harmony" between the repressive State apparatus and the Ideological State apparatuses and between the different Ideological State apparatuses'.[18]

In *For Marx*, Althusser criticised a Hegelian totality in which all the differences 'are negated as soon as they are affirmed' or 'only posed to be negated', because they are no more than ' "moments" of the simple internal principle of the totality'.[19] Against this 'simple unit of a totality', he posited a Marxian 'structured unity of a complex whole',[20] in which the superstructure is 'not the pure phenomenon of the structure, it is also its condition of existence', because 'production without society, that is, without social relations, exists nowhere'.[21] Correspondingly, he opposed determinism with the concept of 'overdetermination', in which each contradiction is no more univocal, but 'reflects in itself,

14. Althusser 2001, p. 96; Althusser 1995, p. 282.
15. Althusser 2001, p. 105; Althusser 1995, p. 291.
16. Althusser 2001, pp. 103–4; Althusser 1995, pp. 289–90.
17. Althusser 2001, p. 104; Althusser 1995, p. 290.
18. Althusser 2001, p. 101; Althusser 1995, p. 287.
19. Althusser 1979, pp. 203–4.
20. Althusser 1979, pp. 202–3.
21. Althusser 1979, p. 205.

in its very essence, its relation to the unevenness of the complex whole': it is 'complexly-structurally-unevenly determined', in short, it is 'overdetermined'.[22] In *Reading Capital*, he complemented his critique of a Hegelian 'expressive totality' with a critique of the 'model of a *continuous and homogeneous time*' as an ideological pre-judgment and argued that each social level (for example, the productive forces, relations of production, political superstructure, philosophy, aesthetic production, scientific formations) had its own relatively autonomous temporality.[23] It is noteworthy that this concept of a complex and non-linear time has remarkable similarities with Ernst Bloch's reflections on contradictions of 'non-contemporaneity', even though the two theorists appear to be separated by different 'national' cultures of theoretical reception.

These elements are taken up in Althusser's ideology-theory as well. Firstly, the ideological state-apparatuses vary with regards to the different 'regional' specificities; secondly, they vary according to the power-relations reigning in them, and finally, in regards to the effectiveness of their ideological integration. Instead of being a mere 'expression' of a foundational economy, the ideologies have their own 'material existence' and therefore temporality. Individuals are moved by a system that goes from a particular apparatus to material rituals, to everyday practices of the subject and produces ideological effects there: 'Ideology existing in a material ideological apparatus, prescribing material practices governed by a material ritual, which practices exist in the material actions of a subject acting in all consciousness according to his belief'.[24] Althusser illustrates this determination from the outside to the inside by a formula from Pascal that 'scandalously' inverts the usual perception: 'Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe'.[25] Whereas the believers imagine their faith to be coming from the 'inside', they are actually moved by a complex ideological system. If ideology was originally comprehended by Destutt de Tracy as the analysis of 'ideas', these are now re-interpreted as integral elements of ideological practices and rituals: 'Disappeared: the term *ideas*. Survive: the terms *subject, consciousness, belief* [croyance], *actions*. Appear: the terms *practices, rituals, ideological apparatus*'.[26]

22. Althusser 1979, p. 209.
23. Althusser and Balibar 2009, pp. 17, 110 et sqq.
24. Althusser 2001, p. 115; Althusser 1995, p. 302.
25. Althusser 2001, p. 114; Althusser 1995, p. 301. This is, however, not a literal quote from Pascal, who in his *Pensées*, Aph. 469 [90] actually did not simply deduce the inner belief from outer practices, but rather reflected on how to connect the exterior of rituals to the interior of beliefs and attitudes (Pascal 1954, p. 1219).
26. Althusser 2001, p. 115; Althusser 1995, pp. 301–2.

6.3. A debate on 'functionalism'

Althusser's 'point of view of reproduction'[27] has often been criticised as 'functionalism', that is, as a view from above that disregards the actual contradictions and struggles in social institutions in favour of considering their function for the stabilisation of domination, so that their significance seems to lie outside themselves.[28] The *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT*) made the criticism that all institutions of socialisation, from the family to the labour-union, were designated as ideological *state*-apparatuses, which, contrary to the more flexible notion of *ideological powers*, came down to a 'static, functionalist fixation of phenomena that are constantly shifting on account of the relations of forces determining them'.[29] For Pierre Bourdieu, the notion of apparatus designates no more than a 'pathological state of fields' and thus functions itself as a 'Trojan horse of "pessimistic functionalism"', because it neglects that those dominating 'in a given field . . . must always contend with the resistance, the claims, the contention . . . of the dominated.'[30] Another of Bourdieu's criticisms is that Althusser's ideological state-apparatus concept misses the '*economy* of the institutions of production of cultural goods', their character as 'cultural industry' as well as the material and symbolic interests of the actors.[31]

Nicos Poulantzas argued in *Fascism and Dictatorship* that Althusser conceptualised the predominance of the 'ruling ideology' in an abstract and formal way that did not concretely take the class-struggle into account and neglected the contradictions between repressive state-apparatuses and ideological state-apparatuses, as well as those among and within the ideological state-apparatuses.[32] Instead of just putting the ruling ideology to work, ideological apparatuses often become a 'favoured "refuge"' or 'spoils' of non-hegemonic classes and fractions that may even be in bitter struggle with the hegemonic class: the ideological state-apparatuses are therefore often 'the *last ramparts* of a waning class power, as the Church was for the landed nobility, or the *first strongholds* of a new class power, as publishing and the schools were for the bourgeoisie before the French Revolution'.[33] In *Political Power and Social Classes*, he criticised the distinction between repressive state-apparatuses and ideological state-apparatuses as too schematic: it assigns functions in an essentialist way, and thus overlooks that a number of apparatuses 'can slide from one sphere to the other and assume

27. Althusser 2001, p. 85; Althusser 1995, p. 270.
28. For example, Hirst 1979, pp. 68 et sqq.; Hall 1983, p. 63; Hall 1988, p. 48; Eagleton 1991, pp. 147–8.
29. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 63; *PIT* 1979, p. 182.
30. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 102.
31. Bourdieu 1991, p. 260, n. 24.
32. Poulantzas 1974, pp. 306–7.
33. Poulantzas 1974, p. 308.

new functions either as additions to, or in exchange for, old ones' – for example, when the military becomes a central ideological-organisational apparatus and functions chiefly as the political party of the bourgeoisie.[34] The contraposition of repression and ideology furthermore misses the state's 'peculiar role in the constitution of the relations of production'. It thus becomes unable to adequately understand the basis of the dominant power in the dominated classes: the state is effective in the economic itself and produces the 'material substratum' of the consensus that binds the subalterns to domination;[35] additionally, it places at the disposal of the rulers techniques and strategies of knowledge, which are certainly built into ideologies, but at the same time go beyond them;[36] finally, the state also installs the material framework of 'temporal and spatial matrices', which, according to the social divisions of labour, become the mould for social atomisation and fractionalisation.[37] At this point, Poulantzas's argument seems to be inspired by the nexus between class-formation, the state and the division of labour as developed in the *German Ideology*: 'It is therefore not so much a question of the ideology constituted, systematized and formulated by the organic intellectuals of the bourgeoisie – which is always a second-order ideology – as it is of the primary and "spontaneous" forms of ideology that are secreted by the social division of labour and directly embodied in the state apparatuses and the practices of power'.[38]

Since Althusser himself was aware that his definitions were still schematic and abstract,[39] one could argue that several of these objections could still be integrated into an Althusserian framework. However, one fundamental question is how Althusser can explain resistance and struggles if he considers human beings as completely entangled in, and formed by, ideological practices, rituals, and, as we will see, 'interpellations' constituting individuals as subjects. In response to the critique of his 'functionalism', Althusser emphasised the primacy of the 'class-struggle' and referred to the emergence of the ideology of both the dominant and the dominated classes outside of the ideological state-apparatuses.[40] In his 'Remarks on the Ideological State Apparatuses' (1976), he introduced the concept of a 'proletarian ideology', which is formed under the primacy of (and against) the bourgeois class-struggle and calls upon individuals as militant subjects – a peculiar ideology, because it functions as a 'fusion' of the labour-movement and

34. Poulantzas 1978, p. 33.
35. Poulantzas 1978, pp. 30–1.
36. Poulantzas 1978, p. 32.
37. Poulantzas 1978, p. 64.
38. Poulantzas 1978, p. 66.
39. Althusser 2001, pp. 124–5; Althusser 1995, pp. 312–13.
40. Althusser 2001, p. 126; Althusser 1995, pp. 313–14.

Marxist theory, thus also containing 'objective knowledge' [*connaissances objectives*] and 'enlightened experiences' [*expériences éclairées*].[41]

This raises, on the one hand, the problem that different contradictions and struggles tend to be subsumed reductively to 'class-struggle', which prevented the Althusser school from opening itself up to a theoretical elaboration of gender- and race-relations, and their respective connections to class- and state-domination. On the other hand, the professed primacy of class-struggle remains rhetorical insofar as there is no attempt to actually develop concepts to investigate the ideological forms of class-struggles *outside* of the ideological state-apparatuses. In Althusser's favour, one could certainly argue that his emphasis on the dimension of socialisation from above, which is at times neglected by Gramsci, gives a realistic account of the relations of force within the ideological. This aspect is, however, absolutised, so that the interface between ideology and the contradictorily composed forms of everyday consciousness falls out of view.

We have already seen that the Marxian critique of fetishism was for Althusser a relic of a pre-Marxist 'humanist' concept of alienation and 'fictitious theory' (see above, Section 2.2.5.). He thus missed a major issue of a critical ideology-theory, namely the way that elaborate ideologies are supported by the 'objective thought-forms' of capitalist market-societies (together with the respective notions of freedom and justice), how they link up with them, process them further, transform and systematise them. This is caused by the methodological decision not to distinguish between non-ideological or proto-ideological materials and their ideological organisation. Althusser cannot, therefore, make his own reference to the emergence of ideologies outside of the ideological state-apparatuses theoretically productive. It looks as if the ideological state-apparatuses produce their rituals and practices 'out of nothing, that is, without recognisable connection with the practices and thought forms of those who are subjected'.[42]

Poulantzas's criticism (and similarly the *PIT*'s) that Althusser missed the sliding of ideological functions from one sphere to the other,[43] leads back to a significant difference between Gramsci and Althusser: whereas Gramsci considered ideology and hegemony as *dimensions* of socialisation that traverse the different instances of the 'integral state', Althusser immediately identified the ideological with specific state-apparatuses. Stuart Hall criticised Althusser for collapsing 'the state/civil society distinction', which leads to a neglect of 'private' institutions. This, for example, played a significant role in the ideological preparation of neoliberalism.[44] One could object that the contraposition of civil society and the 'state'

41. Althusser 1995, pp. 263 et sqq.
42. *PIT* 1979, p. 115.
43. Poulantzas 1978, p. 33.
44. Hall 1988, pp. 46 et sqq.

does not correspond to Gramsci's theory of hegemony (see above, Section 5.5.) and that the concept of the 'state' underlying Althusser's ideological state-apparatuses is to be understood in the broad sense of Gramsci's 'integral state', which obviously comprises 'private' institutions and associations as well. On the other hand one could validate Hall's argument in the sense that Althusser's focus on 'big' institutional frameworks like the school-system (and its connection to the family) was determined by a specifically statist, 'French' variety of Fordism, and therefore overlooked the growing influence of the 'private' think-tanks of neoliberalism, such as, for example, the transnational Mont-Pèlerin-society. It is no coincidence that major critical studies of neoliberal ideology usually prefer the more elastic and flexible approach of Gramsci to Althusser's concept of ideological state-apparatus.[45]

6.4. 'Ideology in general' and subject-constitution

Althusser not only turned against an understanding of ideology as 'false consciousness', which he believed to be the position of the *German Ideology* (see my criticism of this in Section 2.1.4.), but he also denied that it belonged to the domain of 'consciousness' at all: ideology has 'very little to do with "consciousness" ', he argued in *For Marx*, but is 'fundamentally *unconscious*', its representations are 'usually images and occasionally concepts, but it is above all as *structures* that they impose on the vast majority of men, not via their "consciousness" '.[46] Considering ideology as a lived and believed reality also entails a critique of its reduction to manipulation: ideology 'can never be purely *instrumental*', because even those who would use it 'purely . . . as a tool, find that they have been caught by it, implicated by it, just when they are using it and believe themselves to be the absolute masters of it'. Rousseau missed this aspect when he explained the maintenance of inequality by the fact that the rich 'deliberately' persuaded the poor to live their slavery as their freedom: 'In reality, the bourgeoisie has to believe in its own myth before it can convince others'.[47]

This understanding of ideology as a lived reality was developed further in the ideological state-apparatus essay in subject-theoretical terms: ideology in general was defined through the function of constituting concrete individuals as subjects. The term 'subject' has a double meaning in French as well as English. On the one hand, it means a subjected being that submits to a higher authority, and on the other hand it seemingly means the opposite of this, namely a self-confident and responsible author of one's actions, endowed with a free subjectivity, an

45. Cf., for example, Walpen 2004, Bieling 2007, and Brand 2007.
46. Althusser 1979, p. 233.
47. Althusser 1979, p. 234.

intentional centre of initiatives. According to Althusser, ideology works precisely through the combination of these two opposite meanings. One submits to higher authorities, high moral values, and while doing this, one considers oneself as a free, independent person, guided merely by one's inner impulses, convictions and beliefs: the subject is subjected in the form of autonomy.[48]

Althusser explained this successful combination of subjection and freedom by his model of 'interpellation'. If one looks up the French verb *interpeller* in a dictionary, one finds something like 'to call out to, to shout out to, to hail', and with regards to the police, it can also mean 'to take in someone for questioning'. Althusser gave the example of hailing someone on the street: 'Hey, you there!' Usually, the hailed individuals will turn around and respond, 'Yes, it is me', because they recognise that it was really them to whom the hail was addressed.[49] This is, for Althusser, the basic mechanism of ideology: by turning around and responding, the individuals *recognise themselves* as the ones being called upon; they recognise and accept their identity in the interpellation, and this is what transforms them into subjects.

This might sound a bit trivial. But that is exactly what Althusser is trying to demonstrate. It is in this very obviousness, this self-evident reaction of all of us (namely, that when called upon we turn around) that the ideological subjection has its foundation. Althusser illustrates this with an example from the Hebrew Bible, the famous story of the thornbush (Exodus 3). We find at the top of the arrangement a capitalised Subject, which is God, an unchallenged authority – 'I am who I am' (V. 14) – and at the bottom, we find Moses, who is frightened by the burning bush, which is not consumed. The process starts with the Subject's interpellation: 'God called to him out of the bush: "Moses, Moses!" And Moses turns around and responds 'Here am I' (V. 4), or in Althusser's account: 'It's really I! I am Moses thy servant, speak and I shall listen!'[50] Recognising that it is really him who is called by his name, Moses also 'recognizes that he is a subject, a subject of God, a subject subjected to God, a *subject through the Subject and subjected to the Subject*. The proof: he obeys him, and makes his people obey God's Commandments'.[51]

Moses's only activity seems to be that he turns around, recognises himself in the call and shows this in his response. Later, we will discuss some of the implications of these restrictions (see Section 6.7.). Let us note in passing that the ideological dynamic of the story of the thornbush in Exodus 3 is more complicated

48. Althusser 2001, p. 116; Althusser 1995, pp. 302–3; Althusser 2001, pp. 122–3; Althusser 1995, pp. 310–11.
49. Althusser 2001, p. 118; Althusser 1995, p. 305.
50. Althusser 2001, p. 121; Althusser 1995, p. 309.
51. Ibid.

than Althusser seems to notice: the actual historical superpower defining the power-field is not God but the Egyptian state equipped with huge apparatuses, both repressive and ideological. If one considers the real power-relations, it becomes clear that God's interpellation of Moses is in itself part of a resistance-movement. God calls upon Moses to be the leader of a slave-revolt which leads the people out of Egypt. One could certainly argue that the big Subject God calls upon the little subject Moses 'from above', but it also calls him to *resist* another big Subject, namely, the ruling powers. The real history of ideological struggles is replete with such contradictory combinations, which points to the need to 'dialecticise' Althusser's model of interpellation.

Translating the biblical example onto our times, we could imagine a speech by 'our president', who addresses us in the name of the 'Almighty' or of our American values, or of the great American path toward freedom. He might call us to help the nation and the government in its 'war on terrorism', which is framed as a struggle between 'good' and 'evil'. The effectiveness of such a speech is not merely determined by the extent to which the president is telling the 'truth' or is lying (it might usually be something in between: working with half-truths, quoting some 'facts', silencing others, dissimulating the socio-economic background, and such like), but by the way he is 'interpellating' us as ideological subjects: in the name of what ideological instances and values is he speaking to us? The point is to analyse why and under what conditions we 'turn around' and 'recognise' ourselves when we are called upon as members of a great nation, as brave and law-abiding citizens, as fighters for freedom and justice (maybe even in the name of Martin Luther King and the civil-rights movement). Why or under what conditions do we respond: 'Yes, he is speaking to "us", that's what we really are' (or want to be)?

Althusser described this ideological mechanism as a 'mirror structure': the subjects are subjected in a way that they can contemplate in the big Subject their 'own image (present and future)' so that they are given 'the *guarantee* that this really concerns them'.[52] The subjects can also recognise one another as being little subjects subjected to the same Subject. By this 'mutual recognition of subjects' (via the Subject), they might also recognise who does not belong, for example the 'barbarian' foreigner or the 'black underclass' that is cut off from the American mainstream—all those who do not share the 'American values' and the belief in America's greatness. The ideological interpellations thus provide 'the absolute guarantee that everything really is so, and that on condition that the subjects recognize what they are and behave accordingly, everything will be all right'. Subjects constituted in this way now function ' "all by themselves',

52. Althusser 2001, p. 122; Althusser 1995, p. 310.

i.e. by ideology', with the exception of some ' "bad subjects" who on occasion provoke the intervention of one of the detachments of the (repressive) State apparatus'.[53]

When Althusser defines ideology in general by its function to constitute individuals as subjects, this suggests a temporal succession (first individuals, then subjects), which he then calls into question: the formula is chosen for didactic clarity, for in reality "ideology has 'always-already' [*toujours-déjà*] interpellated individuals as subjects".[54] He demonstrates this with the 'ideological rituals' with whose help the child, already before his or her birth, is 'expected' by a highly structured (familial) order and through which it must become the 'sexual subject (boy or girl) which it already is in advance'.[55] The observation could serve as an indication that ideological subjection does not occur uniformly, but rather should be investigated as 'a process split into two genders'.[56]

Instead of following the thread of such a gender-split within the ideological, Althusser uses the example primarily as proof for his theoretical assumption that ideology in general is without history and 'eternal, exactly like the *unconscious*', that is to say, 'omnipresent, trans-historical and therefore immutable in form'.[57] Here, he refers to Sigmund Freud's description of the unconscious as 'timeless' and without contradictions.[58] Interestingly, he seems to hesitate for a moment in regards to the meaning of 'omni-historical': when using this term, he would understand history in the sense of the *Communist Manifesto*, as the history of class-struggles and class-societies, that is, restricted to the 'history of social formations containing social classes'.[59] But this potential restriction goes against the grain of his entire concept of ideology in general, which he had already developed before his ideological state-apparatus essay. According to *For Marx*, 'ideology is as such an organic part of every social totality' and it is 'human societies' (not just class-societies) that 'secrete ideology as the very element and atmosphere indispensable to their historical respiration and life', so that '*historical materialism cannot conceive that even a communist society could ever do without ideology*, be it ethics, art or "world-outlook" '.[60] By equating ideology and art, ethics, and 'world-outlook' in general, Althusser turns away from Marx and Engels's critical concept of ideology and adopts Marxism-Leninism's 'neutral' concept. This can also be seen in his reading of Marx's famous passage in the 'Preface' to the *Critique of Political Economy*, which in his interpretation means

53. Althusser 2001, p. 123; Althusser 1995, pp. 310–11.
54. Althusser 2001, p. 119; Althusser 1995, pp. 306–7.
55. Ibid.; Althusser 1995, p. 307.
56. Cf. F. Haug 1983, pp. 653 et sqq.
57. Althusser 2001, p. 109; Althusser 1995, p. 295.
58. Freud 1953–74, Vol. 14, pp. 186–7; Freud 1940–52, 10, p. 286.
59. Althusser 2001, pp. 108–9; Althusser 1995, pp. 295–6.
60. Althusser 1979, p. 232.

that every 'social organisation of production' needs corresponding 'ideological forms' and that 'it is in ideology . . . that men *become conscious* of their place in the world and in history'.[61] We remember that Marx did not talk about men's 'place in the world' in general, but more specifically about the 'conflict existing between the social productive forces and the relations of production',[62] about a fundamental contradiction of class-societies (see above, Section 2.3.). What distinguishes Althusser's approach, however, is that the focus shifts from conscious to unconscious procedures: 'ideology is a matter of the *lived* relation between men and their world' and is as such '*indispensable in any society if men are to be formed, transformed and equipped to respond to the demands of their conditions of existence*'.[63] This is taken up in the ideological state-apparatus essay, where the concept of an ideology in general, mediated by Lacan's structuralist interpretation of psychoanalysis, leads to defining the human being – following Aristotle's *zoon politikon* – as an 'ideological animal by nature': '*l'homme est par nature un animal idéologique*'.[64]

Despite Althusser's momentary hesitations, and against Marx's location of the ideological in class-antagonistic societies, the ideological is thus once again relocated into the individual and comprehended as an unhistorical-anthropological essence.[65] In this over-general version, ideology '*represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence*'.[66] Taken by itself, the formulation could be made fruitful for an investigation of the relations between the 'imaginary' forms of common sense and their 'representations' in elaborate ideologies. To this end, it would however be necessary not to restrict the relationship to one of 'representation', but to conceive of it also as one of an active ideological processing, transformation, and antagonistic interpretation of such imaginary forms, for example of common sense's tendencies to 'identifying thought' (see above, Section 4.5.) and of the underlying 'objective thought-forms' of bourgeois society.

But Althusser will not follow this path. Instead of getting involved with the real-imaginary and objectively mystified thought-forms and praxis-forms of

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61. Althusser 1979, pp. 232–3.
62. Cf. Marx 1859, p. 263.
63. Althusser 1979, pp. 233, 235.
64. Althusser 2001, p. 116; Althusser 1995, p. 303; cf. Aristotle 1946, 1253a.
65. In an early criticism of 1970, Rancière argued that the methodological decision to develop a general definition of ideology prior to class-struggle and outside the realm of a Marxist analysis led to an uneasy combination of two heterogeneous conceptual systems, historical materialism and a Comtian/Durkheimian sociology, which argues on the general level of a bond or cohesion of the social whole, with the effect that the ideology (in general) 'is not posited, at the outset, as the site of a struggle' (Rancière 2011, pp. 131–2, 134).
66. Althusser 2001, p. 109; Althusser 1995, p. 296.

capitalism, he uses the concept of the imaginary in a general anthropological way derived from two main sources: from a specific interpretation of Spinoza's concept of '*imaginatio*' and from Lacan's version of psychoanalysis.

6.5. The derivation of the 'imaginary' from Spinoza and Lacan

Spinoza distinguished between the human capacity of imagination (*imaginatio*) as 'knowledge of the first kind' and reason as 'knowledge of the second kind' and a third kind he called 'intuitive knowledge'.[67] He characterised the imagination (among others) by a spontaneous perception, by which 'all things in nature act as men themselves act, namely, with an end in view', according to a purpose: 'After men persuaded themselves, that everything which is created is created for their sake, they were bound to consider as the chief quality in everything that which is most useful to themselves'.[68] For Spinoza, such an inbuilt teleology belongs to the nature of our imagination, which interprets the world as oriented toward us. As an illustrating example one could think of the idea that animals have the purpose to be slaughtered for human consumption. This self-centred attitude is also projected onto religion: humans 'assert that the gods ordained everything for the use of man, in order to bind man to themselves and obtain from him the highest honour', which in fact leads to a competition for divine love that degrades God to an instrument of man's 'blind cupidity and insatiable avarice'.[69] Humans' fundamentally teleological imagination prevents them from understanding that God, which is also a synonym of nature [*deus sive natura*],[70] acts out of pure necessity and has no final goals, since 'final goals are mere human figments' [*humana figmenta*].[71]

When, in *Reading Capital*, Althusser tried to explain the 'epistemological break' between the young and the mature Marx, which supposedly separated the humanist ideology of the former and the historical-materialistic science of the latter, he referred to Spinoza's difference between the imaginary and the true as a kind of precursor of Marx's distinction between ideology and science.[72] In his *Elements of Self-Criticism*, he explained that instead of being a 'structuralist', as his critics usually assumed, he rather was a 'Spinozist', and was so 'in order to improve our understanding of Marx's philosophy'.[73] This detour via Spinoza, who

67. Spinoza 1997, II, prop. 40, n. 2.
68. Spinoza 1997, I, 'Appendix'.
69. Ibid.
70. Spinoza 1997, VII, 'Preface'; Spinoza 1997, VII, prop. 4, proof.
71. Spinoza 1997, I, 'Appendix'.
72. Althusser and Balibar 2009, p. 17; cf. Althusser 2009, p. 175.
73. Althusser 1976, pp. 132, 134.

'anticipated Hegel, but . . . went further,'[74] was also part of Althusser's strategy to de-Hegelianise Marxism:[75] whereas Hegel's approach was teleological, 'Spinoza, because he "begins with God," never gets involved with any Goal, which, even when it "makes its way forward" in immanence, is still figure and thesis of transcendence'. Not only did he refuse the notion of the 'Goal', he also explained it 'as a necessary and therefore well-founded illusion', which leads Althusser to the conclusion that 'in the 'Appendix' to Book I of the *Ethics*, and in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, we find in fact what is undoubtedly the first theory of *ideology* ever thought out, with its three characteristics: (1) its *imaginary* 'reality'; (2) its internal *inversion*; (3) its ' "centre": the illusion of the *subject*'.[76]

Let us try to unpack this complex definition. Althusser interprets Spinoza's concept of a teleologically structured 'imagination' as a '*materialism of the imaginary*', which refers to 'the material world of men *as they live it*, that of their concrete and historical existence'; this 'materialism' is based 'on the relation of men to the world "expressed" by the state of their bodies'.[77] We already encountered the notion of ideology as a lived reality in *For Marx*. The additional description of the imaginary as a bodily reality could be fruitfully connected with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* as a set of incorporated and corporeal social dispositions (see Section 7.3.). Ideology's 'internal *inversion*' is not clearly explained in the text, but might well consist in the projection of subjective goals and intentions onto a historical process, which, according to Althusser, actually proceeds without subject and goal. By questioning the inversions and projections of this imaginary 'reality', Althusser's Spinoza also challenges 'the central category of imaginary illusion, *the Subject*', and thus reaches into the very heart of bourgeois philosophy and its 'legal ideology of the Subject'.[78]

It can be seen that this entire interpretation is based on the equation of Spinoza's observation of a general anthropocentric tendency to organise the world according to human purposes and Althusser's 'ideology in general'. It is evident that this equation cannot be 'derived' from Spinoza, but is Althusser's own philosophical decision. This decision furthermore contradicts his own 'point of view of reproduction', since it is hardly to be maintained that human purposefulness as such can be subsumed to the ideological reproduction of class-societies. If this were the case, every attempt at a practical critique of ideology would be stillborn from the outset. Inspired by the late Heidegger, in particular by his letter on humanism, Althusser applies the Spinozian critique of teleology to the

74. Althusser 1976, p. 136.
75. Cf. the critical comment on Althusser's anti-Hegelian reading of Spinoza by Vesa Oittinen (1994).
76. Althusser 1976, p. 135.
77. Althusser 1976, p. 136.
78. Ibid.

illusion of the modern individual that the whole world turns around his/her own ego. According to Dick Boer, it is this 'concrete imagination that Althusser's ideology theory has in mind'.[79]

We have seen how, when introducing his concept of an 'eternal' and 'omnihistorical' ideology in general, Althusser hesitated for a moment about whether to use 'history' in the sense of class-societies or of human societies. We can now observe how the unresolved problem bounces back with a vengeance: in his self-criticism of 1974, he blames his 'detour via Spinoza' for his deviation of 'theoreticism', which shows itself in a 'speculative distinction between *science* and *ideology*, in the singular and in general'.[80] The fact that Spinoza, contrary to Hegel, did not know of any contradictions misled Althusser (according to his self-criticism) to consider ideology as the 'universal element of historical existence' and thereby to neglect the antagonistic class-tendencies which 'run through' the ideological regions, 'divide them, regroup them and bring them into opposition'.[81] This is probably an implicit response to Rancière's attack of 1970, which criticised Althusser for overlooking how Marx's ideological forms 'are not simply social forms of representation, *they are the forms in which a struggle is fought out*', so that Althusser's theory of ideology is 'entirely metaphysical, in the strict sense: it cannot think contradiction'.[82]

But Althusser's self-criticism remains ambiguous: if he wanted to challenge the very construct of an 'eternal' and anthropological ideology in general, he would be obliged to revoke the many statements that define ideology as the 'universal element of historical existence', and in particular to give up the equation of Spinoza's purposeful imagination and ideology. Since he does not indicate anything of this kind, it is more likely that he just questions a certain overemphasis of the ideology's 'universal' character insofar as it leads to a disregard for concrete class-struggles. The outlook is, nevertheless, interesting, because it enables to replace an all too general concept of ideological subjection with a multidimensional and contradictory field: the antithesis of science/ideology in its *general*, rationalist-speculative form must be 'rejected' and 'reworked' from the point of view of a 'complex process of the "production" of knowledge, where the class conflicts of the practical ideologies combine with the theoretical ideologies, the existing sciences and philosophy'.[83]

However, Althusser's derivation of ideology from Spinoza would have hardly been possible without a tacit substitution of Spinoza's '*imaginatio*' with Jacques

79. Boer 2004, p. 791.
80. Althusser 1976, p. 106; cf. Althusser 1976, pp. 119, 123.
81. Althusser 1976, p. 141.
82. Rancière 2011, pp. 151–2.
83. Rancière 2011, pp. 147–8.

Lacan's concept of the 'imaginary' as developed in his 1949 essay on the 'mirror stage as formative of the function of the I'. The concept starts out from Freud's theory of narcissism. Of importance here is the difference between narcissism and auto-erotism: whereas auto-erotism designates a state in which sexual drives are satisfied independently from each other, and in an anarchistic way, in narcissism the entire body and the Ego are taken as a love-object. Derived from the ancient myth of Nárkissos (Narcissus in Latin), who fell in love with his mirror-image in the water to the effect that, according to one version, he plunged headlong into the water and drowned, the term narcissism describes the love directed towards the visual *Gestalt*, the *image* of one-self, a process that is connected with the unifying function of Ego-formation.[84]

Based on the investigation of the psychologist Henri Wallon's investigation of the different reactions of animals and humans to their reflections in a mirror,[85] Lacan focused on the aspect of the *image* and explains it by a narcissistic 'mirror stage', in which the small child of about 6–18 months, 'in a flutter of jubilant activity', recognises him/herself in the mirror as a unitary image, even though the child's motor-activity still functions to a large extent non-uniformly.[86] This 'jubilant assumption' of the mirror-image by the infant, who, since it is born 'prematurely', is 'still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence', exhibits in an exemplary situation 'the symbolic matrix in which the I is precipitated in a primordial form'.[87] The basic principle of the imaginary is that an incoherent, uncoordinated, and fragmented individual finds one's identity by projecting a unified image of oneself. Thus emerges an Ego-ideal ['*moi*'] that henceforth functions as the matrix for the development of the small I ['*je*'].[88] The projection also contains a fundamental alienation. The child sees a corporeal unity which it is unable to sense, and is henceforth split into an illusorily homogeneous Ego-ideal ['*moi*'] and a fragmented I ['*je*']. Thus from the outset, the first 'recognition' [*reconnaissance*] in the mirror is 'misrecognition' [*méconnaissance*], an 'alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development'.[89] Lacan's ego is a 'form of estrangement, a mirage of coherence and solidity through which the subject is seduced into misrecognition of its own truth'.[90]

84. Cf. Laplanche and Pontalis 1973, pp. 255 et sqq.; Benvenuto and Kennedy 1986, pp. 50–1, 56.
85. Wallon 1934.
86. Lacan 1977a, pp. 1–2.
87. Lacan 1977a, p. 2.
88. 'If the infant is jubilant . . . this is because the ideal ego – which is what the image is – is the formative matrix of the ego' (Julien 1994, p. 49).
89. Lacan 1977a, p. 4.
90. Dews 1987, p. 55.

Again taking up Althusser's formula that ideology '*represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence*',[91] I can now tentatively reformulate the description of the 'imaginary' as follows: the individuals' relationships to their life-conditions are mediated through unifying images, which are archetypically anchored in one's psychological development, constitute homogenised identities and thus misconstrue reality. The difference between the 'representing' ideology and the 'represented' imaginary is not quite clear. On several occasions, Althusser seems to replace the relation of representation with one of simple identity: 'ideology = an imaginary relation to real relations'.[92] Instead of investigating the kind of 'representation' (and, as I would suggest, of complementing it by processes of transformation), Althusser collapses the imaginary and ideology on the basis of their common mirror-structure: in the same way as the fragmented '*je*' of the child is unified in the Ego-ideal and takes its imaginary coherence from there, the grown-up subject 'transcends its true state of diffuseness or decentrement and finds a consolingly coherent image of itself reflected back in the "mirror" of a dominant ideological discourse'.[93]

With this equation, Althusser extends his concept of ideology to ego-formation in general, without which, according to Freudian psychoanalysis, human beings become psychotic and cannot live in a coherent way. Ideology in general thus coincides with social praxis and the capacity to act as such, with all its 'conscious' and (primarily) 'unconscious' dimensions. It is in turn only on the base of this conceptual extension that Althusser can describe ideology as 'eternal'. We seem to move in a speculative circle where all the elements refer to the same arbitrary decision to sever the ideological from the reproduction-problems of class-societies and to dissolve it in a general and psychoanalytically inspired anthropology. I would like to argue that it would be much more productive to take Althusser's concrete ideological state-apparatus theory as a starting point: a historical-critical reconstruction of the connection between ideology and the formation of the unconscious would have to investigate the modern family as an ideological apparatus and the ideology of the family as the first representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their conditions of existence.[94]

Against the omnihistorical and omnipresent ideological subject-form, only 'science' resists, but it does so only at the cost of its disengagement from the human life-process: in the framework of Althusser's 'theoretical antihumanism', science is construed as an 'objective' process of production, independent from subjects and, therefore, as a domain cut off from what Marx described as the

91. Althusser 2001, p. 109; Althusser 1995, p. 296.
92. For example, Althusser 2001, p. 112; Althusser 1995, p. 299.
93. Eagleton 1991, p. 142.
94. Cf. Boer 2004, pp. 793, 796.

standpoint of 'social humanity' [*gesellschaftliche Menschheit*].[95] 'The negation of the ideological by science remains abstract: without a standpoint in human praxis itself'.[96] We will see that this abstraction invites and facilitates Foucault's deconstruction of *any* analytical differentiation between science and ideology, and his consecutive dissolution of both into the concepts of knowledge [*savoir*] and discourse (see Section 8.4.).

6.6. Lacan's universalisation of subjection and alienation

It is obvious that a literal *visual* understanding of the 'mirror stage' would lead to the absurd conclusion that congenitally blind infants were unable to develop an ego or any comparable instance of coherence. Some interpreters have tried to evade such empirical objections by proposing that the mirror be taken as a mere metaphor for the 'other'.[97] But this alone is certainly not sufficient. The 'image' the others are projecting back to the infant is then to be understood in a metaphoric sense as well: to reach a blind infant, such an 'image' would need to be acoustic or tactile or relating to the sense of taste. It remains unclear whether Lacan's point of an imaginary unification of the self could be spelled out on the level of other sense-perceptions as well. But even if we disregard or bracket all these empirical objections, which from the elevated perspectives of Lacanian 'high theory' seem pedantic at best, the theoretical evaluation is not as clear as it seems. The notion that a 'fragmented' infant existed before the discovery of one's mirror-image is strictly speaking an oxymoron: 'fragmentation' is an experience that can only occur *after* the formation of a unifying ego, only a unified self can fall apart.[98] If we take Lacan's account of the child's 'jubilatory' recovery of its mirror-image for granted, we can interpret this joy without his interpretative overload, namely as an enthusiastic expression of the increased potentials of reaching out to the world made possible by new qualities of self-recognition and self-consciousness.[99] The fact that Lacan (and with him Althusser) reads the event primarily as a life-structuring matrix of self-deception is again a theoretical construct due to the decision to conceptualise the imaginary as part of a fundamental structure of alienation. In contrast to Marx, this alienation is no longer linked to specific societal structures of bourgeois commodity-economy and of class- and state-domination, but rather describes a universal human

95. Marx 1845, p. 5.
96. *PIT* 1979, p. 127.
97. 'Strictly speaking, it is the other who functions as a mirror. For the wolf-child, it is the wolf! Thus the mirror stage is but a paradigm' (Julien 1994, p. 30).
98. Cf. Lichtman 1999, p. 1021.
99. Cf. Kaindl 2007a, pp. 143–4, n. 1; Kaindl and Rehmann 2008, p. 234.

destiny: the human infant is alienated by the 'symbolic order' which tears it off its primary needs.

It is primarily by the concept of the 'symbolic order' that Lacan distances himself from what he considers as Freud's 'biologism' and ties psychoanalysis to structural linguistics. A 'language' is presupposed, which in its formal structure determines both the societal and the unconscious. The main difference with Freud can be demonstrated with the example of the Freudian account of the murder of the 'primal father': after the assassination of the primal father by his sons, the incest-taboo (and with it, the Oedipal complex upon which 'culture' is established) is fixed in a 'hereditary schema' and thus becomes a genetic property of each individual, and it does so relatively independently from his or her empirical experiences. 'Wherever experiences fail to fit in with the hereditary schema, they become remodelled in the imagination'.[100] The foundational psychoanalytical myth of the murder of the primal father and the universal significance of the Oedipus complex are accepted by Lacan as well, who recognises the Oedipus complex as 'covering the whole field of our experience with its signification' and as 'mark[ing] the limits that our discipline assigns to subjectivity'.[101] But contrary to Freud, and inspired by Lévi-Strauss's *Structural anthropology*,[102] it is no longer a 'hereditary schema' which builds the bridge between the murder of the primal father and the individual unconscious, but the 'law of language', by which the repression and suppression of primary needs is carried through. The symbolic is the rule of the dead father, it reproduces the 'Law of the Father', the order of patriarchal domination. It is the 'name of the father' [*nom-du-père*] that structures the symbolic function 'which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law'.[103]

'Man speaks, then, but it is because the symbol has made him man'.[104] Since human beings are subjected to the 'passion of the signifier', it is 'not only man who speaks, but that in man and through man *it* speaks (*ça parle*), that his nature is woven by effects in which is to be found the structure of language, of which he becomes the material'.[105] Lacan can describe the symbolic order as the constitutive reality, because in his approach the unconscious itself is structured like a 'language', its elements are inscribed 'letters', which in turn explains why Lacanian psychoanalysis can claim to overcome any reference to biological drives. The formation of humans seems to coincide with 'language', both phylogenetically, on the level of the emergence of humanity (since language allows

100. Freud 1953–74, Vol. 17, p. 119; Freud 1940–52, Vol. 12, p. 155.
101. Lacan 1977a, p. 66.
102. Lévi–Strauss 1963.
103. Lacan 1977, p. 67.
104. Lacan 1977, p. 65.
105. Lacan 1977, p. 284.

us to overcome 'nature' and to establish 'culture'), and ontogenetically, on the individual level of the child's learning to speak.

Lacan's structuralism has often been interpreted as a promising attempt to free psychoanalysis from its individualistic form, and to connect its categories – via the symbolic order – to relevant aspects of the social order.[106] However, such praise easily overlooks the fact that the Lacanian attempt to overcome the 'biologism' of Freudianism quickly ended up in what W.F. Haug called a 'languageism' ['*Sprachismus*'],[107] which reduces the multiformity of social practices and relations to 'language', whose meaning is at the same time indiscriminately extended to a degree that it seems to constitute all societal levels and human life in its entirety. Lacan shares the general characteristics of a 'linguistic turn' that obscures the importance of social production and reproduction, of cooperative relations and of sensory experiences.[108]

According to Lacan, subject-constitution through integration into the symbolic order engenders a fundamental alienation, because the child that is about to learn the language can only convey its vital needs by giving it the form of a signifying chain, whose meaning is not its own, but has been built up by others, by earlier generations, for example.[109] He starts out from a passage of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in which Freud describes an infant coping with the mother's absence by alternately throwing away a wooden reel and drawing it back with a piece of string tied around it, while uttering the vowel sounds 'o' and 'a', which according to Freud stand for the German words 'gone' (*Fort!*) and 'here' (*Da!*).[110] For Lacan, this is a telling example of an insertion into language by which the child's symbolic action 'destroys' the object.[111] The symbol that places itself between these needs and their satisfaction 'manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing'.[112] The baby wanted something and was given the *ersatz* thing of a symbol. At the same time as it expressed its needs, it also estranged itself, since 'there is no demand that does not in some sense pass through the defiles of the signifier'.[113] This narrow passage of signifiers destroys the immediacy of pre-linguistic ['*prétexte*'] needs. Following Heidegger's notion of 'thrownness' [*Geworfenheit*], the Lacanian subject is *thrown* into the world first without language (as an '*infans*',

106. Cf. Soiland 2012, pp. 561–4.
107. Cf. W.F. Haug 2006, p. 90.
108. Cf. the pertinent critique of the 'lingusitic turn' and of its postmodernist radicalisation by McNally (2001, pp. 45–8).
109. 'Alienation is thus constitutive of the subject', 'an irreducible lack is inscribed within the subjective structure, a lack due to the priority of the signifier and the nature of the symbolic order' (Stavrakakis 1999, p. 28).
110. Freud 1953–74, Vol. 18, pp. 14–15; Freud 1940–52, Vol. 13, pp. 12–13.
111. Lacan 1977, p. 103.
112. Lacan 1977, p. 104.
113. Lacan 1977, p. 309.

which means both child and without language). It intends to use the symbolic act as a transparent means for bringing about its demand, but what the symbol radiates back is no longer the 'narcissistic familiarity with the primal intention of the wish', but rather the 'strange face of an order of the Other', as Manfred Frank summarises.[114] When it speaks, it is always in the 'situation of Tantalus who reaches out for foods that recede from his grasp and who stands in water without being able to quench his thirst'.[115] The connection to the imaginary can then be described as the compensation of a painful want: 'The wound inflicted by the symbolisation of the *je* is imaginarily healed in a vision, indeed, in the vision of the *moi*'.[116] From then on, the subject is split into two, first, into the narcissistic ego of the small child that desperately and futilely identifies with its mother, second, into the 'speaking being that has delivered itself over to the order of the Others'.[117]

In the process of splitting the subject, the symbolisation also transforms the primary 'need' [*besoin*] into a 'desire' [*désir*], which is fundamentally unquenchable. As language means the entrance into the order of the Other, the desire is a 'desire of the Other' [*désir de l'Autrui*] taking shape in the 'margin in which demand becomes separated from need'.[118] Whereas the (lost) 'need' could be satisfied by a determined object, the 'desire' manifests itself as the unsatisfiable demand to be recognised and loved by the Other. There is a sense of a non-having woven into desire, so that its movement becomes one of endlessly running from one signifier to another. The outcome is a kind of desirous and obsessive rat-race, which inscribes an insoluble negativity into the structure of impulses and creates a fundamental 'lack of being' [*manque à être*], in which the human condition is anchored.[119]

In addition to the symbolic and the imaginary, Lacan distinguishes a third dimension called the 'real'. The term is obviously not used in its common-sense meaning. It is derived from Freud's notion of 'psychic reality', which describes the unconscious wish manifested in reminiscences. Another aspect, borrowed from Bataille, expresses 'an idea of morbidity, of *reste* (vestige), of *part maudite* (doomed or accused part), . . . a black shadow or ghost beyond the reach of reason'.[120] It is the point where the subject meets with death or inexpressible enjoyment, both of which are seen as intimately connected.[121] Žižek speaks of

114. M. Frank 1989, p. 301.
115. M. Frank 1989, p. 303.
116. M. Frank 1989, p. 300.
117. M. Frank 1989, p. 303.
118. Lacan 1977, p. 311.
119. Cf. Benvenuto and Kennedy 1986, pp. 118–19; Pagel 2002, pp. 62, 66–7, 78.
120. Cf. Roudinesco 1997, p. 217.
121. The real 'is the impossible *jouissance* – an enjoyment beyond any limit, any barrier – the link between death and the libido' (Stavrakakis 1999, p. 130); cf. Benvenuto and Kennedy 1986, pp. 81, 166, 180.

a 'core of primordial "passionate attachments", which are real in the precise sense of resisting the movement of symbolisation',[122] 'a residue, a leftover, a stain of traumatic irrationality and senselessness', a 'non-integrated surplus of senseless traumatism' that Althusser has failed to account for in his model of interpellation.[123] According to Eagleton, the Althusserian subject is much more stable and coherent than the split and lacking one of Lacan: Althusser substituted Lacan's 'dishevelled unconscious' by his 'buttoned-down ego' and thus silenced the real's 'potentially rebellious clamour'.[124]

However, it remains unclear where Eagleton gets his assessment of a 'rebellious clamour' from: contrary to any clamorous demand, Lacan's 'real' is characterised by the impossibility to be said and expressed, it is an enigmatic remainder, a trace that is not at one's disposal. The subjects can only describe a chain of discourse around the real which always slips away from them. One of Lacan's examples for a hallucination of the 'Real Order' is Freud's famous case 'Wolf Man' who to his 'unspeakable terror' [*unaussprechlichen Schrecken*] dreams of having cut through his little finger so it was only hanging on by its skin.[125] There is no indication whatsoever of a connection between such an 'unspeakable terror' and any kind of rebellion or resistance. It is no coincidence that the attempts to develop a Lacanian 'ethics of the real' do not provide anything but some platitudes concerning 'encircling the real, the lack, the *béance* as such', which means a 'recognition of the irreducibility of the real' and its non-integrated, traumatic horror, by means of some 'empty' symbolic gesture – all of this for the sake of an 'ethical hegemony' of democracy.[126]

In comparing Freud's psychoanalysis with Lacan's concept of alienation that culminates in the assumption of a necessary 'lack of being' [*manque à être*], one can identify both continuities and significant discrepancies. The continuity can best be explained with the example of Freud's *Trieblehre* [theory of drives], which, in spite of its significant changes in the course of Freud's development, is based on a fundamental contraposition of 'society' and the 'individual': 'society' is defined by its function of *Versagung*, that is, by the frustration or deprivation of primary needs, whereas the individual's essential needs and desires are conceived as primarily unsocial, turned away from 'society' (of whatever kind).

122. Žižek 1999, p. 274.
123. Žižek 1989, p. 43.
124. Eagleton 1991, p. 144.
125. Freud 1953–74, Vol. 17, p. 85; Freud 1940–52, Vol. 12, pp. 117–18; cf. Benvenuto and Kennedy 1986, pp. 152–3.
126. Cf. Stavrakakis 1999, pp. 130, 135, 137; Cf. Zupančič 2000; Žižek, who also used the term 'ethics of the real' frequently (cf. Žižek 1991, pp. 272–3), explicitly pointed out that it had nothing to do with rebellion and resistance: the 'Real' is far from hindering the full submission of the subject to the ideological command, but rather is 'the very condition of it': by escaping ideological sense, it sustains the 'ideological *jouis-sense*, enjoyment-in-sense . . ., proper to ideology' (Žižek 1989, pp. 43–4).

In the framework of the German School of *Critical Psychology*, Ute Holzkamp-Osterkamp developed a differentiated critique of this dichotomy: according to Freud's *Triebtheorie*, the satisfaction of drives can only be conceived as a reduction of inner-organ tensions. Relaxation is identified with pleasure, tension is identified with displeasure. This dichotomy excludes from the outset the possibility of a motivated and joyful move *towards* the 'world' based on needs that are directed toward an extension of one's capacities to act. Every such turning to (and appropriation of) social reality is interpreted as a necessary *detour* imposed by a frustrating and depriving outer world. What Freud describes as the 'pleasure principle', namely the tendency to reducing the organism's energy, leads him consequently to his concept of a death-drive (the reduction of energy ultimately leads to death).[127] The reductionism of this instinctual model becomes evident as soon as one observes children in their games and playful experiments, which show manifold manifestations of joy and pleasure in experimenting with objects of their social reality, and in increasing their competence and agency (cf. Spinoza's notion of *potentia agendi*, the capacity to act).

This critique of the psychoanalytical dichotomy between 'society' and the 'individual' applies to Lacan as well. But in his version of psychoanalysis, the balance of forces between a 'frustrating' society and a 'desiring' individual has dramatically changed to the detriment of the latter. In Freud's approach, the Ego is in the service of the Id – Freud compares it with a rider who tries to hold in check the superior strength of a horse, but with forces borrowed from it. The Ego is often even obliged to guide the Id where the Id wants to go, so that 'it is in the habit of transforming the Id's will into action as if it were its own'.[128] The reality-principle functions in the service of the pleasure-principle, and it is only with the formation of the Super-ego that an instance builds up in the individual that is antagonistic to the Id. In Lacan's approach, the Oedipal complex no longer relates, as in Freud, to a specific ontogenetic period of development, but constitutes a structure 'that determines the being of the subject from the outset'.[129]

Freud's different 'topical' and 'dynamic' models show a continuous battle between the different instances. The concrete outcome is in principle open, and usually contains a 'compromise-formation' (cf. the ideology-theoretical reinterpretation of this Freudian concept in Section 9.4.). In this context, psychoanalysis is designed to help to work through neurotic symptoms, to decipher the underlying conflicts between the unconscious instinctual wishes of the Id and the punishments of the Super-ego, and to reduce cruel confrontations by

127. Cf. Holzkamp-Osterkamp 1976, pp. 196–258; the critique is taken up and extended to Lacan by Kaindl and Rehmann 2008.
128. Freud 1953–74, Vol. 19, p. 25; Freud 1940–52, Vol. 13, p. 253.
129. Pagel 2002, p. 100.

strengthening the conscious functions of the Ego: 'Where Id was, there Ego shall be'.[130] In this sense, the categories of Freudian psychoanalysis, despite their problematic connection to a reductionist concept of drives, can well assume a liberating function in the process of becoming aware of the causes and mechanisms of one's suffering and of developing one's capacity to act. The instances Id, Ego, and Super-Ego provide an analytical distinction that might help to relate one's state of emotions 'to the underlying dependencies, unresolved conflicts, denials of constraints and restrictions of one's life conditions',[131] so that the subjects who are, for example, suffering from qualms of conscience can recognise them as internalisations of social constraints and threats. However, the emancipative potential is limited by the fact that Freud universalised bourgeois conditions of life he was living in (and whose psychological effects he was confronted with in his therapeutic practice) to an eternal and omnipresent reality, in which subjective claims to happiness are in principle subjected to social suppression and psychological repression.

It is no coincidence that Lacan distanced himself from Freud's psychoanalysis exactly at this relatively strong point, where it could open a door to critical self-enlightenment and capacity to act. The Freudian 'Ego', which is in principle capable of becoming aware of at least parts of the tormenting conflicts that traverse it, is replaced with an imaginary and thus necessarily misrecognising '*moi*'.[132] Social practices appear as if they were completely determined by the logic of a symbolic order, which can neither be effectively challenged by the imaginary functions of the ego nor by the fleeting remnants of a Lacanian 'real'. Whereas Freud's Ego can also rebel against its imperious ruler, the Super-ego, its relative 'freedom' and 'autonomy' are in Lacan's framework nothing but a transitory point, in which the 'law' has successfully melted into 'desire'. The entire theoretical arrangement comes down to the ontological assessment of a universal and omnihistorical submission to domination and its phallocratic symbolic order, in the framework of which it is no more possible to identify *what* social and individual conditions and experiences lead to the readiness to 'voluntarily' comply with the restrictions on one's spaces of possibility.[133]

The fact that Lacan's psychoanalysis to a large degree invaded both Althusserian Marxism and Poststructuralism led to widespread polemics against the 'essentialist' anthropology of 'Freudo-Marxism', its 'naive' denunciations of sexual oppression/repression and its 'utopian' demands for the 'liberation' of instincts,

130. Freud 1953–74, Vol. 22, p. 80; Freud 1940–52, Vol. 15, p. 86.
131. Cf. Holzkamp 1984, pp. 27, 30.
132. At the same time the '*je*' as the 'true' subject (*s'être*) is moved into the unconscious id – as 'the trace of what *must* be in order to fall from being' (Lacan 1977, p. 300). Cf. M. Frank 1989, pp. 290 et sqq.; Pagel 2002, pp. 37 et sqq.
133. Cf. Kaindl 2007, p. 146; Kaindl and Rehmann 2008, p. 240.

and such like. Given the heterogeneous development of 'Freudo-Marxism', it would be worthwhile critically re-examining if, and to what extent, these general accusations of 'essentialism' or 'utopianism' are justified. What interests me more is that these polemics dissimulate the fact that the Lacanian concept of 'alienation' was itself founded on an essentialist and romantic notion of human 'needs' dormant in the individual before and in opposition to any kind of socialisation. It is astonishing that the same Althusser who so vigorously dismissed the Marxian concept of alienation as a speculative humanist ideology accepted Lacan's uttermost speculative universalisation of human alienation and adopted it as the foundation of his own ideology-theory. Lacan's overly general assumption that the transition from biological existence to human existence is achieved within the 'Law of Order' or 'Law of Culture', which is 'confounded in its *formal* essence with the order of language', is celebrated by Althusser as 'the most original aspect of Lacan's work, his discovery'.[134]

Contrary to such uncritical adoption, materialist feminists have pointed out that patriarchal domination is not to be reduced to a symbolic order, but must be analysed in connection with exploited labour in capitalism.[135] By adopting Lévi-Strauss's conception of a *mathesis universalis* of the unconscious, Lacan presumes a universal human spirit detached from the material life-conditions and the concrete 'ensemble of social relations' (Marx), which motivated Sartre's critique that his decentering of the subject went hand in hand with a devaluation of history.[136] From the perspective of a historical-materialistic theory of the subject, individual socialisation in class-societies is to be understood as an active and contradictory process containing (and oscillating between) both aspects of suppression and potentials of resistance, submission and emancipation, enlargement and restrictions of agency. Althusser presents, instead, an apocalyptic image of a 'war without memoirs and memorials' that humanity thinks to have won in advance, 'simply because humanity is nothing but surviving this war', a 'war which is continually declared in each of its sons, who, projected, deformed and rejected, are required, each by himself in solitude and against death, to take the long forced march which makes mammiferous larvae into human children, *masculine or feminine subjects*'.[137] This anthropological assumption of an omnipresent and eternal war-like opposition between society

134. Althusser 2001, p. 142.

135. 'Lacan's theory is idealist. . . . One of the aims of materialist feminism has been to theorize the phallus as a historically variable effect of contradictory social arrangements that are nor reducible to the symbolic, . . . of a contradictory set of social relations under capitalism in which the production of desire is historically bound up with exploited labor' (Hennessy 2000, p. 155).

136. Sartre 1966, p. 91; cf. Jablonka 2012, pp. 588–9.

137. Althusser 2001, p. 140.

and the individual is the main reason for what Eagleton described as 'political bleakness of Althusser's theory'.[138]

6.7. Can subjects talk back at interpellations?

Althusser's contradictory combination of historical-materialist ideology-theory and Lacanian Psychoanalysis has been criticised from opposite sides. The crisis of the Althusser school and the subsequent take-over of social theories by poststructuralist and postmodernist approaches marked a new hegemonic constellation in which most of the criticisms targeted the components that could still be identified as 'Marxist'. Michèle Barrett accused Althusser of a 'colonialist' integration of Lacan in Marxism that marginalises the meaning of the unconscious.[139] According to Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, the materiality of ideology does not lie in the ideological state-apparatuses but in the ideological praxis of subject-production itself, which can only be analysed by psychoanalysis, not by Marxism.[140] Slavoj Žižek identified ideology with a 'fantasy' anchored in the economy of the unconscious, which structures our social reality itself and supports the ideological interpellation as a specific 'enjoyment-in-sense', ideological *jouis-sense*.[141] Judith Butler was mainly interested in Althusser's concept of ideology in general, which she proposed to locate in an even deeper psychological mechanism where subjection/subordination and subjectivation coincide:[142] the ideological interpellation is to be comprehended on the basis of a psychological 'founding submission', which is described as 'a certain readiness to be compelled by the authoritative interpellation', a 'certain desire to be beheld by and perhaps also to behold the face of authority', a 'guilty embrace of the law'.[143] To become a 'subject' is thus to have been 'presumed guilty, then tried and declared innocent' or 'to be continuously in the process of acquitting oneself of the accusation of guilt'.[144] It remains a mystery to me why Butler derives such a production of guilt from a 'founding submission' that supposedly precedes and underlies ideological interpellations, instead of reconstructing it from the family ideological state-apparatuses and their 'interpellating' practices and discourses.

Others went against the grain, and directed their critique mainly against Althusser's omnihistorical approach of an ideology in general, while allying themselves more with the historical-materialist components of Althusser's

138. Eagleton 1991, p. 145.
139. Barrett 1991, pp. 104–5.
140. Coward and Ellis 1977, p. 69.
141. Žižek 1994, pp. 316, 321 et sqq.
142. Butler 1997, pp. 7–8.
143. Butler 1997, pp. 111–12.
144. Butler 1997, p. 118.

ideological state-apparatus concept. For Rancière, the ideological state-apparatus concept was a 'theoretical product of the May movement' and marked a potential (if inconsequential) rupture with Althusser's former opposition of science and ideology: The bourgeoisie's ideological domination after 1968 was not 'the result of a social imaginary wherein individuals spontaneously reflected their relations to the conditions of existence', but rather of the system of material power-relations reproduced by different apparatuses.[145] Althusser had to make his new ideological state-apparatus concept 'coexist comfortably with his old theory of the imaginary, the notion of interpellation serving as the tenuous link between the two'.[146] The *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT*) argued that Althusser's potentially fruitful concepts of the ideological state-apparatus and ideological interpellation should be detached from the omnihistorical concept of 'ideology in general', which was caught in the problematic psychoanalytical opposition of a 'needy individual' and a necessarily 'repressive society' – a dichotomy, in which the formation of self-determined capacities to act could not be conceptualised.[147] Instead of developing the 'celestialised forms' of the ideological out of the 'actual relations of life', which Marx called the 'only materialist and therefore scientific method,'[148] Althusser handed over all human action and thought to an overwhelming structure of alienation and misconception that is based on the premise of a primary 'un-societal foundational structure' of the individual. A concrete analysis of the respective conditions of action was thus replaced with a reductionist procedure: 'in the night of the subject-effect all practices turn grey'.[149]

Many of these problems have been discussed with the example of Althusser's model of interpellation. According to Stuart Hall, Althusser gives 'an *over-integrative* account' of the reproduction of a ruling ideology and does not account sufficiently for the contradictions and struggles that lead to its continuous production and transformation.[150] Eagleton argued that Althusser's model is 'a good deal too monistic', because it 'runs together the necessity of some "general" identification with our submission to specific social roles'.[151] Judith Butler criticised the model of interpellation for disregarding different forms of disobedience: 'The law might not only be refused, but it might also be ruptured, forced into a rearticulation that calls into question the monotheistic force of its own unilateral operation', so that there is always a 'slippage' between the discursive command

145. Rancière 2011, p. 74.
146. Rancière 2011, p. 76.
147. *PIT* 1979, pp. 121 et sqq.
148. Cf. Marx 1867, p. 374; cf. Marx 1976, p. 494, n. 4; translation modified.
149. *PIT* 1979, p. 126.
150. Hall 1988, p. 48.
151. Eagleton 1991, p. 145.

and the effects, a 'constitutive failure of the performative', which might open possibilities for resignifying the terms.[152] From another perspective, Richard Wolff argued that Althusser could have accounted better for the contradictory character of both the ideological state-apparatuses and their interpellations, if he had followed through his own insight in the plurality of the 'modes of production combined in social formations': since the contradictions between these 'modes of production' and the respective class-structures are transmitted to the different ideological state-apparatuses as well, we get a panoply of contradicting interpellations to which the individual subjects are subjected.[153]

This suggestion would, indeed, lead to a much more nuanced constellation. Since each subject is confronted with different, competing, and even opposed interpellations – and not only according to the different ideological apparatuses but also according to the struggles and power-relations within the same apparatus –, he or she needs to balance and prioritise them, which might imply rejecting some in order to be able to 'respond' to others. As the young Marx of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* observed, 'each sphere applies to me a different and opposite yardstick . . ., for each is a specific estrangement of man'.[154] What interests me here is not the general aspect of 'alienation', but the circumstance that it is the very contradictoriness of interpellations that gives the interpellated subjects some room for manoeuvre. As Stuart Hall points out, the 'encoding' of a message by an ideological apparatus, for example, the cultural apparatus of a television-channel, does not 'fully guarantee' the 'decoding' by the receiver (for example the one watching the television), which is a meaningful and therefore relatively autonomous activity of interpretation.[155] Against this background, he distinguishes three possible types of decoding: (1) in the 'dominant-hegemonic' type, the decoding takes place within the dominant code; (2) in the 'negotiated code', the viewers accept the dominant position only on a general or abstract level and redefine it differently in regard to their local conditions; and (3) in the 'oppositional code', the viewers 'decode the message in a *globally* contrary way', they 'detotalise' the hegemonic message in order to 'retotalise' it in an alternative framework of reference.[156]

It is obvious that the first 'dominant-hegemonic' type of decoding corresponds to what Althusser described as the 'turning around' of the subject – the television-viewers accept and adopt the 'encoded' interpellations without questioning them. The second type, the 'negotiated' code, has become the favorite subject

152. Butler 1993, pp. 122, 124.
153. Wolff 2004, pp. 765–6; cf. Althusser 2001b, p. 107; Althusser 1995, p. 293.
154. Marx and Engels 1975–2005, Vol. 3, p. 310.
155. Hall 1993, p. 508.
156. Hall 1993, p. 517.

of postmodernist and postcolonialist theories that focus on the ambivalences, 'hybridities' and strategies of 'mimicry' in discourses and power-relations.[157] The finding itself is not as new as it seems. Much of the ambivalences highlighted in these theories have already been captured by W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of 'double consciousness', developed in 1897 in the context of the African-American condition 'of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity'.[158] The 'negotiated' code covers different kinds of compromise and ambiguity toward ideological interpellations: restricting their meaning, applying them only halfway, mimicking them in a way that might slip into mockery or subversion, 'resignifying' them by using the slippages of the message's signifiers.[159]

I would like to focus, for a while, on the 'oppositional code' and discuss it with a concrete example of poor people rejecting racist interpellations. The event was reported by Ashwin Desai, whose book *We are the Poors* investigated specific community-struggles of the poor in post-apartheid South Africa. The historical context was that after liberation from the apartheid-regime, the African National Congress (ANC) government under President Thabo Mbeki adopted the doctrine of neoliberalism and pushed through economic policies of privatisation and deregulation that were directed against large parts of poor communities. Since the end of apartheid, only three percent of arable land had been redistributed and much of that small percentage had been given 'to black commercial farmers and not to landless peasants'.[160] The struggle Desai examined took place between a local council of the ANC in Chatsworth that tried to push poor neighbourhoods from their homes and the poor communities that defended themselves against water-cut-offs and impending evictions. To understand the dynamics of the struggle it is important to consider that most of the people of this community were Indian. When the ANC city-council tried to evacuate the community, it met such determined resistance in the form of demonstrations and squatting that it had to give up and withdraw. Furious about this defeat, an ANC city-council member played the race-card, and began castigating the crowd as 'Indians' who were seeking to maintain their ethnic privileges against the poor black majority of the district. But the crowd responded by shouting, 'We are not Indians, we are the poors', and, from the ranks of the black constituencies: 'We are not African, we are the poors'. This response could not be co-opted:

157. Cf. e.g. Bhabha 1994, pp. 122 et sqq., 159–60.
158. Du Bois 1995, p. 45.
159. Butler 1993, p. 124.
160. Desai 2002, p. 11. Cf. for the following the discussion in Baptist/Rehmann 2011, 151–8.

'identities were being rethought in the context of struggle and the bearers of these identities were no respecters of authority'.[161]

We have to note several peculiarities of the constellation that facilitated the rejection of the ideological interpellation. First, we are dealing with a kind of 'negative' interpellation, a swearing. The insult is furthermore embedded in an attempted violent action, which, however, just failed. The 'shield' of the repressive state-apparatuses, which is often well hidden behind the hustle and bustle of the ideological state-apparatuses, became visible and was revealed as ineffective. The negative interpellation also came 'too late', after the preceding positive interpellations were not successful. Potentially 'good' subjects had already turned into non-responsive 'bad' ones. Another characteristic is that the interpellating agency, the ANC government, speaks in the name of 'liberation', of the anti-apartheid struggle, of the social emancipation of the black majority, though this is perceived as standing in blatant contradiction to its current neoliberal policies.

As in Hall's portrayal of the 'oppositional code', the poor reject the encoded racist message ('We are not Indians') and 'retotalise' it by affirming a counteridentity: 'We are the poors!' This is certainly not to be understood as a total change of identity. The subjects remain heterogeneous and contradictory. Neither were they determined, before this event, merely by 'ethnic' interpellations, nor are they now only identified as 'the poors'. They are still 'Indians' or 'Africans', men or women, young or old. The difference is that poverty is now perceived and affirmed as common denominator and defining issue. What is revealed in such a response is a significant shift in the power-relations of common sense, with no guarantee whatsoever that it cannot be reversed.

I think there are at least three characteristics that go beyond what Althusser's model of interpellation is able to capture: first, by rejecting the interpellation 'you are privileged Indians', the poor refuse to recognise themselves in a capitalized Subject and thus break out of what Althusser described as the ideological 'mirror-structure' between subjects and Subject. Secondly, instead of recognising themselves through the big Subject, they recognise each other as equal little subjects living in poverty and fighting together against their eviction. Althusser neglects the fundamental difference between 'vertical' interpellations that come from above, from ideological state-apparatuses, and two varieties of opposite interpellations, which are closely interrelated: 1) 'talking-back' interpellations from below against the interpellating authority, which are in turn based on 2) 'horizontal' interpellations among equals, mutual 'recognitions' as poor,

161. Desai 2002, p. 44.

among those 'who have no part'.[162] I do not see any reason why such horizontal 'recognitions' are to be defined as necessary 'misrecognitions'.

And third, not only do the poor reject the interpellation from above, they confront it with a positive counter-subjectivity. Since this subjectivity is explicitly articulated, it is not to be explained by the un-expressible and ever-fleeting movements of the Lacanian 'real'. If we want to understand the possibility of different responses to ideologies, we need to presume that the subjects are not mere 'effects' of ideological interpellations. They are not 'constituted' merely by ideologies or by 'discourses', including their manifold 'slippages' as highlighted by Judith Butler, but contain other levels of practice and experience as well. Without the lived experience of being poor and of sharing that situation across colour-lines, the communities in South Africa would not have had the basis from which to resist the dominant interpellations. They live in bodies with physical needs and try to survive in specific material conditions of life. The point is not to argue that there is a 'pure' standpoint 'outside' of ideological constructions and meanings. Language and discourse are certainly always with us, but they are not the only factors that determine our lives. Experiences like feeling hungry, sleeping in the cold and becoming ill can hardly be characterised as effects of ideological interpellations or discourses, even if the interpretation of that hunger, cold, and illness are heavily influenced by the predominant ideologies. Due to his overly general concept of ideology in general, Althusser has no analytical tool to identify experiences which could both support and resist ideological interpellations. Ideological interpellations are effective only when they succeed in appealing to lived experiences, and they can only be challenged or rejected when there are better and more convincing ways of making 'good sense' (Gramsci) of our lives.

162. Cf. Rancière 1999, p. 30.

Chapter Seven

From the Collapse of the Althusser School to Poststructuralism and Postmodernism

What started out as a promising renewal of ideology-theory finally ended in a crisis of the Althusser school, in the course of which theoretical, political and personal moments overdetermined each other in an extremely devastating way. Althusser, who was plagued periodically by manic-depressive psychosis, killed his wife Hélène Rytmann in November 1980, was committed to a psychiatric hospital (until 1983) and spent the last years of his life as a recluse (until 1990).[1] Nicos Poulantzas killed himself in 1979. Michel Pêcheux committed suicide in 1983. On a political level, the tendency to theoreticism and a highly esoteric language (primarily under the influence of Lacanianism) prevented an organic relationship to grassroots-movements. Already in the 1970s, the Althusser school was under heavy attack by poststructuralist and postmodernist tendencies inspired by an 'alternative' re-reading of Nietzsche and Heidegger, which lead to a fundamental change of hegemony in intellectual milieus. Such a rapid change raises the question of the inner weaknesses of the Althusserian project.[2] In a study on the emergence of 'leftist Nietzscheanism' in France, I came to the conclusion that the Althusserian school (with the remarkable exception of Poulantzas, who was, in many respects, more a Gramscian than an

1. Balibar recounts that Althusser told him in August 1980 that he would not commit suicide, but would rather do something worse, namely destroy what he has produced, what he is for others and for himself (Balibar 1991, pp. 61–2).

2. Cf. F.O. Wolf 1994, pp. 189–90.

Althusserian) was unable to defend itself against the postmodernist take-over of its central categories: the resistance against such a take-over was 'paralysed by a "theoretical antihumanism", which was itself due to a questionable combination of Marx, Nietzsche, and Heidegger'.[3]

After the dissolution of the Althusser school, ideology-theory suffered a profound crisis in the course of which the concept of ideology was successively displaced by that of 'discourse' and 'power'. According to Jorge Larrain, Althusserian ideology-theory decomposed into three main currents: first, a line around Michel Pêcheux developed a discourse-theory in the framework of Althusserianism and a communist class-project; second, a 'middle' neo-Gramscian line around the early Ernesto Laclau and Stuart Hall ('Hegemony Research Group') integrated linguistic and semiotic approaches into an ideology-theory in order to be able to analyse neoliberalism, rightwing populism and popular culture; third, under the influence of Foucault, a poststructuralist line around Laclau and Chantal Mouffe came into being, which now accused Marxism of 'essentialism' and replaced the concepts of ideology, culture and language with that of discourse as the paradigmatic principle of constitution of the social.[4]

7.1. Michel Pêcheux's discourse-theoretical development of Althusser's ideology-theory

Contrary to a widespread misconception, discourse-theory was first developed not in a poststructuralist setting, but in the framework of Althusserian ideology-theory. For the research-group around Michel Pêcheux and Paul Henry, the main task was seen as bringing together linguistics and Lacanian psychoanalysis with Althusser's model of interpellation, in order to be able to explain how the production of evidences of meaning is linked to the constitution of the subject.[5] It is through language that the identification with a 'preconstrued' meaning, the 'effect of the preconstructed' [*effet de préconstruit*] occurs.[6] The evidence of meaning emerges from the illusion of an immediate transparency of language (that a word 'has' a meaning, directly signifies a thing, and so on).[7] The 'discourse formation' defines, in the framework of a given ideological conjuncture, what (corresponding to the rules of a speech, a sermon, a programme etc) 'can and should be said'.[8] Each of the discourse-formations is in turn dependent on what

3. Rehmann 2004a, p. 72.
4. Cf. Larrain 1994, pp. 68 et sqq., pp. 85 et sqq.
5. Pêcheux 1982, p. 105.
6. Pêcheux 1982, pp. 64, 190.
7. Pêcheux 1982, p. 105.
8. Pêcheux 1982, p. 111.

Pêcheux calls 'interdiscourse', namely on the '"complex whole in dominance" of the discourse formations'.[9] However, the discursive formation conceals, by the transparency of the meaning, its determination, namely 'the contradictory material objectivity of interdiscourse . . . that resides in the fact that "it speaks" ("*ça parle*") always "before, elsewhere and independently", i.e. under the domination of the complex of ideological formations'.[10] Insofar as individuals are called upon as subjects of 'their' discourse, the constitution of the subject and that of meaning coincide in one and the same process.[11] The similarities with Adorno's and Horkheimer's critique of 'identifying thought' are obvious (see above, Section 4.5.), but the different theoretical traditions never engaged in a dialogue at the time.

Pêcheux's modifications can be interpreted as an attempt to break out of the 'eternity' of the Althusserian 'ideology in general' without explicitly challenging it. In order to counter the widespread criticism of Althusserian 'functionalism', Pêcheux proposed to enlarge the standpoint of reproduction with the conceptual couple of 'reproduction/transformation'.[12] Going back to Althusser's remarks on the specifics of a 'proletarian ideology,'[13] he distinguished between a bourgeois ideology calling out to an 'autonomous' subject and a proletarian ideology that interpellates the 'militant' subject.[14] This is however an all too simplistic juxtaposition, which dissimulates the fact that, for example, also Jacobin, nationalist, imperialist, and even fascistic ideologies interpellate their subjects as 'militants' (and for a 'common' cause).

To characterise the specific interpellations by 'proletarian ideology', Pêcheux proposed the concept of 'disidentification', that is, a 'transformation of the subject-form' in which the evidences imposed by the ideological state-apparatuses are reversed: since ideology in general is 'eternal' as a category, it 'does not disappear, but operates as it were *in reverse*, i.e. *on and against itself* ['*à l'envers*, c'est-à-dire *sur et contre elle-même*]'.[15] This does not mean an exit from subjection, but permanent 'work in and on the subject-form', so that within the subject-form the subject-form can, at the same time, be called into in question.[16]

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9. Pêcheux 1982, p. 113.
10. Ibid. In this arrangement, the 'preconstructeds' [*préconstruits*] function as 'ready-formed elements which circulate between discourse formations, which are perceived as what is "given" or known to or already said by participants, whereas they actually originate outside subjects, in interdiscourse'. (Fairclough 1992, p. 31)
11. Pêcheux 1982, pp. 105, 112; cf. the summarising description of interdiscourse and discursive formation by Denise Maldidier in Pêcheux 1990, pp. 43 et sqq.
12. Pêcheux 1982, p. 215; Pêcheux 1984a, pp. 61 et sqq.
13. Cf. Althusser 1995, pp. 263 et sqq.
14. Pêcheux and Fuchs 1975, p. 207, n. 5.
15. Pêcheux 1982, p. 159; cf. Pêcheux 1975, pp. 200–1.
16. Pêcheux 1982, pp. 194–5; Pêcheux 1975, pp. 248–9.

This anti-ideological 'counter-strike [*contrecoup*]' is related, on the one hand, to the appropriation of scientific knowledge and the operation of scientifico-educational discursive processes.[17] On the other hand, it is related to the political perspective of the 'non-state', which is supposed to make it possible to overcome representative politics in the proletarian revolution through revolutionary mass-democracy.[18] This means at the same time an 'ideological de-regionalisation' that drives politics beyond the limits of parliamentarism and creates a politics of the 'broken line', which – without the certainties of the 'master' and the knowledge of the pedagogues – consists in endlessly displacing the questions at stake.[19] Here Pêcheux refers to some of the operative, anti-ideological aspects of Lenin's praxis (discussed above in Section 3.3.) and of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, in which 'through the disidentification of the juridical ego-subject and the de-regionalisation of ideological functionality the multiformed network of the … dominated ideologies immediately begins to work in the direction of the non-state'.[20] Pêcheux's unmediated 'non-state' orientation in reference to Lenin and the Cultural Revolution, however, shared the theoretical weakness of lacking a dialectic strategy of how to connect the development of direct democracy with the democratisation of the existing state-apparatus.[21]

A self-critical remark of the 'Postscript' to *Language, Semantics and Ideology* echoed the self-criticism of Althusser with regard to the deviation of 'theoreticism' and also took up the criticism of Althusser's all-too-narrow interpretation of Lacan (see above Section 6.6.): through a problematic identification of the 'ego' and the 'subject-form', his book *Language, Semantics and Ideology* was still marked by a 'Platonic bent', an 'idealist return of a primacy of theory over practice'. 'Functionalism, expelled politically from the door, had managed, despite all denegations, to slip back in through the psychoanalytic window'.[22] On another occasion, he pointed out that *Language, Semantics and Ideology* did not yet deal with dominated ideologies. To explain their emergence would require understanding 'that there is no ritual without lacunae, nor rule without transgression, and that therefore the resistance and the revolts do no stop

17. Pêcheux 1982, pp. 159, 194.
18. Pêcheux 1984b, p. 65.
19. Pêcheux 1984b, p. 66.
20. Ibid. Norman Fairclough made the criticism that Pêcheux's disidentification of discursive formations is only possible in connection with the 'revolutionary theory and praxis of Marxism-Leninism' and the organisational form of the Communist Party (Fairclough 1992, p. 32): 'There is a one-sided view of the subject as positioned, as an effect; the capacity of subjects to act as agents, and even to transform the bases of subjection themselves, is neglected. The theory of "disidentification" as change externally generated by a particular political practice is an implausible alternative to building the possibility of transformation into one's view of discourse and the subject' (Fairclough 1992, p. 34).
21. Cf. Poulantzas 1978, p. 260.
22. Pêcheux 1982, p. 216.

under the interpellation of the ruling ideology'.[23] In a way similar to Judith Butler's critique of Althusser's model of interpellation (see above, Section 6.7.), he highlighted the permanent shifting of signifiers as a possible starting point for resistance.[24]

Some strengths and limits of Pêcheux's approach can be seen when we apply it to the South-African example of 'We are the poors' discussed in the context of Althusser's model of interpellation (see above, Section 6.6.). The concept of disidentification is, indeed, able to capture the poor's collective rejection of the dividing racial interpellations. The called-upon subjects might have turned around at the first moment towards the interpellating voice, but then something caused them to turn away again and take their distance: 'If you call upon us as Indians or Africans, we have to say, that's *not* us, that's not who we are'. Why and under what (dys-)hegemonic conditions a process of disidentification disrupts an initial recognition remains unclear in Pêcheux's account. The fact that there are lacunae, shiftings, and slippages in the ruling discourse cannot be the only resource for resistance. The articulation of a new counter-identity, 'we are not Indians/Africans, we are the poors', goes beyond both the notion of 'disidentification' and of shifting signifiers. It contains the articulation of lived experiences that cannot be conceptionalised within Pêcheux's framework.

Pêcheux's modifications are, in my estimation, not yet sufficient to overcome Althusser's 'passive' concept of the subject as an effect of ideological interpellations. This is in part due to the decision to place his concept of discourse-theory in the framework of Zellig Harris's' formalist version of structuralism, which based itself on the systematic exclusion of the 'signified' from its scientific object. As Pêcheux explained in an interview with the German revue *Das Argument*, for him, taking seriously the 'materiality of the text' meant to decipher its unconscious discursive structures that, instead of being produced by a subject, 'produce the reader-subject'.[25] The German interviewers (Harold Woetzel and Manfred Geier) expressed their astonishment at Pêcheux's alliance with Harris's descriptivism, pointing out that it was usually criticised from a Marxist perspective for its purely 'formal' procedures that miss a connection to social reality, to history in general, to the subjectivity of the speaking subjects and to their social knowledge.[26] Indeed, Pêcheux's claim of textual 'materiality' risked losing

23. Gadet and Pêcheux 1982, p. 399.

24. Gadet and Pêcheux 1982, p. 397. Denise Maldidier locates a fundamental modification (*sérieux aggiornamento*) in 1980: 'La question du discours est désormais placée sous le signe de l'hétérogénéité. . . . Ce qui, dans les années précédentes, se cherchait à travers la contradiction marxiste ou les ratés de l'interpellation idéologique, s'inscrit désormais dans le terme "héterogénéité" '. (Pêcheux 1990, pp. 67 et sq.).

25. Gadet and Pêcheux 1982, p. 388.

26. Gadet and Pêcheux 1982, p. 390. Pêcheux responded that this objection was due to the predominance of the 'hermeneutic tradition of Marxism' in Germany (Ibid.).

any connection with social 'materiality' in which the conditions and practices of speaking are connected to each other, as well as to other types of conditions and practices. Continuing the path of what he called the theoretical 'triple alliance' between Althusser, Lacan and Saussure,[27] Pêcheux merged Althusser's 'theoretical antihumanism' with a 'linguistic turn', which, in an over-generalised struggle against any kind of 'hermeneutics', 'semantics', 'socio-' or 'psycho-linguistic', abstracted from the body, from experiences, and from history.[28]

However, Gadet and Pêcheux claimed to find a middle-way approach to language beyond 'logicism', which forgets what belongs to the political, historical and poetical dimensions of language, and 'sociologism', which proclaims to do without the concept of *langue*, because its unity is precisely an illusion created by ideological state-apparatuses.[29] In their book *La langue introuvable*, they argued against a concept of *langue* as a closed system, and (with the example of the French language) proposed reconstructuring it in a historical-materialist fashion: whereas feudal ideologies relied on the 'material existence of a linguistic barrier' between the elites and the masses, which had left the mosaic of local *patois* intact, the bourgeois national state established the national language through alphabetisation and its usage in jurisdiction, so that the question of the *langue* becomes very much 'a question of the State practicing a politics based on invading, absorbing, and annihilating differences'.[30]

I think there are, in the interstices of Pêcheux's overall theoretical approach, some promising elements of a new orientation of research which he had no time to develop any more. Of particular interest, in my view, is the project to redefine discourse-analysis 'from the direction of the multiple exigencies of everyday life' and from the fact that the 'pragmatic subject' ('ordinary people faced with the diverse exigencies of their lives') has itself the need for 'logical homogeneity'.[31] The remark is reminiscent of Gramsci's theory of common sense as a heterogeneous and contradictory ensemble and the perspective for a *philosophy of praxis* to work on its coherence (which is, however, certainly more than a mere 'logical' homogeneity). According to Pêcheux, we cannot deny a 'universal need for a "semantically normal (that is, normalised) world" ', which is anchored in our relation to our body and the immediate environment, 'beginning with

27. Pêcheux 1990, p. 261.

28. Cf. the critique of structuralism's and poststructuralism's abstractions with the examples of Saussure and Derrida, in McNally 2001, pp. 45 et sqq., 56 et sqq.

29. Gadet and Pêcheux 1982, p. 392.

30. Gadet and Pêcheux 1981, pp. 34–6. The approach was inspired among others by Renéé Balibar and Dominique Laporte's book *Le Français National*, which pursued the reconstruction of the French language on the two levels: the linguistic effects of the *political* domination of the bourgeoisie and the '*politique* bourgeoise *de la langue*' (Balibar and Laporte 1974, pp. 80 et sqq.).

31. Pêcheux 1988, p. 639.

the distribution of good and bad objects, archaically figured by the distinction between food and excrement'. This need is linked to multiple and interconnected 'things to be known' [*choses à savoir*] functioning as reserves for accumulated knowledge on which we depend, and that is often administered by the state and institutions.[32] Pêcheux thus acknowledges what is usually neglected in an Althusserian framework, namely a space of everyday practices and knowledge, which discourse-analysis needs to take into account: a discourse is not 'a miraculous aerolite, independent of networks of memory and the social trajectories within which it erupts', but it marks, by its very existence, 'the possibility of a destructuring-restructuring of these networks and trajectories' and 'the potential sign of a movement within the socio-historical filiations of identification'.[33]

7.2. The post-Marxist turn of Ernest Laclau and Chantal Mouffe

Laclau was initially concerned with distinguishing the material in the ideological struggles from elaborated class-ideologies: the single ideological elements have no necessary relation to class, but obtain it only through their articulation in an ideological discourse whose unity is produced by 'the specific interpellation which forms the axis and organising principle of all ideology'.[34] One should distinguish between interpellations as class and popular-democratic interpellations in which subjects are called upon as the 'people' against the ruling power-bloc.[35] 'Class struggle at the ideological level consists, to a great extent in the attempt to articulate popular-democratic interpellations in the ideological discourses of antagonistic classes. The popular-democratic interpellation not only has no precise class content, but is the domain of ideological class struggle par excellence'.[36] According to Lacau, the defeat of the workers' parties at the hands of fascism was connected to these parties limiting themselves to proletarian class-discourses, while the Nazis developed a populism that was able to occupy the contradictions between the ruling power-bloc and the 'people', and incorporate them into a racist anti-democratic discourse.[37]

While, in his concept of 'proletarian ideology', Pêcheux sought to develop further the dimensions of ideology-critique and immanent subject-critique within an Althusserian framework, Laclau based himself upon a model of interpellation that functioned 'in the same way', based 'on the same mechanism' for ruling

32. Ibid.
33. Pêcheux 1988, p. 648.
34. Laclau 1977, pp. 99, 101.
35. Laclau 1977, pp. 107–8.
36. Laclau 1977, pp. 108–9.
37. Laclau 1977, pp. 124 et sqq., pp. 136–7, 142.

ideologies and for the ideologies of the oppressed.[38] By highlighting the 'neutral' notion of ideology as a practice that produces subjects, the ideology-critical edge is taken out. The way is thus free to replace it with the concept of discourse.

This occurred in the poststructuralist turn, in which Laclau and Mouffe bade farewell to Marxist theory (including Gramsci and Althusser) in the name of an in principle indeterminism of the social.[39] Whereas Laclau had earlier emphasised the necessity of linking popular-democratic elements with the class-discourse of the workers' movement so as to avoid the alternative between left-radical sectarianism and social-democratic opportunism,[40] the centrality of the working class was now regarded as an 'ontological' prejudice.[41] That Gramsci and Althusser related the materiality of the ideological to the social superstructures was interpreted as an 'essentialist assumption' of an 'a priori unity'.[42] Ideology was replaced by discourse, which was defined as a 'structured totality' of articulation-activities, which in turn were supposed to include both linguistic and non-linguistic elements.[43]

Based on such a comprehensive definition, the discursive however coincides with the social as such. When Laclau and Mouffe conclude that there is no object that is not 'constituted as an object of discourse',[44] they formulate a tautology. According to Eagleton, with Laclau and Mouffe 'the "inflation of discourse" in post-structuralist thought reaches its apogee': 'The category of discourse is inflated to the point where it imperializes the whole world, eliding the distinction between thought and material reality'.[45] The concept of discourse has here absorbed into itself so many meanings from the different fields of ideology, of culture and language that it becomes analytically useless.[46]

38. Laclau 1977, p. 101, n. 32.
39. Laclau and Mouffe 1985, pp. 69, 85 et sqq., 98.
40. Laclau 1977, pp. 141–2.
41. Laclau and Mouffe 1985, p. 87. Oliver Marchart is one of the many who uncritically celebrate the abandonment of any class-politics as a heroic post-Marxist deed of liberation. According to him, Laclau and Mouffe have removed the 'last class core' from the concept of hegemony, which thus can develop its full potential – 'by this *discursive turn* the terrain of class analysis is ultimately left behind' (Marchart 2007, pp. 113–14). The author is so happy about this abandonment that he does not even think it necessary to explain why this should be an intellectual achievement.
42. Laclau and Mouffe 1985, p. 109.
43. Laclau and Mouffe 1985, pp. 105, 109.
44. Laclau and Mouffe 1985, p. 107.
45. Eagleton 1991, p. 219.
46. Cf. Sawyer 2003, p. 59.

7.3. Stuart Hall: bridging the theory of hegemony and discourse-analysis

Stimulated, among others, by Laclau's studies on right-wing populism, Stuart Hall investigated how Thatcherism 'set out to and has effectively become a populist political force, enlisting popular consent among significant sections of the dominated classes, successfully presenting itself as a force on the side of the people'. What is to be explained is 'an ideology that has successfully penetrated, fractured and fragmented the territory of the dominated classes, precitipating a rupture in their traditional discourses (labourism, reformism, welfarism, Keynesianism) and actively working on the discursive space'.[47]

From this perspective, Hall criticised different concepts of ideology: when, in the *German Ideology*, Marx and Engels equated the ideas of the ruling class with the ruling ideas (see above, Section 2.1.5.), they established a theoretical model that misses the 'internal fractioning of the ideological universe of the ruling classes' as well as the specifically new Thatcherist combination of an 'iron regime' and populist mobilisation from below.[48] Just as language is 'multiply accentuated', as Vološinov has demonstrated, so also is the ideological 'always a field of overlapping accents', so that the representation of fixed class-ideologies is to be replaced by the concept of an 'ideological field of struggle' and the task of 'ideological transformation'.[49]

In Hall's view, the critical conception of ideology as 'false consciousness' misunderstood that the ideological 'reversals' analysed by Marx in *Capital* were not 'false' but rational in the context of real levels of reality that are however one-sidedly generalised.[50] The sphere of circulation with its values of 'Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham',[51] deduced by Marx from the contract-relation of exchange, is a reality without which capitalism could not function. The experience of the market, the wage-packet, the penny in the machine, and so on, is for anyone '*the* most immediate, everyday and universal experience of the economic system'.[52] Both reformist and revolutionary ideologies 'are ways of organizing, discursively, not false but real, or (for the epistemologically squeamish) real enough, interests and experiences'.[53] The most important question regarding an 'organic' ideology is 'not what is *false* about it but what about it is *true'*, i.e. what 'makes good sense', which is usually 'quite enough for ideology'.[54]

47. Hall 1988, pp. 40, 42.
48. Hall 1988, pp. 40–2.
49. Hall 1983, pp. 78–9; cf. Vološinov 1973, pp. 65 et sqq.
50. Hall 1983, pp. 72–3.
51. Marx 1976, p. 280; Marx 1867, p. 186.
52. Hall 1983, pp. 72, 75.
53. Hall 1988, p. 46.
54. Ibid.

Hall criticised Althusser for giving 'an *over-integrative* account' of the reproduction of a ruling ideology that did not account sufficiently for the contradictions of the ideological.[55] As I argued earlier (see above, Section 6.7.), his own distinction of three different types of decoding, the 'dominant-hegemonic', the 'negotiated' and the 'oppositional' code[56] can be seen as a comprehensive model that is able to integrate Althusser's top-down interpellations as one of its varieties. According to Hall, Althusser's theory of the subject was not equipped to analyse how 'already positioned subjects can be effectively detached by their points of application and effectively *repositioned* by a new series of discourses', since the 'transhistorical speculative generalities of Lacanianism', through its fixation on the first entrance into language as constitutive for the subject, neglected the appropriation of the respective concrete 'languages'.[57] Hall's objection can easily be explained with our example of Desai's *We are the poors*: the question of whether the poor interpellated as privileged 'Indians' can recognise themselves in this interpellation, or whether they oppose it by a resisting identity as 'the poors', cannot be answered in the framework of a general psychoanalytical model. What needs to be explored is therefore the experiences and the concrete conditions of hegemony and discourse upon which the already 'positioned' subjects are able to 'reposition' themselves and to find a new language.

Hall concluded that Gramsci's concept of hegemony is best suited to the analysis of neoliberalism, because he dealt with the central problem of the consent of the masses without taking the mistaken path of a false consciousness and mediated ideology with the contradictory composition of common sense.[58] Using Hall's example, one can observe how the frontline against a traditional notion of 'false consciousness' can lead back to a 'neutral' conception in which ideology signifies the 'mental context' that 'different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works'.[59] Against the critical meaning of ideology in Marx and Engels, which he erroneously reduces to a critique of 'false consciousness', he wants to use the concept in a 'more descriptive' sense, 'in order to refer to *all* organised forms of social thought'.[60] With that, the ideology-critical strand in Gramsci's thought is once again eliminated (see above, Section 5.7.). This leads in turn, as Koivisto and Pietilä have demonstrated, to a diffuse relation to both 'culture' and 'discourse'.[61]

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55. Hall 1988, p. 48.
56. Hall 1993, p. 517.
57. Hall 1988, p. 50.
58. Hall 1988, pp. 53 et sqq.
59. Hall 1983, p. 59.
60. Hall 1983, p. 60.
61. Cf. the criticism in Koivisto and Pietilä 1993, pp. 242–3.

Colin Sparks's historical overview has shown that it was in the aftermath of 1968 that the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham opened itself up to Marxist analyses, which in turn became more and more influenced by an Althusserian approach.[62] When cultural studies caught on internationally in the 1980s, it also started to move away from any self-identification with Marxism, which was replaced by a 'post-Marxist' paradigm at the beginning of the 1990s.[63] It was in fact primarily the poststructuralist abandonment of Marxism that allowed cultural studies to become an established discipline, particularly in the US.

Sparks concludes that 'the link between Marxism and cultural studies was much more contingent and transitory than it once appeared even to its main actors'.[64] In my estimation, this is a rash judgment. Firstly, the concept of Marxism is used in the singular and as a fixed entity once and for all without discussing the analytical criteria that constitute it. Carrying out critical studies into culture was breaking new ground and required innovative methods, which by definition had to go beyond the established rules a dogmatically defined 'singular' Marxism. Secondly, it is questionable to project back the poststructuralist turn of a new generation of cultural studies to their founders. Stuart Hall has actually been criticised by several Marxists for his turn to semiology, which was strongly inspired by Roland Barthes. We cannot discuss these debates here.[65] But contrary to poststructuralism, with which Hall is sometimes associated, he refused to have the ideological dissolved into discourse or power, as practiced by Foucault and Laclau/Mouffe. According to him, the substitution of ideology by knowledge/power comes 'at the cost of a radical *dispersal* of the notion of power', in which discursive practices seem to 'pass continually on different tracks, like trains in the nights, on their way to an infinite plurality of destinations'. These approaches sidestep, for example, the 'deep and difficult problem of the relation between the lateral powers in the sites of civil society and social relations and the vertical powers of, say, the state and political relationships'.[66] Hall criticised the mainstream of US cultural studies for its 'overwhelming textualization', which 'formalizes out of existence the critical questions of power, history, and politics', by constituting them as 'exclusively matters of language and textuality itself'.[67] A self-critical reflection on the development of cultural studies points out that its (necessary) struggle against class-reductionism and

62. Sparks 1996, pp. 80, 82.
63. Sparks 1996, pp. 88, 96.
64. Sparks 1996, p. 97.
65. For the debates between Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams, cf. Jones 2004, pp. 105 et sqq.
66. Hall 1988, p. 52; cf. Hall 1996, pp. 135–6; Hall 1983, p. 78.
67. Hall 1996, p. 274.

class-essentialism led to a situation where issues like class, the fundamental category of 'capital' and its internationalisation dropped out of sight altogether. The most important task is now to take up these dimensions again and to reintegrate them into cultural studies.[68]

Considering these statements against the grain, I think one should be hesitant to subsume Hall under a post-Marxist turn. Rather, he stands for the difficult, and at times vacillating and inconsistent, attempt to bridge the gap between a neo-Gramscian theory of hegemony and the linguistic turn in cultural studies.

7.4. Michel Foucault's neo-Nietzschean trajectory from ideology to discourse to power

The dissolution of the Althusserian school and the 'crisis of Marxism' were intimately intertwined with various 'superannuations' of ideology-theory by theoretical approaches of discourse and power. Most of them referred in particular to Michel Foucault, who, after having been supported by Althusser for several years, turned away from Althusser's early concept of ideology in 1969. I focus on the formative influence of Nietzsche on Foucault mainly for two reasons. Firstly, Foucault confessed his 'fundamental Nietzscheanism' throughout the different periods of his work; secondly, Nietzsche has indeed become (together with Heidegger) the main reference-point for poststructuralist and postmodernist theories in general,[69] so that Foucault becomes a case in point for a paradigm-shift that goes beyond him. After reconstructing how Foucault developed a peculiar Nietzschean-Heideggerian strand of 'anti-humanism', I will deal with the formative period of his theory of power from about 1968 to 1971, which passed through different stages: he first dissolved the problem of ideology into the concept of 'knowledge' and 'discourse' and then transferred it – via the adoption of Nietzsche's 'fictionalism' – to the concept of power. But this does not mean that all of his theoretical proposals are of no interest for a historical-materialist ideology-theory. In conclusion, I will discuss how Foucault's concepts of '*dispositif*' and 'techniques of power' could be re-interpreted in an alternative framework.

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68. Hall 1996, p. 400.

69. According to Cornel West, the features we associate with postmodernism 'go back to Deleuze's resurrection of Nietzsche against Hegel' (West 1999, p. 283). Habermas treats Nietzsche as the decisive entry-point into postmodernism (Habermas 1987b, pp. 83 et sqq.); according to Manfred Frank, neostructuralism overthrows structuralism by means of a philosophical thesis 'attained through a reconsideration of Nietzsche's overcoming of metaphysics' (M. Frank 1989, p. 22). As Resch observes, 'The Nietzschean Left was Postmodernism *avant la lettre*' (Resch 1989, p. 514). According to Waite (1996, p. 108), 'Poststructuralism must be defined as an *overwhelmingly positive, assimilative embrace of Nietzsche.* And it is as such that it persists today'.

7.4.1. *A peculiar Nietzschean-Heideggerian strand of 'anti-humanism'*

Foucault's *The Order of Things* (1966) begins with the assumption that 'man is only a recent invention, . . . a new wrinkle in our knowledge', and closes with the perspective that 'man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea'.[70] It is clear that Foucault is not assuming the disappearance of empirical human beings. What is at stake is the epistemological status of humans as the 'subject' of history and its 'telos'. In this generalised meaning, man is, in his view, an invention of the humanities at the end of the eighteenth century, and this concept has already begun to vanish in light of structuralist ethnology and Lacanian psychoanalysis. For Foucault, it was Nietzsche who had, by his discovery of the 'death of man' and 'the promise of the overman', opened the way to a new thinking 'in the void left by man's disappearance':[71] Nietzsche 'took the end of time and transformed it into the death of God and the odyssey of the last man; he took up anthropological finitude once again, but in order to use it as a basis for the prodigious leap of the superman; . . . It was Nietzsche, in any case, who burned for us . . . the intermingled promises of the dialectic and anthropology'.[72]

As can be seen by this passage, Foucault's reading of Nietzsche (similar to that of Gilles Deleuze before him) belongs to a 'hermeneutics of innocence', which represses both the socio-political context and the radically aristocratic and reactionary perspective of Nietzsche's philosophy.[73] What is erased in this reading is, for example, the fact that for the late Nietzsche (whose *Zarathustra* Foucault is referring to above) the 'overman' [*Übermensch*] is no longer the free-thinker living like an 'Epicurean god',[74] but the 'law-giver' [*Gesetzgeber*] who represents a 'higher form of aristocratism'[75] and increasingly merges with the 'physician' whose task is to fulfil the 'medical' annihilation of 'degenerating life'.[76] It is not legitimate, in my view, to praise Nietzsche's insight in the 'perspectivism' of seeing and knowing without considering what his own 'perspectivism' consisted of.

It has often been observed that Foucault's critique of modernity's 'anthropological sleep' was also heavily influenced by Heidegger's critique of humanism,

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70. Foucault 1994, pp. XXIII, 387.
71. Foucault 1994, pp. XXIII, 342.
72. Foucault 1994, p. 263.
73. On the 'hermeneutics of innocence', cf. Losurdo 2004, pp. 653, 781 et sqq., 798 et sqq.; see also my review-article (Rehmann 2007a).
74. Cf. Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 9, p. 604; Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 10, p. 244.
75. Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 12, pp. 462–3.
76. Cf. Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 6, pp. 134, 174; Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 10, pp. 530, 372; Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 11, p. 542; Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 12, pp. 425 et sq.; Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 13, p. 18. Regarding Nietzsche's notion of the *Overman* and its misreading by Foucault, cf. Rehmann 2004a, pp. 87–8, 91–2.

especially by his *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*.[77] From his *Being and Time* (1927) to his *Letter on Humanism* (1947), Heidegger's diagnosis of Western and in particular modern thought was basically that the thought of Being (*Sein*) was gradually repressed in favour of the fantasy of the self-empowerment of the subject, so that Being was transformed into an object to be manipulated by our modes of acting and representing. Foucault, who declared in 1984 that Heidegger had been for him 'the essential philosopher' determining his 'entire philosophical development', and that without him he would not have read Nietzsche,[78] took up his view in the *Order of Things* and reformulated it. When, for example, he located the 'anthropological era' in the period following the late eighteenth century, he adopted this from Heidegger's *Zeit des Weltbilds*.[79] When he explained his intention 'to destroy the anthropological 'quadilateral' in its very foundations', in order to rediscover 'a purified ontology or a radical thought of being',[80] he indicated that he also shared the basic terms of Heidegger's 'fundamental ontology'.

The influence of Heidegger's ontology on Foucault's *The Order of Things* is widely acknowledged in secondary literature, but only seldom questioned. The fundamental problem of this connection is thus usually overlooked: Heidegger purified the being-in-the-world from the contingencies of the material world and defined it as 'transcendence of *Dasein*'.[81] As Günther Anders remarks, Heidegger's *Dasein* has 'neither a *body*, nor *hunger*, nor *gender*'.[82] Heidegger's overthrowing of Kant's 'transcendental idealism' consists basically of transposing the characteristics of the 'transcendental' (the 'a priori' status) to a concept of 'Being that is withdrawn from beings', as Habermas observed.[83] His critique of metaphysics of 'reason' flips over to the establishment of an 'ontological' metaphysics, from which any practical life-world is excluded. It is against the backdrop of this ideologisation of Being that Sartre defined his own concept of existentialism as priority of existence over essence – '*l'existence précède l'essence*' – and demands, similar to Marx's first thesis on Feuerbach, to start from subjectivity,[84] to which Heidegger in turn responded that Sartre's variety of existentialism had 'not the least in common' with his own ontology, where man stands 'ek-sisting . . . in the destiny of being'.[85]

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77. Heidegger 1991. As demonstrated by Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, Foucault took up whole passages almost verbatim (Ferry and Renaut 1985, pp. 142 et sq.).
78. Foucault 2001b, Nr. 354, p. 1522.
79. Heidegger 1950. Cf. Heidegger 1977, pp. 93, 99–100.
80. Foucault 1991, pp. 341–2.
81. Heidegger 1991, p. 235.
82. Anders 2001, pp. 83, 280.
83. Habermas 1987, p. 139.
84. Sartre 1958, p. 17.
85. Heidegger 1975, pp. 72–3, 79–80.

It is certainly not to be denied that Heidegger's critique of traditional metaphysics also had some appealing strengths, particularly regarding his philosophical reflections on our 'being-in-the-world'.[86] However, an uncritical adoption of Heidegger's ontology leads to a series of problems. Foucault is so fascinated with Heidegger's critique of the 'anthropological' self-(mis)understanding of modernity that he turns a blind eye to his elevation of Being to a new kind of ideological, quasi otherwordly 'beyond'. He thus establishes a Nietzschean-Heideggerian 'anti-humanism' that has effectively eliminated human practices from its world-view.

I would like to examine the consequences of this at the very point where Foucault tries to overcome the 'naïve' anthropology of Marx. According to Foucault, Marxism introduced 'no real discontinuity' in Western knowledge, but rather found its place without difficulty as a 'comfortable . . . form', unable to breathe outside the nineteenth century; its controversies with bourgeois economics 'may have stirred up a few waves and caused a few surface ripples; but they are no more than storms in a children's paddling pool'.[87] The reason is that Marx belonged to a general modern humanistic paradigm of 'utopias of ultimate development' that assume 'man's anthropological truth to spring forth in its stony immobility', to be fetched back from social 'alienation', or, according to a Freudian paradigm, to be deciphered in the endless murmur of the unconscious.[88] From now on, according to Foucault, 'all those who still wish to talk about man, about his reign or his liberation, . . . who still ask themselves questions about what man is in his essence' are philosophically laughable.[89]

In comparison to Althusserian 'anti-humanism', one can see that Foucault has taken up Althusser's criticism of the young Marx's 'humanism' and extended it to both Marx's entire work and to Marxism in general, so that any perspective of emancipation or liberation appears as a naïve anthropology that imagines an originally good and fixed nature of the human to be set free at last. Althusser reacts furiously to this anti-Marxist hijacking and instrumentalisation, calling Foucault's respective interviews on Marx 'foolish' [*déconnantes*].[90]

As we can see, the frontline against Freudo-Marxism which Foucault will develop in more detail in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality* is already prefigured in the *Order of Things*. As in my discussion of Lacan, I have again to leave open whether or to what degree Foucault's critique had a point in regard to some naïve Freudo-Marxist perspectives of sexual repression and liberation

86. For a more extensive account, cf. Rehmann 2004a, pp. 74–81.
87. Foucault 1991, pp. 261–2.
88. Foucault 1994, pp. 262, 327.
89. Foucault 1994, p. 342.
90. Cf. Eribon 1994, pp. 333 et sqq.; the interview in question is probably 'L'homme est-il mort?' of 1966 (in: Foucault 2001a, Nr. 39, pp. 568 et sqq.).

that were influential at the time (see above, Section 6.6.).[91] It is, however, absurd to ascribe such an essentialist anthropology to Marx himself, who stated in his Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach, that the essence of humans is 'no abstraction inherent in each separate individual', but rather 'in its reality . . . the ensemble of social relations'.[92] Contrary to Foucault's assumption, Marx has clearly distanced himself from any 'stony immobility' of a fixed human nature that is just waiting to come out. His argument goes rather like this: If you want to find something like a human 'essence', don't search for an inward, dumb generality, but look at the societal relations the individuals in question are involved in. Instead of indulging to the abstract platitude of a 'death of man', Marx shifts his focus to an epistemology of praxis: reality is to be analysed as 'sensuous human activity', he writes in his First Thesis on Feuerbach, as an aggregate of social practices.[93] Whatever might be outdated in Marx, this foundational impulse of a 'philosophy of praxis' is certainly not.

It is, therefore, imperative to differentiate two fundamentally different criticisms of a transcendental concept of subject. Foucault developed a Nietzschean-Heideggerian 'antihumanism', which generated not much more than the abstract rhetoric of a 'death of man', in the name of which human practices vanished behind the succession of discursive paradigms. 'Doesn't poststructuralism, where it simply denies the subject altogether, jettison the chance of challenging the *ideology of the subject* (as male, white, and middle class) by developing alternative and different notions of subjectivity?', asked Huyssen.[94] According to Sanbonmatsu, the 'magical transformation from the human *being* into a human *effect* is itself a symptom of reification'.[95] Despite the apparent anti-Platonic rhetoric, the idea of humans as 'mere shadows, shadows cast by other shadows – by *pouvoir* or by discourse' is reminiscent of 'Plato's idealist skepticism toward perceptual knowledge'.[96] Contrary to such 'theoretical anti-humanism', Marx's approach can be characterised as a combination of deconstruction and reconstruction: having deconstructed the SUBJECT as a transcendental figure, he reconstructs the reality of concrete social subjects living under concrete societal conditions and praxis-forms, and does so in the perspective of enhancing their capacities

91. Both Lacanianism and Foucauldianism have created an over-generalised image of an essentialist and utopian of 'Freudo-Marxism' that dissimulates its inner diversity. Foucault's critique might well apply, for example, to some of Wilhelm Reich or Erich Fromm's Rousseauian tendencies, but not so easily, for example, to Herbert Marcuse's strand of Freudo-Marxism.

92. Marx 1845, p. 4.

93. Ibid.

94. Huyssen 1986, p. 213.

95. Sanbonmatsu 2004, p. 112.

96. Sanbonmatsu 2004, p. 111.

to act. Since Foucault is not interested in such a practical-humanist perspective, his discourse remains stuck in the realm of philosophical abstractions.

According to Nietzsche, there is no 'human species, but only different singular individuals'.[97] It is perfectly consistent from Nietzsche's own perspective to oppose any concept of a human species-being, because it contains egalitarian implications: it is symptomatic that 'mass instinct' has captured even the process of knowledge.[98] He sensed that if one started from the assumption of a human species-being, one had at some point to acknowledge that all individuals are connected to each other by something which is common to them. This is the uneasy community that Nietzsche was rejecting. Throughout the *Zarathustra*, the 'end of man' is intimately linked to 'overman's' disgust of the 'small people': this 'dirty stream' that is man, 'human mould and bones', the 'mob hodgepodge' – 'O nausea! Nausea! Nausea!'.[99]

Against this backdrop, Foucault's 'anti-humanism' is like a repetition of Nietzsche's elitism without giving any thought to its political implications. It is not least by this Nietzschean strand of 'anti-humanism' that postmodernism intersected with a 'neoliberalism' that tends to dissolve any sense of common responsibility for the welfare of all citizens. The rhetoric of the 'end of man' played into the hands of a radical market-ideology that has no interest in recognising as fellow human beings those who search for food in garbage-heaps.[100] Under these conditions, it is intellectually and strategically questionable to give up the concept of a human species, rather than radically historicise and concretise it. Postmodernist Nietzscheanism has thus contributed to diverting social movements from the tasks of identifying the overarching problems of human survival, and of how to build up a new (and diversified) universalism from below.

7.4.2. *The dissolution of Althusser's concept of ideology into 'knowledge'*

In the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault encountered the problem of ideology when he tried to 'show positively how a science functions in the element of knowledge': the ideological functioning of science can be observed 'where science stands out against knowledge' [*se découpe sur le savoir*], where it is 'localised' in it, finds its place in a 'discursive regularity', where it functions in a 'field

97. Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 9, p. 508.
98. Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 9, pp. 500–1.
99. *Zarathustra*, Prologue, §3; part. III, The Convalescent, §3; part IV, On the Higher Man, §3; cf. Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 4, pp. 15, 274, 357–8.
100. This is why Sartre accused Foucault of establishing 'a new ideology, the last barrage that the bourgeoisie can still erect against Marx' (Sartre 1966, p. 88).

of discursive practices', in short where it 'exists as a discursive practice'.[101] It is important to note that 'knowledge' [*savoir*] does not mean an empirically given amount of information, but a deeper level of rules which determine 'that which must have been said – or must be said – if a discourse is to exist', and which thus constitute the preconditions 'on the basis of which coherent (or incoherent) propositions are built up . . . and theories developed'.[102]

The transfer of the concept of ideology to the concepts of knowledge and discursive practice leads to an over-generalisation, which leads to the loss of any critical edge. This becomes obvious as soon as one asks the counter-question, where science would then *not* exist as discursive practice and would *not* be localised in knowledge. Foucault has bid farewell to the question of ideology before he has even raised it. To raise the question of ideology would mean to search in both 'knowledge' and 'science' for specific forms and modes of functioning that organise a 'voluntary' submission to the respective relations of domination, weaken the dispositions of resistance or block encompassing solutions. The analytical method to dissect given discourse-formations according to different dimensions or functions is however not possible in Foucault's 'archaeological' approach, because it is not compatible with the constitutive capacities that he ascribes to his notion of 'rules'.

As Dominique Lecourt has shown, Foucault's *Archeology of Knowledge* reacted here to Althusser's *For Marx* and *Reading Capital*.[103] It is, therefore, worthwhile to look at the points of intersection and divergence. On the basis of Gaston Bachelard's concept of the 'epistemological break', and with the example of Marx, whom he divided into an early humanistic (and thus 'ideological') and into a mature historical-materialist (and thus 'scientific') Marx from about 1845 onwards, Althusser had established an opposition of science and ideology.[104] At this stage of Althusser's development, the ideological was not yet understood as a material instance of ideological apparatuses and practices, but in general terms, as a necessarily 'imaginary', 'lived' relation to the world – an understanding, however, which Althusser preserved later too, integrating it into his concept of 'ideology in general'. I have already criticised Althusser's negation of the ideological by 'science', understood as an 'objective' process of production independent from subjects, for remaining abstract and cut off from any standpoint in human praxis itself, thereby facilitating its later dissolution into discourse (see above, Section 6.5.).

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101. Foucault 1972, p. 185 (translation corrected).
102. Foucault 1972, p. 182.
103. Lecourt 1975, pp. 199–200.
104. Cf. Althusser 1979, pp. 223 et sqq.

Against this backdrop, it is important to see that Foucault in no way contradicted Althusser's over-general concept of ideology, which was taken as given when he equated it with his notion of discursive practice. What he left behind was merely Althusser's attempt to negate and overcome ideology by 'science'. Where Althusser described the task of science as that of transforming spontaneous (and therefore 'ideological') perceptions through 'theoretical practice' into a 'concrete-in-thought',[105] Foucault proposed to describe both science and knowledge as 'discursive formations'.[106] Even if one is not convinced of Althusser's dichotomy of ideology and science, which he himself later challenged in his *Self-Criticism* of 1974, it is obvious that Foucault's response oversimplifies the relationship in a way that altogether eclipses the perspective of a critical-analytical working through of one's ideological presuppositions.

This becomes even clearer when he argues that instead of looking at 'theoretical contradictions, lacunae, defects', the ideological functioning of a science must be analysed on the level of its 'positivity'.[107] By this, Foucault implicitly, and in passing, refers to Althusser's concept of a 'symptomatic reading' (*lecture symptômale*) developed in *Reading Capital*. With this concept, Althusser tried to identify the 'lacunae . . . and blanks' in a text, to unveil the inner link between what is seen and what is not seen, and to lay open the textual ruptures and fissures that indicate the interference of a second text in latency with an opposite logic.[108] What Althusser formulates here can be understood as a differentiated project of a text-immanent ideology-critique. Foucault's proposal to replace it with an analysis of the text's 'positivity' is an all-too-swift move that risks destroying any critical analysis of texts.

In the 'happy positivism' he propagated,[109] Foucault abandoned the analytical task of relating the respective formations of knowledge and science to the underlying social perspectives, and of differentiating between the inherent ideological or subversive and anti-ideological dimensions. What got lost is the theoretical understanding that the societal productions of knowledge and reflection are themselves antagonistically structured fields, on and around which different social positions struggle with each other. When one compares Foucault's positivist conclusion with Althusser's *Self-Criticism*, one can see that the latter maintained a much stronger awareness of the antagonistic character of knowledge and science: rejecting his own antithesis science/ideology, he proposed to rework it from the point of view of a 'complex process of the "production" of

105. Althusser 1979, pp. 185 et sqq.
106. Foucault 1972, p. 186.
107. Ibid.
108. Cf. Althusser and Balibar 2009, pp. 28–29.
109. Foucault 1972, p. 125.

knowledge, where the class conflicts of the practical ideologies combine with the theoretical ideologies, the existing sciences and philosophy'.[110] As Pêcheux argued in his essay 'Remontons de Foucault à Spinoza', Foucault missed the task of analysing a discursive formation on two levels, namely on the one hand from a 'regional' standpoint, which identifies its internal relationships, and on the other hand from a point of view of class, which is able to explain why ideologies invoke the same higher values but 'under contradictory modalities that are connected to the class antagonism'.[111] I will later return to this phenomenon, when I discuss the *Projekt Ideologietheorie's* concept of an 'antagonistic reclamation of the *Gemeinwesen*' (see Section 9.4.).

Foucault thus adopted an early version of Althusser's 'ideology in general' and simultaneously diluted it into the concept of discourse. He then stopped engaging with Althusser's later development of the ideological state-apparatus concept. In 1976, six years after the publication of the ideological state-apparatus essay, he still maintained that the concept of ideology is 'always' in opposition to truth, is 'necessarily' related to a subject and subordinated to the economy.[112] All of these descriptions had of course already been rejected by Althusser, whose notion of the materiality of the ideological was no longer addressed by Foucault. According to Lecourt, Foucault remained in an 'archeological circle':[113] in his search for the interlocking [*embrayage*] between discourse-formations and their material-institutional base, he did not find anything but the regularities of the discourses themselves. The Foucauldian *Archaeology* thus remained a 'theoretical ideology' that was not able to conceive of the connection between ideological subject-production, the social mode of production and social struggles.[114]

7.4.3. *The substitution of ideology-critique by 'fictionalism'*

At the same time as Althusser was working on a materialist concept of the ideological in his ideological state-apparatus essay (written 1969–70, published 1970), Foucault took up again his readings of Nietzsche. In 1969, he gave a course in Vincennes entitled 'Nietzsche and Genealogy', in the winter semester 1970–1 he taught another class at the Collège de France titled '*La volonté de savoir*', which dealt with Nietzsche's concept of a 'will to knowledge', and in December 1970 he gave his inaugural speech at the *Collège de France* with the title '*L'ordre du discours*', in which he introduced the concept of power for the first time.

110. Althusser 1976, pp. 147–8.
111. Cf. Pêcheux 1990, p. 258.
112. Foucault 2001b, Nr. 192, p. 148.
113. Lecourt 1975, p. 205.
114. Lecourt 1975, pp. 206–7, 213.

Before I look at the genealogy of Foucault's neo-Nietzschean concept of power, I would like to first observe how he adopted from Nietzsche a fictionalism, which totalised the perspective-dimensions of perceiving and thinking by declaring them to be 'untrue'. Fictionalism can be defined as a 'negative ontology of knowledge', by which fiction is extended to its counterpart of reality: 'Whatever is due to thought operations, which are constructive and correlating, ordering and interpreting, is thereby defined as fiction'.[115]

Nietzsche is a good example to demonstrate how fictionalism first emerged from a justified and potentially fruitful critique of metaphysics, which however remained inconsequential. Indeed, Nietzsche outlined a convincing argument when, against the truth-idealism of traditional philosophy, he argued that the assumption of 'knowledge as such' suppressed the active and interpreting dimensions of perception, 'by which seeing only becomes seeing-something': 'There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective "knowing" ', and 'the *more* affects we allow to speak about a thing, the *more* eyes, various eyes we are able to use for the same thing, the more complete will be our 'concept' of the thing, our "objectivity" '.[116] Nietzsche's argument intersects in an astonishing way with a core tenet of Marxian ideology-critique, which consists of reconstructing the products of human thought from the perspective of underlying social standpoints and practices. It strongly reminds one of, for example, Gramsci's critique of objectivism, in which the term 'objective' is re-interpreted as 'humanely objective' and thereby as 'historically subjective'.[117] For Bertolt Brecht, truth is a matter of capacity, something that 'needs to be produced. There are therefore modes of production of truth'.[118] Compared to an idealistic concept of 'truth' as such, independent of human perspectives, Nietzsche's 'perspectivism' could have acquired the potential to reconstruct knowledge and truths (in the plural) as epistemological 'productions' embedded in social practices.

However, this potential could not be realised, because Nietzsche's standpoint remained basically one of a disappointed 'truth-idealism' turned over to the negative: he considers the perspectivist and humanely relational-relative character of truth as the soiling of an idealised heroic act of knowledge. By the fact that Nietzsche conceives of thinking as perspective and embedded in the human 'community and herd-nature', it becomes for him 'flat, thin, relative-dumb, general'.[119] Since he recognises truth as the 'sum of human relations', he turns it into illusion and deception. It becomes an obligation imposed by society to 'lie' according to

115. W.F. Haug 1999, pp. 449, 459.
116. Nietzsche 1999a, III, §12; Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 5, p. 365.
117. Cf. Gramsci 1975, Q11, §17, pp. 1415–16.
118. Brecht 1967, 20, p. 189.
119. Nietzsche 1999b, pp. 591 et sqq.

a fixed convention and in a style mandatory for all,[120] the vehicle of a general human will to deception and fiction: 'Man has . . . an invincible inclination to be deceived', and for that he is 'enchanted by happiness'.[121] Nietzsche concludes that the truths are nothing but the '*irrefutable* errors of man' [*unwiderlegbaren Irrthümer des Menschen*], the appearance is the 'real and only reality of things' [*die wirkliche und einzige Realität der Dinge*], the true world is a 'mere fiction, built up merely by fictitious things' [*eine bloße Fiktion, aus lauter fingirten Dingen gebildet*].[122]

Foucault adopted Nietzsche's 'negative ontology of knowledge' from early on and held on to it throughout. In 1963, he proposed to delete all 'contradictory words' that juxtaposed the subjective and the objective, inside and outside, reality and imaginary and to replace them with a '*language de fiction*'.[123] In 1966, he described fiction as the 'order of the narrative' [*régime du récit*], the 'woven fabric' [*trame*] that is at the base of the relationship between the speaker and what is spoken,[124] and in this sense he himself has written nothing but historical 'fictions', which are certainly not true.[125]

In this way the ideological is dissolved into a negative ontology of 'everything is fake'. Contrary to a widespread misconception, the actual controversy here is not between a postmodernist 'perspectivism' and a Marxist 'objectivism'. The acknowledgement that human seeing, thinking, and feeling is active and thus determined by a respective social standpoint and perspective does not only correspond to Marx's first thesis on Feuerbach, but is also crucial for any critical analysis of ideological and discursive formations. The difference is that ideology-critique deciphers the social perspectives of discourses and ideologies, whereas fictionalism stops short and is satisfied with defining the perspective-character of seeing, acting, and thinking as something 'untrue' as such. Not only does this fall back behind the level of Marxist ideology-theory at the time, but even behind the classic ideology-critical topic of 'false consciousness', which for Marx and Engels was always connected with a search for the underlying objective divisions in societal reality. Instead of concreticising and fine-tuning such correlations, fictionalism places Marx's and Freud's ideology-critiques under suspicion of being ideological, because, on the basis of their claims to truth and perspectives of liberation, they apparently chase after a lost and hidden essence of the human.[126]

120. Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 1, pp. 880–1.
121. Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 1, p. 888.
122. Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 3, p. 518; Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 11, p. 654; Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 13, p. 270.
123. Foucault 2001a, Nr. 17, pp. 308–9.
124. Foucault 2001a, Nr. 36, p. 534.
125. Foucault 2001b, Nr. 280, p. 859; Foucault 2001b, Nr. 281, p. 863.
126. Foucault 1970, p. 262.

7.4.4. *The introduction of a neo-Nietzschean concept of power*

The transition from fictionalism's 'everything is fake' to 'everything is power' was already prepared by Foucault's early adoption of Nietzsche's anthropological assumptions: in 1967 he learns from Nietzsche that 'underneath all speaking' [*au-dessous de tout ce qui parle*] is a relation of violence.[127] Referring again to Nietzsche, he argues in 1971 that knowledge is an 'invention' driven (among other things) by man's 'will to appropriate' [*volonté d'appropriation*], by his 'hatred' and 'wickedness' [*méchanceté*].[128] In his essay 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', Foucault described the will to knowledge as a 'cruel subtlety', 'the inquisitor's devotion'. It is malicious, sometimes murderous, and in any case 'opposed to the happiness of mankind'.[129] According to Richard Wolin, this claim has 'wreaked more intellectual havoc' and 'pseudo-scholarly feeblemindedness, than one could possibly recount'.[130] Foucault is, indeed, so fascinated by Nietzsche's pseudo-radical rhetoric that he overlooks Nietzsche's fundamental operation of projecting back a peculiarly aggressive variety of bourgeois 'possessive individualism' and egotism onto human nature.[131] It is noteworthy that the same Foucault who accused Marx of a utopian notion of 'man's anthropological truth to spring forth in its stony immobility', has no hesitation in adopting from Nietzsche the most essentialist and reactionary assumptions of human nature.

From 'it's all discourse', 'it's all fake' and 'it's all malicious', we finally arrive at the last step of this formative period, namely to 'it's all power'. What is important for Foucault is that the late Nietzsche links the 'will to power' to the 'will to truth'. Several outlines of a structure for the planned book, *The Will to Power*, indicate that Nietzsche wanted its first chapter to be titled 'The Will to Truth'.[132] In *Zarathustra* (Part II, 'Self-Surpassing'), he proclaimed: 'And even thou, discerning one [*Erkennender*], art only a path and footstep' of this will to power, which in turn 'walketh even on the feet of thy Will to Truth'.[133] However one decides to distinguish between the different periods of Foucault's works, the connection between power, knowledge and truth is the main axis from the early 1970s all the way through *Discipline and Punish* of 1975 and the first volume of *History of Sexuality* (originally published in France 1976 with the Nietzschean

127. Foucault 2001a, Nr. 46, p. 600.
128. Foucault 2001a, Nr. 101, pp. 1111–12.
129. Foucault 1998, p. 387.
130. Wolin 2004, p. 42.
131. Cf. Mapherson 1962, pp. 3, 263–4; for an analysis of Nietzsche's radicalisation of early liberalism, see Losurdo 2004, pp. 314 et sqq., 1055 et sqq.
132. Cf. Nietzsche 1999, 13, pp. 515–16, 537, 543.
133. Nietzsche 1999c, p. 148.

title *La Volonté de savoir*) to the late studies on Greek Antiquity, Stoicism, and early Christianity in the 1980s.[134]

Foucault's power-concept made its first appearance in 1971 in *L'ordre du discours*.[135] It is linked to the 'will to truth', which is, from Plato onwards, the most important and insidious 'system of exclusion'. At the same time, power can also be seen on the side of what is excluded and subjugated by this system: namely the link between discourse, desire and power, 'the incessant, disorderly buzzing of discourse' and in particular what 'could possibly be violent, discontinuous, querulous' in that discursive buzzing.[136] Power thus emerges on opposite sides of the 'system of exclusion', on the side of the subjugating 'will to truth' and on the side of the creative-violent potency subjugated and controlled by the rule of truth. Emerging on the heels of a necessarily fictitious and malicious 'will to knowledge', Foucault's notion of power, like that of 'discourse', lurks, without qualification, from every directions. It is not being introduced as an analytical tool to decipher social relations and respective capacities to act, but rather as a vague quality somehow attached to knowledge and truth-claims, no matter for whom, of what kind, to what ends, or for doing what. We are dealing with a enigmatic force equally permeating the strategies of immediate domination, hegemonic ideologies as well as the aspirations of the dominated classes.

What is usually omitted in the mainstream literature is that, in 1971, Foucault did not yet use the power-concept in the sense of a 'micro-physics', but rather as an integral part of a hyper-radical Parisian 'gauchisme', which can be characterised by a combination of Nietzsche's 'will to power' and Mao Tse-tung's 'all power lies in the barrel of a gun'. In a discussion with high-school students in 1971, published under the Nietzschean title 'Beyond Good and Evil', Foucault was using Nietzsche's 'will to power' as a quality to be claimed by the radical left: it has been subjugated by Western rationality, by its 'will to truth', as well as by its 'humanism', and has to be liberated again [*désassujettissement*] by proletarian class-struggle and a cultural destruction of the subject.[137] In a televised discussion with Noam Chomsky at that time, Foucault argued that the revolutionary proletariat has no need to claim any notion of 'justice' for its cause, because it intends, for the first time, to seize 'power'.[138] Chomsky warned of an abstract rhetoric of power detached from human rights, freedom, and dignity that could easily slide into a terroristic police-state.[139] Foucault's juxtaposition of (proletarian) 'power'

134. Foucault 1988 and Foucault 1990b.
135. The text is published in English with the misleading title 'The Discourse on Language' as an appendix of the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (cf. Foucault 1972).
136. Foucault 1972, pp. 216, 219, 228–9.
137. Foucault 2001a, Nr. 98, pp. 1094–5.
138. Foucault 2001a, Nr. 132, p. 1371.
139. Ibid.

and 'justice' furthermore overlooked how justice as an ideological value is itself traversed by power-relations so that it can be invoked by antagonistic classes and social forces. Foucault's equation of class=violence=power shows that this early usage of power was not yet designed at all to overcome traditional Marxism's class-reductionism, but rather represented one of its most sectarian strands at the time that fell far behind the contemporary debates about the relative autonomy and 'regional' specifics of ideological state-apparatuses and struggles.

From about 1972 onwards, Foucault left the framework of an ultra-leftist class-reductionism behind and started to apply his power-concept to disciplinary strategies, and then later to sexual discourses, 'biopolitics' and 'governmentalities'. The basic operation underlying this shift can be studied in a talk with Gilles Deleuze in March 1972, 'Les intellectuels et le pouvoir', in which Foucault explains 'power' to be an alternative to both the concept of 'exploitation' and to the traditional analyses of state-apparatuses: Marx had detected what 'exploitation' is, but we still do not know the nature of *power*, 'this thing that is so enigmatic, simultaneously visible and invisible, present and hidden, invested everywhere'.[140] Power cannot be revealed neither by an analysis of different modes of 'appropriation' nor of the state or state-apparatuses, because it sits at a much deeper level: 'underneath [sous] the old theme of the sense, the signified, the signifier etc., [there is] finally the question of power'.[141]

The fact that Foucault positions his concept of power over and against the concepts of exploitation, appropriation and state-analysis shows how the main frontline is again Marxism again. However, this raises the question of how 'power', which by Foucault's definition is a relational term 'invested everywhere', can be introduced as an *alternative* to 'exploitation' or to state-domination, as though such relations were not (particular) fields of power as well. For Marx, relations of production were obviously not just economic 'facts' but highly condensed and institutionalised power-relations. His *critique of political economy* can be understood as an unveiling of the mechanisms of fetishism and exploitation by which the cooperative powers of the producers are alienated and handed over to the capitalist class that owns the means of production. It is one thing to argue that there are manifold manifestations of power beyond and relatively independent from class-relations of production and distribution; it is quite another thing to define 'power' as a reality of its own, *outside* and *underneath* the social relations of production and domination.

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140. Foucault 2001a, Nr. 106, p. 1180.

141. Foucault 2001a, Nr. 106, p. 1181. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault explained that effects of domination of a micro-physics of power 'are attributed not to "appropriation", but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings' (Foucault 1995, p. 26).

7.4.5. *'Relational power' or 'phagocytic essence'?*

For a long time it has been a widespread consensus among scholars that Foucault successfully superannuated Marxism's fixation with the economy and the state. Even those who criticised Foucault for his lack of a consistent 'normative' perspective (such as Habermas, Honneth or Nancy Fraser) did not hesitate to credit him for having demonstrated, 'that modern power is "capillary", that it operates at the lowest extremities of the social body in everyday social practices'.[142] Marxist scholars tended to silently concede this point and to blame him instead for neglecting the macro-levels of society and thus for diverting attention from the important economic and political issues. But this controversy turned out to be a deadlock. Instead of pitting micro-structures and macro-structures of power against each other, the task of critical theories of ideology, discourse or power is rather to find a way to convincingly connect the different levels.

The crucial question is, therefore, whether Foucault actually utilised his power-concept in a way that unearths power-relations on the micro-level of everyday life. There is certainly no want of rhetoric invoking a 'relational power' [*pouvoir relationnel*], whose 'micro-physics' is 'diffuse' and made up of bits and pieces.[143] According to his 'nominalist' definition, power is nothing but the 'name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society'.[144] But, as soon as one looks at what Foucault is actually demonstrating, the picture resembles more what Honneth describes as a 'monistic' conception:[145] starting from the prison, disciplinary power spreads 'further and further outwards', building up a 'great carceral continuum' until it constitutes a 'disciplinary society' penetrated 'through and through' with disciplinary mechanisms[146] – the movement is one of expansion, of 'gradual continuity', proceeding without any hindrance, without any struggle, like a sharp knife cutting through soft butter.[147]

The notion of 'relational power' usually ascribed to Foucault was, in fact, first conceptualised by Poulantzas, who already in 1968 proposed a 'relational' concept of power in the sense of a collective capacity to act, which depends on the

142. Fraser 1989, p. 18.
143. Foucault 1995, pp. 26, 177.
144. Foucault 1990a, p. 93.
145. Honneth 1991, pp. 176–7.
146. Foucault 1995, pp. 209, 207.
147. Comparing his work with Rusche and Kirchheimer's classic socio-historical study *Punishment and Social Structure* (Rusche and Kirchheimer 1939), I tried to show that Foucault blurred the different periods and functions of modern penal systems, including the turn from (relatively) progressive prison-reform attempts in the 1920s to European Fascism (cf. Rehmann 2004a, pp. 151 et sqq., pp. 178 et sqq.). For a critical discussion of Foucault's approach in regards to the French penal system, cf. J.-G. Petit (Petit 1991, pp. 127–8). For the US system, cf. Parenti 1999, p. 135.

power-relations between social classes.[148] He made explicit what was implicitly contained in Marx's *critique of political economy*, namely that the relations of production and the appropriation of unpaid surplus-labour are to be understood as a specific 'power-network' [*réseau de pouvoirs*] of society bound up with political and ideological relations.[149] Poulantzas was one of the few who criticised the essentialist construct of Foucault's concept of power from the perspective of a 'strictly relational' power-concept:[150] since Foucault positions his approach as separated from actual social relations and practices, his concept of power 'never has any other basis than itself: it becomes a pure ' "situation" in which power is always immanent', so that 'the question *what power* and *power to do what* appears as a mere obstacle'.[151] This leads to an 'absolutization in which power always refers to itself'. The allegedly relational concept of power turns into a 'Master-Power [*Maître-Pouvoir*] as the prime founder of all struggle-resistance'.[152] Behind the rhetoric of a multiple micro-power lies the idea of a 'phagocytic essence' [*essence phagocyte*] that invades and penetrates both the mechanisms of domination and of resistance, glossing over all social contradictions and struggles.[153]

What Poulantzas criticised as Foucault's turn from a relational concept of power to an omnipresent and all-permeating 'Master-Power' can at least in part be explained by the Nietzschean origins and underpinnings of his power-concept. Foucault, in fact, never developed power as a 'relational' concept, i.e. developed from class-relations, gender-relations, or race-relations, but installed it from the outset as an enigmatic force both outside and 'underneath' actual social relations of power and domination. Thanks to his neo-Nietzscheanism, Foucault not only overlooked the structural power-relations within capitalist production but also those between genders.

I would like to show this using the example of his 'rule of continual variations' in the *History of Sexuality* (Vol. I),[154] where Foucault pronounces as a methodical rule that 'we must not look for who has the power in the order of sexuality (men, adults, parents, doctors) and who is deprived of it; nor for who has the right to know and who is forced to remain ignorant. We must seek, rather, the pattern of the modifications which the relationships of force imply by their play itself [*par leur jeu même*]'.[155] But why should the 'relationships of force' invoked by Foucault be separated from the question of who actually has the power and

148. Poulantzas 1975, pp. 99 et sqq. It is probable that Foucault took his notion of 'relational power' from Poulantzas, but without mentioning the source.
149. Poulantzas 1979, p. 36.
150. Poulantzas 1979, p. 147.
151. Poulantzas 1979, p. 149.
152. Ibid.
153. Poulantzas 1979, p. 151.
154. Foucault 1988.
155. Foucault 1990a, p. 99 (translation altered).

knowledge in the order of sexuality? By severing the 'play itself' of power from the actual gender-relations, Foucault robs his 'relational' power-concept of its very relations.[156] In this paradigm, it is neither possible to investigate the multiplicity of gender-relations nor their fixation to structurally asymmetrical forms of gender-domination.

One objection to this critique could be that, on several occasions, Foucault considered the possibility that the micro-physics of power-relations might form 'a chain or system', a 'dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions', which can be integrated and codified in state-power.[157] He is aware that there is neither a simple homogeneity nor a discontinuity between a microscopic and a macroscopic level, but rather a 'double conditioning' of tactics and strategies.[158] However, as Bob Jessop observes, Foucault 'faced difficulties in moving from the amorphous dispersion of micro-powers to their class-relevant overdetermination in and through the central role of the state'.[159] What is missing in particular are the analytical tools to grasp *how* the micro-physics of power can be assembled and accumulated in such a fashion that they build strategic axes of economic, state-, and patriarchal domination. As I will discuss later, Bourdieu's emphasis on the modes of 'conversion' between different kinds of power, or, in his terminology, between economic, cultural, social and symbolic 'capital', could be seen as a fruitful contribution to fill this gap (see Section 8.2.).

Going through the examples presented in *Discipline and Punish*, it becomes clear that the new diagram of disciplinary power is much more intimately connected to state-power than Foucault's interpretation would have it. Both the 'system of permanent registration' to fight the plague[160] and the disciplining of the soldiers' bodies are organisational efforts linked to the emergence of modern territorial states. As Kalyvas has pointed out, the concrete materials could be interpreted against Foucault's theory of power: 'the new techniques of power did in effect come from one central strategic terrain, the state, to spread all over the social field during the creation of the bourgeois nation state and the first phase of capital accumulation'.[161] Poulantzas observed that Foucault, in order to place his concept of power outside the realm of the state, employed a narrow and juridical concept of the state which Gramsci had already overcome: 'a number

156. 'Gender-relations' [*Geschlechterverhältnisse*] has become an important concept in ethnological, social-historical and feminist research for the critical analysis of the ways that the genders are inserted in the ensemble of relations (Cf. F. Haug, 2001, p. 493).
157. Foucault 1990a, pp. 92, 96.
158. Foucault 1990b, pp. 99–100.
159. Jessop 1990, p. 238.
160. Foucault 1990a, p. 196.
161. Kalyvas 2002, pp. 117–18.

of sites of power which they [Foucault and Deleuze] imagine to lie wholly outside the state (the apparatus of asylums and hospitals, the sports apparatus etc.) are … included in the strategic field of the State'.[162]

7.4.6. *Foucault's* 'dispositif' *and the 'technologies' of power – a re-interpretation*

Whereas secondary literature is in general full of praise for Foucault's 'superannuation' of ideology critique and ideology theory,[163] I cannot see any theoretical achievements in this paradigm-shift. On the contrary, by the successive dissolution of 'ideology' in 'knowledge', 'discourse', and 'power' several analytical accomplishments of Marxist theory, which had often been achieved in hard struggles against dogmatism and class-reductionism, got lost. Gramsci's distinctions between coercion and consent, political society and civil society remained just as unnoted as Althusser's modifying distinction between the repressive state-apparatuses and ideological state-apparatusess. The marketed promise that Foucault's 'micro-physics' of power could enable us to analyse the fine tissue of power-relations in everyday life has not been fulfilled: firstly because his power-concept was not interested in the question of how alienated and fetishised social relations are experienced in everyday practices; secondly because he has no analytical tools to decipher the contradictions in common sense: neither those of 'non-contemporaneity' (Bloch) nor those between the fixed stereotypes of 'habitus' (Bourdieu) or what Gramsci describes as the 'good sense' [*buon senso*] of 'experimentalism'.

However, this does not mean that the categories developed in the framework of Foucault's theory of power are of no interest to the development of ideology-theory. I will discuss the potentials and limits of his concept of 'governmentality' later (see Section 11.1. and 11.2.) and focus for the moment on his studies of disciplinary power. Of interest, here, is primarily his concept of '*dispositif*', which is, however, difficult to translate and whose specifics have, in fact, been lost by the usual English translation of 'mechanism'. The *Petit Robert* explains the term (among others) as the 'way the pieces and organs of an apparatus are arranged' [*la 'manière dont sont disposés les pièces, les organes d'un appareil'*] or as 'the ensemble of means arranged in accordance with a plan' ['*ensemble de moyens disposés conformément à un plan*'], which would suggest that it should be translated as the 'arrangement of an apparatus'. Foucault uses *dispositif* in the sense of an institutionally fixed spatio-temporal arrangement which subjugates the subjects to the technologies of power: for instance, detailed timetables, by

162. Poulantzas 1978, pp. 36–7.
163. Cf., for example, Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, p. 115 and Michèle Barrett (1991, pp. 123–4, 126, 131–2, 134, 168).

which individuals incorporate disciplinary techniques; spatial arrangements like Bentham's exemplary projects of a 'panopticon'-prison in which the guards can see everything without being seen themselves. The prisoners are 'subjected to a field of visibility', so that they 'assume responsibility for the constraints of power', 'inscribe in [themselves] the power relation' and become 'the principle of [their] own subjection'.[164] Starting from the prison-system in the early nineteenth century, he sees a multiplication of hierarchical spatial arrangements which permeate different apparatuses of both a repressive and ideological nature (for example, barracks, administrative buildings, hospitals, schools) and constitute a network of 'mechanisms of normalisation' [*dispositifs de normalisation*].[165]

Leaving aside the 'monistic' fashion by which Foucault's disciplinary power spreads throughout society without hindrance and struggle, I would argue that his interest in the emergence of a new *dispositif* cutting across different apparatuses can provide an important ideology-theoretical device. Of importance is, for example, his claim that these *dispositifs* generate new semantic objects. The major example in *Discipline and Punish* is the production of 'delinquency', formed in the foundations of the judicial apparatus as a correlative of the penitentiary system.[166] Its function is to erect a barrier between the different proletarian strata of the population: the attempts to 'moralise' the poorer classes, to teach them the elementary rules of property and thrift, to give them training in docility at work, in stability of residence and of the family etc. were intimately connected with specific methods 'to maintain the hostility of the poorer classes to delinquents'.[167] In *History of Sexuality* (Vol. I), he defines sexuality as a 'name that can be given to a *dispositif historique*' (translated as 'historical construct'), which is not to be essentialised as an 'underlying reality' but to be considered as a modern 'surface network', in which certain strategies of knowledge and power create a new epistemological object.[168]

Since Foucault's concept of *dispositif* is part of his over-general neo-Nietzschean power-theory, its application usually lacks historical accuracy. When he assumes, for example, that Bentham's panopticon-project became 'the architectural

164. Foucault 1995, pp. 202–3. Hardt and Negri describe *dispositif* as 'the material, social, affective, and cognitive mechanisms or apparatuses of the production of subjectivity' (Hardt and Negri 2009, p. X; cf. pp. 126 et sqq.).

165. Foucault 1995, p. 306; cf. Foucault 1975, p. 358. Compare also the English version (Foucault 1995) and the original French version (Foucault 1975) on the following pages: pp. 202/235, 207/241, 209/243, 298/349, and 306/355–6. Methodologically speaking, Foucault uses the concept as an alternative to a psychoanalytical model of reading: instead of searching the texts for what is 'not being said' (their '*non-dit*'), what is 'repressed' and 'unconscious', one should rather look at what the 'explicit discourse' reveals about the 'tactics with their dispositifs' (Foucault 2001a, pp. 1587–8).

166. Foucault 1995, pp. 254–5.

167. Foucault 1995, p. 285.

168. Foucault 1990a, pp. 105–6.

program of most prison projects' in 1830s,[169] this clearly contradicts the historical reality that Bentham's design was considered too expensive and therefore had almost no impact on the actual prison-architecture.[170] Foucault's description of the modern *dispositif* of sexuality is entirely restricted to discursive patterns without ever considering the actual spatio-temporal arrangements in which encounters of 'bodies and pleasures'[171] have the chance to actually take place – as if, for example, the over-crowded, leaking, and dirty dwellings of the early industrial proletariat were not also a relevant part of the sexual *dispositif* of the time. These and other empirical weaknesses do however not in principle jeopardise the potential for a theoretical concept if it is reconnected to an analysis of the ensemble of repressive and ideological powers. The *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT*) therefore proposed a rearticulation of Foucault's *dispositf* to designate the ideological as an 'external arrangement' of ideological powers 'above' society.[172]

Even if, as Bob Jessop remarks, 'for Foucault the danger is that the specificity of different social relations is dissolved through their common use of the same technique of power',[173] it is worthwhile taking up Foucault's emphasis on techniques (or technologies) of power, which emerge and change across different apparatuses and 'fields' (Bourdieu).[174] However, such a reinterpretation would require overcoming Foucault's neo-Nietzschean essentialism and, instead of severing power from the economy, investigating the technologies of power and domination in the context of the technological transformations of the mode of production. We have seen how Gramsci, who considered the hegemony of Fordism as emerging in the factory, analysed the 'psycho-physical adaptation to the new industrial structure', which led to the 'forced elaboration of a new type of man'.[175] In a similar way, the forms of neoliberal hegemony have been influenced by the network-structures created by the internet. At the same time, the development of video-cameras, electronics and network-technologies provided 'disciplinary neoliberalism'[176] with new possibilities for 'panoptic' surveillance of the population, a panopticism that differs from Bentham's project in that it

169. Foucault 1995, p. 249.
170. Except some exemplary buildings like Joliet in Illinois or La Petite-Rochette in France; cf. Petit 1991, pp. 127 et sqq., 133–4. Bentham's own application to the English government was finally rejected in 1813. Foucault also omits the fact that Bentham tried to learn the lesson from his defeat and wrote a long 'postcript', which contradicted his earlier Panopticon design and highlighted the priority of economic over-exploitation, larger prison cells, and so on (cf. Rehmann 2004a, pp. 168–71).
171. Foucault 1990a, p. 157.
172. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 61; cf. *PIT* 1979, p. 180.
173. Jessop 1990, p. 231.
174. E.g. Foucault 1990a, pp. 23, 29, 127.
175. Gramsci 1971, p. 286; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §61, p. 72; Gramsci 1975, Q22, §2, p. 2146.
176. Bakker and Gill 2003, pp. 116 et sqq.

is independent of a specific architectural form. An integral analysis of power-technologies would, then, focus on the ways that technological revolutions in the forces of production modify the relations of production and impregnate the patterns of ideological socialisation and the societal imaginary.

7.5. Poststructuralism and postmodernism

7.5.1. *Questions of definition*

There is no scholarly consensus whatsoever about how the notions of 'poststructuralism' and 'postmodernism' are to be defined in relation to each other. For Andreas Huyssen, poststructuralism is a 'theory of modernism at the stage of its exhaustion' – a 'modernism of playful transgressions, of an unlimited weaving of textuality' – and is, therefore, to be understood as a continuation of modernity rather than as its postmodernist overcoming.[177] According to Ermath, poststructuralism questions the entire Western tradition, whereas postmodernism critically relates to modern enlightenment and humanism, so that it can be understood as a historical concept 'indicating something that comes after modernity'.[178] Not only does this definition eradicate poststructuralism's relationship to structuralism, it does not provide any information about the characteristics of 'modernity' that has supposedly been overcome either. Jorge Larrain proposes to distinguish between the notions according to their underlying politics. He applies the term 'poststructuralism' to authors like Foucault, Derrida, Hindess, Hirst, Laclau and Mouffe, 'who do not dissolve social reality into fragmentary images and signs and who still think it possible . . . to be politically constituted by progressive discourses which resist power or aim at socialism', whereas 'postmodernism' supposedly characterises the position of Lyotard and Baudrillard, 'who no longer hope that meaningful change can be attempted and tend to dissolve reality into simulacra'.[179] Larrain's further descriptions show, however, that this distinction is difficult to be maintained, since the central topics of poststructuralism – bidding farewell to the concept of ideology, establishing 'discourse' as the core instance of social life, rejecting any 'linear' concept of history, criticising humanist notions of the 'subject' and its universal 'truth'[180] – can be found in the works of the authors labelled as postmodernists as well. It remains unclear in Larrain's account what defines the specifically postmodernist modifications and why they would constitute a new paradigm-change.

177. Huyssen 1986, p. 209.
178. Ermath 1998, pp. 587, 589.
179. Larrain 1994, p. 91.
180. Larrain 1994, pp. 104 et sqq.

These (and similar) attempts to distinguish between the two terms according to their content lead to interminable debates about who belongs to what category, and are therefore in my view ultimately fruitless. It makes more sense to start from their respective literal meanings. 'Poststructuralism', then, designates a theoretical formation that in France in particular reacts to and claims to overcome the *structuralist* theories that were predominant by then. Whereas structuralism might roughly be described as the endeavour of identifying general (and therefore ahistorical) signifying structures that undergird human speech-utterances, social practices or 'culture' in general,[181] poststructuralism, while continuing (or even radicalising) structuralism's 'linguistic turn', questions the assumption of fixed, ahistorical dichotomies, which are therefore to be 'deconstructed' (Derrida). Postmodernism, on the other hand, was never restricted to a phenomenon of theory. Emerging in US literary criticism in the 1950s, it became a catchword of a vanguard-criticism of 'aesthetic modernity' in the 1960s, and in the early 1970s a general term, primarily for new developments in architecture, but also in dance, theater, painting, film, and music.[182] It is only then, more precisely after the publication of Lyotard's *La condition postmoderne* in 1979 that the concept also becomes a marker for philosophical discourses. Postmodernity is thus a general term referring to aesthetics, culture, and lifestyle designating a turn which defines itself over and against 'modernity'. Poststructuralism is, therefore, not a counter-concept to postmodernism, but rather one of its main theoretical tendencies: it describes 'thought under the conditions of the postmodern era'.[183]

7.5.2. *Postmodernism's essentialist definition of modernity*

The meaning of postmodernity thus depends on the meaning of 'modernity', which it claims to have left behind. We encounter, here, the problem that, by the very term itself, postmodernity implies the procedure of defining modernity as a unitary and homogeneous essence which can be superannuated *en bloc*. However, this is a peculiar essentialist methodology that in principle contradicts

181. This tentative definition is certainly over-simplified in that it, for example, leaves out the development of a 'genetic structuralism' (Bourdieu) that tries to retranslate Lévi-Strauss's ahistorical structural patterns into socio-historically specific social structures, social fields, and habitus (see Section 8.4, and 8.5.).

182. Cf. Huyssen 1986, pp. 184 et sqq., 195 et sqq. However, the first usage of the adjective 'postmodern' can already be found in 1917, in the milieu of the 'George Circle', a German literary group centred around Stefan George, and in connection to Nietzsche's 'overman': for Rudolf Pannwitz, the 'postmodern man' describes the nationalist, militarily 'hardened' and 'religiously aroused' man who is opposed to the ridiculous culture of modern Europe (Pannwitz 1917, p. 64).

183. M. Frank 1989, p. 19.

postmodernism's own self-understanding. Most critics have therefore seized upon the postmodernist construct of its counter-image of a unitary modernity. Habermas's theoretical argument is basically that the postmodernist farewell to 'modernity in its totality presumes a transcendental status and represses counter discourses within modernity that tried to enlighten the enlightenment about its own limits and deformations'.[184] Instead of claiming the emancipatory components of reason and turning them against the one-sided rationality of bourgeois society, postmodernism follows a Nietzschean critique of modernity that abandons the dialectics of the enlightenment.[185] As Huyssen pointed out, the term 'modernism' does not designate a monolithic phenomenon either, but rather 'contained *both* the modernization euphoria of futurism, constructivism and Neue Sachlichkeit and some of the starkest critiques of modernization in the various modern forms of "romantic anti-capitalism" '.[186] According to Manfred Frank, the counter-discourses overlooked by postmodernism are to be found primarily in the romanticist self-criticism of idealism. This had already demonstrated that the view with which we make sense of the world, is not created by us, but rather, according to Fichte's formula of the 'implanted eye', 'in-oculated' into us.[187] What the poststructuralists call the 'decentering of the subject' is not a new thought, but takes up a 'specifically modern idea' that extends from Descartes and Spinoza through Rousseau, Fichte, Schelling to Marx and Freud, 'all of whom, although with different accentuation, allow for the grounding of the self-conscious subject in something that itself is not conscious and on which it depends absolutely'.[188] Ulrich Beck argues that postmodernism erroneously identified modernity with modern industrialism and was therefore incapable of conceptualising 'multiple modernities': at the first sign of a crisis of the industrial paradigm it throws in the towel instead of taking on the constructive task of outlining a post-industrial model of 'reflexive modernisation'.[189]

From a different angle, Hardt and Negri criticise postmodernism and postcolonialism for confusing two opposite meanings of modernity, namely a Renaissance humanism from Duns Scotus to Spinoza, characterised by the discovery of

184. Habermas 1987b, pp. 4–5, 302–3.

185. Habermas 1987b, pp. 55–6, 85–6, 94. Habermas, who famously diagnosed a 'young-conservative' line from Bataille through Foucault to Derrida (Habermas 1981, p. 13), suspects that 'neoconservatism and aesthetically inspired anarchism, in the name of a farewell to modernity, are merely . . . cloaking their complicity with the venerable tradition of counter-Enlightenment in the garb of post-Enlightenment' (Habermas 1987b, p. 5).

186. Huyssen 1986, p. 186.

187. M. Frank 1989, p. 90.

188. M. Frank 1989, pp. 190, 193.

189. In Beck, Giddens and Lash 1996, pp. 39, 24; cf. Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994, pp. 24–5, 33.

immanence and the emphasis on singularity and difference, and a philosophical 'Thermidor of the Renaissance revolution', which 'seeks to control the utopian forces of the first through the construction . . . of dualisms' and through the 'transcendental apparatus' of a schematism of reason – a 'sovereign machine' which transforms the multitude into an 'orderly totality'.[190] What postmodernism calls into question is, therefore, neither the Enlightenment nor modernity as such, but rather modern sovereignty and its logic of domination and exclusion.[191] Due to this self-misunderstanding, the postmodernists cannot situate themselves historically and lose their critical edge: firstly, they are still waging battle 'against the shadows of the old enemies', namely against modern forms of sovereignty, which 'Empire' has already overcome by its own 'politics of difference.'[192] Secondly, they are incapable of establishing a 'constituent power' as a constructive ethico-political alternative, which according to Hardt and Negri should be built upon Spinoza's concept of *potentia agendi*.[193] Inspired by the predominantly French term of *altermondialism* from the protests against globalisation, they employ the concept of *altermodernity*, which, in contrast to both 'hypermodernity' (*à la* Beck and Habermas) and postmodernity, 'provides a strong notion of new values, new knowledges, and new practices, in short . . . a *dispositif* for the production of subjectivity'.[194]

As varied as these objections are, they place into question whether the concept of postmodernism can be used as a theoretical or at least a reliable descriptive category. Due to its dependence on the construct of a homogeneous modernity, every attempt at concretely defining its meaning risks leading to absurdities. If we define it, for example, as a radical challenge to humanism and the Enlightenment, 'no less a person than Pope John Paul II has entered the fray on the side of the postmodern'.[195] Or, to take up one of Eagleton's jocular remarks: if we conceive of the term as describing a fundamental critique of a universalist notion of truth, Pontius Pilate would be the first postmodernist, because he famously challenged Jesus's truth-claim with the question: 'What is truth?'[196] Rather than following postmodernism's self-definitions, it seems to be more productive to conceive of it as a symptom to be explained from the transformations in the capitalist mode of production and reproduction. Frederic Jameson suggested using the term to describe a 'superstructure' in the transition from Fordism to

190. Hardt and Negri 2000, pp. 78–9, 87, 140.
191. Hardt and Negri 2000, p. 140.
192. Hardt and Negri 2000, p. 142.
193. Hardt and Negri 2000, pp. 47, 407–8.
194. Hardt and Negri 2009, pp. 113, 115.
195. Harvey 1990, p. 41.
196. John 18: 38, cited in Eagleton 1996, p. 41.

post-Fordism that produced a new 'structure of feeling'.[197] For David Harvey, postmodernism marks a new round of 'time-space-compressions' in the organisation of capitalism, generated by the pressure of capital-accumulation.[198]

7.5.3. *A component of neoliberal ideology?*

Most poststructuralist and postmodernist approaches inherited Foucault's departure from ideology-theory in one way or another. For Lyotard, ideology-critique would fall under the category of 'true speech' [*parole de vérité*], which in turn was nothing less than 'terror', the 'white terror of truth'.[199] His concept of 'meta narratives' [*métarécits*], whose end he announced, was not just aimed at the metaphysical novels of traditional philosophy – 'such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning' – but also against the 'emancipation of the rational and working subject',[200] which was, of course, a marker for Marxism and socialism. When he rejected modernity for its character as a *project*, which drew its legitimacy not out of an origin but from a 'future to be achieved' [*futur à faire advenir*],[201] he attacked basic capacities of anticipation and hope, without which emancipatory social movements can neither emerge nor maintain themselves.[202] The discourse of postmodernism is blindly entrapped in its opposite: 'it delivers the greatest meta-narrative imaginable, the narrative after every narrative, which is so clever that it always already knows everything to be non-knowledge'.[203]

Lyotard's polemics against 'meta narratives' prominently refer to the late Wittgenstein's concept of 'language-games', and it is here that one can precisely identify the shift towards a 'linguistic turn' that will haunt postmodernism in its different varieties. In his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein had defined 'language-games' as 'the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven'.[204] The concept was intended 'to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life'.[205] It thus focused on the connection between speaking and acting and emphasised the fact that speaking is embedded in socially formed praxis. The meaning of the

197. Jameson 1991, p. XIV. The concept of 'structures of feeling' has been developed by Raymond Williams (Williams 1977, pp. 132 et sqq.).
198. Harvey 1990, pp. 306–7, 327 et sqq.
199. Lyotard 1997, p. 241.
200. Lyotard 1984, p. XXIII.
201. Lyotard 1988, p. 36.
202. Cf. the HKWM-entries '*Glaube*' ('Belief/Faith') (Rehmann 2001) and '*Hoffnung*' ('Hope') (Rehmann 2004b) as well as the entry '*Antizipation*' ('Anticipation') in the Bloch dictionary (Rehmann 2012).
203. W.F. Haug 1993, p. 11.
204. Wittgenstein 1958, §7, p. 5.
205. Wittgenstein 1958, §23, p. 11.

words is 'the kind of use they have',[206] exemplified by the practical communication between builder A and his assistant B, during which the former employs the words 'blocks', 'pillars', 'slabs' and 'beams' as elements of operational calls to have his assistant deliver these labour-items.[207] W.F. Haug engages Wittgenstein in a dialogue with Gramsci and Brecht and raises the question of why he used the ambiguous term 'language-game', instead of describing 'the whole' of language and action in terms of the Marxian and Gramscian concept of *praxis*.[208]

Lyotard is a good example of how the ambiguity of the term could be exploited to the point of alienating its operational meaning: 'The social subject itself seems to dissolve in this dissemination of language-games. The social bond is linguistic, but it is not woven with a single thread. It is a fabric formed by the intersection of . . . language games'.[209] Lyotard's diagnosis of discursive dissemination and dispersion not only overlooks the ongoing efficacy of ideological 'meta narratives' (such as the 'American dream' and the West's fight for 'freedom' and 'human rights' in the world), his reduction of the 'social bond' to language also severs this bond from any material and practical relationships. In contrast to Wittgenstein's understanding, 'language-game' is no longer designed to connect language with the field of action in which it is embedded, but rather operates as an empty marker for discursive fragmentation.

Jean Baudrillard initially expanded the concept of ideology to the form of material and symbolic production in general[210] and finallly replaced it with the categories of 'hyperreality' and 'simulacrum': 'ideology' belongs to an outdated understanding of the sign which is supposed to conceal something real, but the sign merely conceals that it does not conceal anything because there is nothing behind it. In this sense, Disneyland is not, as assumed by ideology-critique, an idealised transposition of a contradictory reality, but only 'conceals' that the real America *is* Disneyland, prisons conceal that the whole society *is* a prison and so on.[211] Baudrillard's provocative statement, 'The Gulf War Did Not Take Place'[212] can be understood as an attempt to expose the overwhelming power of the media-industry to frame and format the 'reality' that subjects are permitted to perceive and acknowledge as such. Taken as a general theoretical statement, this however reduces the subjects to passive effects of a simulating media-machine with no chance to check the fabricated images against other levels of experienced reality. This not only excudes the contradictions in the media-apparatuses

206. Wittgenstein 1958, §10, p. 6.
207. Wittgenstein 1958, §2, p. 3.
208. W.F. Haug 2006, p. 84.
209. Lyotard 1984, p. 40.
210. Baudrillard 1981a, pp. 143 et sqq.
211. Baudrillard 1981b, pp. 12 et sqq.
212. Baudrillard 1995.

but also any possibility of what Stuart Hall described as negotiated or oppositional decoding (see above, Section 6.7.).

The fictionalism that Foucault had adopted from Nietzsche is thus pushed further with radical and absurd consequences. Postmodernist fictionalism finally comes down to an authoritative command that there must not be any reality that is distinct from, or resilient to, the computer-generated virtual appearance-worlds of neoliberal capitalism. If we keep in mind that *critique*, according to the original meaning of the Greek word [*krineín*] revolves around a practice of 'making differences' – a meaning, which is put to work in Hegel's and Marx's understanding of 'determinate negation' – we can see that the concept is undermined, and ultimately destroyed, by such over-generalisation.[213] Already in 1935, Ernst Bloch had pointedly summarised the corruption of critique implicit in this: 'Fictionalism devours . . . knowledge completely', it transforms scientific concepts or ideal convictions most skilfully into 'share certificates which fluctuate according to the given situation' and 'makes the doubt about being comprehensible today into one about anything and everything. It thus runs through large parts of modern thinking, easy, comfortable, faithless'.[214]

The postmodern farewell to ideology-theory has, therefore, itself been described and criticised as an integral component of neoliberal ideology. I have already argued that Foucault's neo-Nietzschean rhetoric of the 'end of man' played into the hands of a radical market-ideology and diverted from the task of building up a new (and diversified) universalism from below (see above, Section 7.4.1.). Frederic Jameson understands postmodernity as a 'force field in which very different kinds of cultural impulses . . . must make their way', with however a 'cultural dominant' defined as an increasing integration of aesthetic productions into the logic of late capitalism's commodity-production.[215] According to Eagleton, postmodernism operates in the functional context of capitalism both iconoclastically and in an incorporated way, because capitalism itself is divided into an anarchic market-logic that permanently decomposes higher values anti-ideologically, and a systemic need for compensatory ideologies: postmodernism 'scoops up something of the material logic of advanced capitalism and turns it aggressively against its spiritual foundations'.[216] David McNally argues that the postmodernist radicalisation of the linguistic turn reproduces what Marx has

213. According to Eagleton, this leads to a ' "left" cynicism' that is 'insultingly complicit with what the system would *like* to believe – that everything now "works all by itself", without regard to the way social issues are shaped and defined in popular experience' (Eagleton 1991, p. 42).

214. Bloch 1990, p. 257; cf. Bloch 1969–76, Vol. 4, pp. 281–2; Bloch 1969–76, Vol. 10, p. 24.

215. Jameson 1991, pp. 4, 6.

216. Eagleton 1996, p. 133; cf. Eagleton 1990, pp. 373–4.

analysed as 'fetishism,' namely the alienating rule of abstract value over use-value, of abstract average labour over concrete labour.[217]

However, we need to take into account that if we conceive of postmodernism as a historical condition, rather than merely a set of lifestyles or intellectual and cultural tendencies, we need to look for its inner contradictions, just as Marx analysed the culture of modernity dialectically as bringing both progress and destruction.[218] According to Harvey, postmodernism itself is a 'mine-field of conflicting notions', which has provoked an 'explosion of opposed sentiments and tendencies'.[219] Alongside the numerous celebrations of discontinuities and fragmentations we also find longings for secure moorings in a shifting world, a revived interest in family and community, a search for personal and collective 'place-identities', and so on.[220]

7.5.4. *Theoretical loss: the dematerialisation of social life*

In the course of, and after the fundamental crisis of Marxism, poststructuralist theories have taken over large parts of academia, most notably in the humanities – successfully squeezing out what had been a stronghold of different Marxist tendencies and critical theories. In reference to Gramsci's theory of hegemony, one could describe this a 'passive revolution', with the peculiarity that it emerged from the defeats and deadlocks of the radical left after 1968.[221] That poststructuralism replaced the concepts of ideology and hegemony with the concepts of knowledge, discourse and power has widely been hailed as a successful triumph over Marxist class-reductionism and state-orientation. Such praise, however, ignores the fact that these shortcomings had already been challenged by Marxist ideology-theories, which were in several respects more substantial and differentiated than their victorious heirs. While Marxist ideology-theories tried to decipher the contradictory social positions inherent in knowledge, discourses and power-relations, and to demonstrate how organic intellectuals of different classes fight in the realm of ideological values, poststructuralist theories tended to drop this analytical task altogether.

This is connected to another theoretical loss. In Gramsci's and Althusser's approaches, the ideological was considered as a complex material arrangement, consisting of hegemonic apparatuses, specific intellectuals, ideological practices,

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217. McNally 2001, pp. 52 et sqq.; pp. 66 et sqq.
218. Cf. Huyssen 1986, p. 200.
219. Harvey 1990, pp. VIII, 292.
220. Harvey 1990, pp. 292, 302.
221. Cf. Rehmann 2004a, pp. 9–10. According to Huyssen, postmodernism managed 'to turn the dung of post-68-political disillusionment into the gold of aesthetic bliss' (Huyssen 1986, p. 212).

rituals, images, *and* also of texts as an integral part of this whole arrangement. Postmodernism has largely emerged from a radicalisation of the linguistic turn and has therefore focused almost entirely on texts, detached from the material-ideological settings and practices in which they are embedded.

The consequence of this one-sidedness is that postmodernism's critical-deconstructive project of the de-*natural*isation of fixed identities is always at risk of morphing into an overall de-*material*isation of social life. On the one hand, for example, it developed a glamorous body-talk, most notably in respect to the tortured and the desiring body, while, on the other hand, it de-materialised the real bodies. In *Discipline and Punish*, for example, Foucault promised to deliver a ' "political economy" of the body'.[222] But throughout the investigation he dealt with bodies solely insofar as they emerged in the paedagogical discourses of prison-literature without ever looking at the actual corporeal conditions in the prison-system, such as nourishment, overwork or death and suicide statistics. For Joy James, Foucault's approach was typical of the tendency to talk abundantly about the body, but in a way that makes it vanish, which in turn goes hand in hand with his silence on the racialisation of prisons.[223]

A similar tendency can be observed in poststructuralist gender-theories, which tend to reduce the social to the symbolic, gendered subjectivities to a shifting play of signification, the body to conventions and norms. A transition from de-naturalisation to de-materialisation occurs, for example, when Judith Butler, in order to challenge the presumption of one's sex as a 'simple fact or static condition of one's body', explains the 'materiality' of the body as an 'effect of power', while power is in turn conceived of as a reiteration of 'norms'.[224] The body thus becomes itself a 'construction', a 'variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated, a signifying practice within a cultural field of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterogeneity'.[225] Such a definition dissimulates the biological genealogy of our bodies. For example, it overlooks that sexual complementarity as such is a 'nature-form' that the human species has inherited from mammals – a biological pattern, which is of course immediately formed and overdetermined by socially constructed gender-patterns.[226] Rosemary Hennessy has criticised an 'eerie if familiar immateriality to this new queer subject, who moves in a milieu of virtual relations, whose desire is the unleashed mobility of

222. Foucault 1995, p. 25.
223. James 1996, p. 25; cf. Davis 1998, pp. 96 et sqq.
224. Butler 1993, p. 2.
225. Butler 1990, pp. 12, 189.
226. Cf. F. Haug 2001, pp. 520–1. In *Undoing Gender*, Butler seems to relativise her de-materialising approach: 'it may or may not be true that cultural construction effaces both sexual difference and bodily process', so that it seems crucial to keep these questions open (Butler 2004, pp. 202–3).

disconnected images'.[227] Under the influence of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, a new reductionism has gained acceptance that sidelines the material conditions where gender-relations are interlaced with various social practices and overdetermined by class-relations.

Confronted with these shortcomings, a renewed critical theory of ideology has a dual task that is both deconstructive and reconstructive. On the one hand, it should continue to criticise the extent to which postmodernist celebrations of social fragmentations and simulacra are propelled by the illusions of fictitious capital and closely connected to the hegemony of neoliberalism. On the other hand it should reinterpret the productive insights of postmodernism in the framework of a historical-materialist theory of hegemony and ideology. Against the postmodernist reduction of social life into disembodied figures of discourse, it has to reembody 'cyberspace' again and reinsert the concrete labouring bodies into the social and cultural analysis of high-tech capitalism.

227. Hennessy 2000, p. 108.

Chapter Eight

Pierre Bourdieu: 'Field', 'Habitus' and 'Symbolic Violence'

To include Bourdieu's theory in a book on ideology-theories seems as paradoxical as including Foucault. After having used the concept of ideology in his earlier works, he finally dropped it in the 1990s. He justified this with the example, among others, of Althusser, whom he criticised for using the concept of ideology like a religious term, which helped him to discredit the empirical work of 'so-called social scientists' for being 'ideological', and thus to distance himself from the world in an 'aristocratic' way. 'Indeed, one of the reasons why I don't like the word "ideology" is because of the aristocratic thinking of Althusser', he argued in an interview with Terry Eagleton.[1] Besides this, his argument is that the 'social world doesn't work in terms of consciousness', but rather 'in terms of practices, mechanisms, and so forth'.[2] Another frontline is Bourdieu's criticism of a theoretical 'anti-humanism', which reduces the subjects to mere effects of social structures and ideological apparatuses.[3]

Bourdieu's arguments need to be disentangled. His view that socialisation does not work primarily on the level of consciousness, but rather of practices, has clearly been formulated by Althusser himself. Instead of supporting the abandonment of the concept of ideology, the argument belongs to the very commonplaces of Marxist ideology-theories. Obviously,

1. Bourdieu and Eagleton 1994, p. 267.
2. Bourdieu and Eagleton 1994, p. 268.
3. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, pp. 19, 102.

Bourdieu tries to revive a dead horse so that he can flog it.[4] Bourdieu's criticism of Althusser's 'anti-humanist' reductionism coincides, however, with my own critique, and thus encourages me to explore whether his claim of developing a non-reductionist notion of the subject can be used to further develop a critical ideology-theory.

To consider Bourdieu's approach as relevant to ideology-theory (independent of his own opinion on the matter) is further justified by the observation that Bourdieu's empirical investigations on social 'fields' can hardly be interpreted as anything but a wide range of substantial and well-founded exercises in ideology-critique. Already on its first page, his monumental study *Distinction* announces its intention to formulate a socio-analytical critique of the 'ideology of charisma', which regards taste in legitimate culture as a 'gift of nature'.[5] The *Homo Academicus* lays bare the ideological mechanisms of the academic field, together with deeply engrained self-deceptions of intellectuals who are more interested in the accumulation of 'academic' and 'intellectual capital' than in understanding reality intellectually.[6] In his book on *State Nobility*, Bourdieu scrutinises the internal structure of the dominant class together with the ideological mechanisms of consecration and naturalisation that mask and help reproduce its domination.[7] In the *Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger*, he deconstructs the strategies of an ideological 'imposition of form', by which Heidegger 'converts' his politics into ontology and thereby provides his political interventions with the aura of a philosophical authority seemingly independent from social conflicts.[8] The *Weight of the World* in turn deals, amongst other things, with the destructive dynamics by which neoliberalism's appeals to creative initiative and empowerment engender an extremely destructive 'destiny effect' amongst marginalised youngsters and contingent labourers.[9]

First, I would like to focus on how Bourdieu develops his concept of 'field' from the theoretical elements of the *German Ideology* – ironically from a text which, in the view of many Marxist ideology-theorists, represented nothing more than an outdated paradigm of critique of 'false consciousness'.

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4. This is a general pattern in Bourdieu's dismissive remarks on 'Marxism' in general, such as when he describes it as 'a sort of Cartesian philosophy, in which you have a conscious agent who is the scholar, the learned person, and the others who don't have access to consciousness' (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1994, p. 268). To argue that the 'whole Marxist tradition' is trapped in a fixation with consciousness (Bourdieu 2000a, p. 172), is as counterfactual as his assumption that in regards to symbolic power, 'Marxist thought is more of a hindrance than a help' (Bordieu 2000a, p. 177).
5. Bourdieu 1984, p. 1.
6. Bourdieu 1988, pp. 73 et sqq.
7. Bourdieu 1996.
8. Bourdieu 1991b, pp. 78–9, 81.
9. Bourdieu et al. (eds.) 1999, p. 63.

8.1. The development of the concept of field from the *German Ideology*

Of theoretical significance is a rarely noticed subterranean connection between Bourdieu's field-concept and Bertolt Brecht: both Brecht and Bourdieu were inspired by the 'force field analysis' of the German-American psychologist Kurt Lewin. Influenced by the *Gestalt* theory of Wolfgang Köhler and Max Wertheimer, Lewin transferred the field-concept from Galileian physics to psychology in order to overcome the prevailing Aristotelian thinking regarding substance. 'A new psychology in the sense of Lewin would not try to explain human beings from their essence or their substance (plus elements), but must analyze a situation according to its different forces'.[10] Brecht, who read Lewin's article on the 'Transition from an Aristotelian to a Galileian thought in biology and physics' (1931) and his 'Landscape of War' (1917), utilises the concept of field for the analysis of social relations of force that undergird the perspectives of perception.[11] Among others, Bourdieu refers to Lewin and his teacher Ernst Cassirer in order to demonstrate that 'to think in terms of field is to *think relationally*', which also means 'to move beyond Aristotelian substantialism that spontaneously impregnates social thinking'.[12]

Bourdieu had already utilised the concept of 'field' in his early essay 'Intellectual Field and Creative Project' from 1966,[13] but he developed it more systematically a few years later with the example of the 'religious field' and starting from Max Weber's typology of religious 'professions' [*Berufe*]. As he explained in an interview entitled 'With Weber against Weber', he gave a series of lectures on Weber's sociology of religion at the end of the 1960s at the university of Lille. In one of his lectures, he summarised the complex relationships between the religious 'professions' in Weber's *Ancient Judaism* with a diagram on the blackboard. This diagram was a rhombus confronting the priesthood, prophets, magicians, and laity. When he visualised how the priests try to destroy the magicians or to excommunicate (or co-opt) the prophets, who in turn threaten the priests' predominance by their charismatic power, he suddenly realised that these relations between religious specialists cannot be conceived in a Weberian way, as 'interactions', but rather are 'objective relations', an 'objective structure' that undergirds the 'typical' action of the social agents.[14]

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10. Langemeyer 1998, p. 4
11. Langemeyer 1998, pp. 6 et sqq.; cf. Zander 2008, p. 10.
12. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, pp. 96–7.
13. Bourdieu 1971.
14. I quote the interview 'With Weber against Weber' from its German version (Bourdieu 2000b, p. 118). The diagram is part of a text titled 'An Interpretation of Religion according to Max Weber' (in Bordieu 2000b, p. 16).

For the purpose of reconstructing these 'objective relations', he goes back to the passage in the *German Ideology* which explains the emergence of ideology from the social division between mental and manual labour that accompanies the genesis of antagonistic classes and the state. According to Marx and Engels, it is only from this division onwards that consciousness can 'really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice, that it *really* represents something without representing something real', and it is only by means of this division that consciousness is 'in a position to emancipate itself from the world and to proceed to the formation of "pure" theory, theology, philosophy, morality'.[15] Bourdieu quotes this passage and concludes that it is only on this basis, and in particular with the underlying development of cities, that religion can prevail over the 'idolatry of nature' by building up a body of specialists in the administration of religious goods.[16] The 'constitution of a religious field' is, therefore, the 'result of the monopolization of the administration of the goods of salvation by a body of religious *specialists*', who are 'socially recognized as the exclusive holders of the specific competence necessary for the production or reproduction of a *deliberately organized corpus* of secret . . . knowledge'.[17] This monopolisation is thus accompanied with its downside, the 'objective dispossession of those excluded from . . . *religious capital*'.[18] According to this understanding, not every 'good of salvation' or belief in 'supernatural' phenomena is therefore a 'religion', since religion in a sociological sense requires the establishment of a specific and exclusive ideological competence.

This finding corresponds with what the *German Ideology* described as 'inversion'.[19] Bourdieu had good reasons for not adopting this Hegel-inspired terminology, but it is all the more remarkable to see the precision with which he noticed and further developed Marx and Engels's historical-materialist foundation of the ideological which was so widely overlooked in Marxist ideology-theories. The fact that he derived his concept of field from the social divisions of labour had immense consequences for the orientation of his sociology: it marks a major point where he goes beyond the approach of Max Weber. Bourdieu had first used Weber's sociology of religion in order to get a hold on the relative autonomy of the religious and to overcome the economistic and reductionist tendencies within Marxism. The development of the concept of field can be seen

15. Cf. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 45.
16. Bourdieu 1991c, p. 6.
17. Bourdieu 1991c, p. 9.
18. Bourdieu 1991c, p. 9.
19. E.g. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 36.

as a 'materialist turn', by which, in a second step, Bourdieu 'goes past Weber with Marx and reformulates the Weberian question in Marxian terms'.[20]

It is, therefore, worthwhile reinterpreting Bourdieu's 'field' as a central ideology-theoretical concept. Unlike Gramsci's 'civil society' and Althusser's 'ideological state-apparatus', the field-concept does not start directly from theoretical reflections on the state, but from the detached position of intellectuals in society, from a detachment which, according to the *German Ideology*, was, however, intimately linked to the emergence of the state.

8.2. Field against apparatus?

As we have seen in our discussion of Althusser's ideological state-apparatus concept (see above, Section 6.3.), Bourdieu criticises the concept of apparatus as a 'Trojan horse of "pessimistic functionalism" '. He equates the apparatus with the idea of an 'infernal machine, programmed to accomplish certain purposes', which in his view betrays a conspiracy-fantasy that an 'evil will is responsible for everything that happens in the social world'.[21] It is questionable whether this criticism applies to Althusser, whose concept of history as a 'process without subject' clearly contradicts the notion of an intentionally evil subject. Because of its supposed teleology ('to accomplish certain purposes') and its ossification of fluid and flexible power-relations, for Bourdieu the apparatus is merely 'a limiting case, . . . a pathological state of fields', namely one in which the dominant 'manage to crush and annul the resistance and the reactions of the dominated, when all movements go exclusively from the top down' – a limit which, however, is 'never actually reached'.[22] In order to capture the struggles within and between the institutions, Bourdieu proposes to replace the apparatus with the 'field', i.e. a network or configuration 'of objective relations between positions', which are in turn defined 'by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital)'.[23]

The definition can be better understood if we divide it up into different components. As we could see with the example of the religious field, the term 'objective relations' marks a departure from Max Weber's 'interactionism', which construed the social fabric by starting from subjective interactions. When Bourdieu insists that this fabric is structured by 'objective relations', he means, among others, those determined by social divisions of labour, for example between classes,

20. Cf. the German editors' analysis of Bourdieu's *Religious Field*, in Bourdieu 2000b, p. 156.
21. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 102.
22. Ibid.
23. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 97.

genders, manual versus intellectual labour, town versus country, the state and its subjects.

The usage of 'capital' as a synonym for power leads us into Bourdieu's peculiar concept of capital and its differentiation into four generic types:[24] economic capital, cultural capital (in an embodied state, as cultural dispositions internalised through socialisation; in objectified form, for example as books, works of art, musical instruments; in institutionalised form, for example the educational system of qualifications); social capital (acquaintances and networks), and symbolic capital (providing legitimacy to the other forms of capital).[25] The different types of 'capital' designate the stakes in each of the fields for which the social agents are competing. In the journalistic field, for example, the contest is about the specific stake of the scoop, the 'exclusive'.[26] By means of this differentiation, Bourdieu tries to accomplish two tasks: firstly, to extend the traditional Marxist class-analysis beyond the economic by uncovering class- and gendered distinctions in the domains of culture, education, taste, social prestige, fashion and so on; secondly, to take into account that each field and its respective capital-forms have a relative autonomy and cannot be reduced to the economic field.

What is also at stake is the question of whether and to what extent the 'capital' accumulated in one field can be converted into the 'capital' of another field. Since the conversion of capital is not equally possible in all directions, the predominant weight of economic relations or their determination 'in the last instance' comes back onto the agenda: it is obviously easier to convert economic capital into cultural capital than the other way round.[27] Education and culture can, to a certain degree, be attained by purchasing private education, but the traditional expectations of translating academic degrees into economically stable job-positions have been rendered illusory in neoliberal capitalism, where even academics with PhDs run a high risk of ending up jobless or in contingent jobs. Entrepreneurs can get rich without a specifically developed culture, while at the same time being despised by 'educated' sections of the bourgeoisie as uncultured 'parvenus' etc. Whereas Foucault left the question of how to ascend from a micro-physics of power to class- and state-domination unresolved (see above, Section 7.4.5.), Bourdieu develops a more realistic notion of power-resources

24. Although Bourdieu refers at times to Marx's notion of capital as accumulated labour, so that his concept of capital 'appears rooted in a kind of labour theory of value', it is not linked to a theory of exploitation in the sense of extracting surplus-value, and does not distinguish capitalist from non-capitalist forms of labour (cf. Schwartz 1997, pp. 74–5).

25. Cf. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, pp. 118–19; Schwingel 1993, pp. 34 et sqq.; Schwingel 2003, pp. 85 et sqq.; Kröll 2012, pp. 359–60.

26. Cf. Bourdieu 1998a, p. 41.

27. Cf. Schwartz 1997, pp. 79–80.

objectively anchored in different fields and able to be appropriated and accumulated by conversion.

After having defined 'capital' as the specific stake of a field, Bourdieu proceeds to defining field as a structured space around the 'distribution structure' of some kind of capital.[28] However, this is a circular definition by which each of the two concepts (field and capital) are defined in terms of the other. There is also the inflationary tendency in Bourdieu's sociology that the fields, whose boundaries cannot be defined *a priori*, are proliferating as much as the social agents' 'interests' and as much as the types of 'capital' they are struggling over.[29] As arenas of struggle for control over 'capital', they contain specific dominant and subordinate positions: on the one hand the established agents defending the maintenance of the professional body and the 'orthodoxy' of the field, on the other hand newcomers as heterodox challengers for the orthodox positions. However, both types tend to share the basic rules of the game as a fundamental agreement on the stakes of struggle, and a common interest in preserving the field itself. The perspectives of the different agents cannot be explained either by the subjects' 'intentions' or by the mere 'content' of their argument, or by the economic class-position they supposedly represent, but primarily by their respective position in the field in which they invest.[30] Fields thus function with a relative autonomy, to a large extent by their own internal mechanisms of development. The class-background of the respective agent does not influence the position directly, but is always mediated through the structure of the field.

Notwithstanding the definitional vagueness of Bourdieu's terminology, I believe it is possible to reinterpret his concept of 'field' as a useful instrument in analysing specific relations of force and of prestige in different ideological domains and, if one considers the different conditions of 'capital'-conversion, also between different ideological domains. Despite Bourdieu's polemics against Althusser, he shares with him the rejection of an economism that reduces the struggles within the ideological domain to class-positions. In contrast to Althusser's ideological state-apparatus concept, Bourdieu's fields do not coincide with specific institutions: one might, for example, find different 'fields' in one institution, or a field spanning different institutions, which may represent positions within it.[31]

Bourdieu's polemics against the 'apparatus' in the name of the 'field' seem questionable to me in several respects. For one, his interpretation of apparatus

28. Quoted in Schwartz 1997, p. 117.

29. Cf. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 117. 'As in the case of capital, conceptual inflation leads to its devaluation' (Schwartz 1997, p. 122).

30. This is, for example, how Bourdieu analyses the conflict between Raymond Picard and Roland Barthes (Bourdieu 1988, p. 115).

31. Cf. Schwartz 1997, p. 120.

as (infernal) 'machine' is by itself a reductionist interpretation of the term, which in its original Latin usages comprised the meanings of preparation, providing, tools/instruments/engines, military and liturgical equipment, supplies/material and magnificence, splendour and pomp. It not only consists of 'things', but also includes people. The widespread tendency to interpret apparatus as 'machine' therefore leaves out its active, sensory and fascinating dimensions.[32] There is no necessity to define 'apparatus' as something that by itself and beforehand excludes the perception of internal struggles, and it would be worthwhile to relate Bourdieu's concept of field to Gramsci's concept of 'hegemonic apparatus', which is more fluid and flexible than Althusser's ideological state-apparatus concept.

Secondly, I would argue that the apparatus's connotations with fixity, lack of fluidity etc. criticised by Bourdieu describe an actual tendency in the reality of ideological socialisation, for example in the shape of powerful administrations like the school-system or the modern 'party-machine' as analysed by Robert Michels. Max Weber speaks of a 'party-machine', which – in correlation with its charismatic political leader – 'uses the means of *mass* demagogy to gain the consent of the masses'.[33] Of course, the point here is not to reduce the mechanisms of the ideological to Weber's instrumentalist concept of 'mass-demagogy', but to recognise that the apparatus's capacities in creating well-trained ideologues play an important role for the hegemonic power-relations. Weber even went so far as to diagnose a 'universal bureaucratisation' that after the First World-War had started its triumphal march 'throughout the whole world', therefore now about to morph into a 'housing of that future serfdom' in which human beings have to submit powerlessly, just like the fellahs in the ancient state of Egypt.[34] Even if one considers this prognosis as the result of a totalising 'ideal-typical' reasoning,[35] the development of powerful bureaucracies and their 'formal rationality' certainly had a strong impact on various ideological fields and are therefore much more than a mere 'pathological' limit. I think Jenkins has a point when he criticises Bourdieu's lack of a 'theorised model of institutions' that says something about the 'institutionalised nature of fields'.[36]

On the other hand, it is obvious that some ideological domains with more 'fluid' power-relations, which are nevertheless relevant for maintaining or

32. Cf. Bollinger and Koivisto 2001, p. 1259.
33. Weber 1994, p. 220.
34. Weber 1994, pp. 155, 158.
35. For a critique of Weber's theory of bureaucracy, cf. Rehmann 2013a, pp. 95 et sqq., 100 et sqq., 130 et sqq.
36. Jenkins 2002, pp. 89–90. According to Jenkins, Bourdieu's 'field is, in fact, institutionally *constituted*, which is something that Bourdieu is not explicit about' (Jenkins 2002, p. 123).

achieving hegemony, cannot be sufficiently grasped with a static and highly institutionalised concept of 'apparatus'. This applies to specific competitive relations between different groups of intellectuals, the 'market' as a constitutive factor of, for example, an emerging literary field, the development of a 'public' etc. In fact, Althusser did not pay much attention to the complex relations that go beyond the institutionalised domain of ideological state-apparatuses and their interpellations. Bourdieu's concept of field seems best suited to an analysis of non-centralised forms of ideological socialisation, like literature or the independent Protestant sects in the US analysed by both Marx and Weber.[37] As can be shown by the example of the neoliberal think-tanks, which after the foundation of the Mont Pèlerin Society in 1947 spread throughout all continents, the 'apparatus' and the 'field' are not exclusive concepts, but can rather complement each other: the hierarchically organised institutions are connected both with each other and with various sections of civil society by subterraneous networks that could be described with Deleuze's and Guattari's metaphor of a 'rhizome'.[38]

8.3. Ideology, symbolic violence, habitus – disentangling a confused arrangement

Seemingly against Marxism in general, but in fact in a similar fashion to Althusser and other Marxist ideology-theorists, Bourdieu turns against a traditional interpretation of ideology as false consciousness. He then draws the conclusion of replacing the concept altogether with the term 'symbolic violence' (or 'symbolic domination') – a procedure which only makes sense on the basis of a methodological decision to equate ideology and false consciousness in the first place. When Bourdieu then proceeds to define 'symbolic violence', he has some difficulties in identifying the significant difference with the abandoned concept of ideology. When he argues, for example, that it has the function of a 'transfiguration' of domination and exploitation,[39] the description does not yet divert from a traditional understanding of ideology. When he describes symbolic domination as being based on the 'misrecognition, and therefore on recognition of the principles in whose name it is exerted',[40] he seems to allude to Lacan and Althusser's conceptual couple 'reconnaissance/méconnaissance' (see above Section 6.5. and 6.6.), but this is not much more than a reformulation of 'false consciousness'

37. In particular Marx's *On the Jewish Question* (Marx 1844) and Max Weber's *Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 2001).
38. Cf. Walpen 2004, p. 62, n. 52.
39. Bourdieu 1998a, p. 100.
40. Ibid.

in a Lacanian paradigm.[41] When he specifies that symbolic violence transfigures the relations of domination into 'affective relations' in a kind of 'symbolic alchemy', transforming 'power into charisma or into the charm suited to evoke affective enchantment',[42] he reformulates the founding impulse of Marxist ideology-theories, namely to grasp 'voluntary' and at times enthused submission under estranged social relations. If one takes Bourdieu's definition of symbolic violence as 'the coercion which is set up only through the consent that the dominated cannot fail to give to the dominator (and therefore to the domination)',[43] one can easily replace symbolic violence with 'ideology' without falling back on an outdated model of consciousness. Another definition of symbolic violence, namely that it is 'violence wielded with tacit complicity between its victims and its agents, insofar as both remain unconscious of submitting to or wielding it',[44] accurately summarises what I have outlined in the Introduction as defining the ideology-theoretical paradigm-shift from consciousness to the mostly unconscious mechanisms of ideological socialisation.

I think the definitions given so far cannot explain convincingly why the decision to replace 'ideology' with 'symbolic violence' would provide any theoretical gain. According to John B. Thompson, the new concept is 'at best a signpost which points to social phenomena worthy of attention', but 'unrefined at a theoretical level', among other reasons because the underlying concept of 'recognition' remains ambiguous.[45] When, for example, a working-class student applying to a university tries hard to speak and write 'good English', such a recognition of the norm could be accompanied by the most different strategies, ranging from adaptation to the social order to its critique and subversion.[46] The concrete function of such a norm-recognition in the framework of ideological socialisation remains to be explored.

Another analytical weakness of Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power is that it is not interested in the trenchant and fundamental transformation of history brought about by the emergence of antagonistic classes and the state: when Bourdieu describes the 'magic' and 'transfiguration' of symbolic power, he not only applies it to the relations of domination in class-societies administered by

41. 'A symbolic power is a power which presupposes recognition, that is, misrecognition of the violence that is exercised through it.' (Bourdieu 1991a, p. 209). According to Schwartz, Bourdieu's key concept 'misrecognition' is akin to the idea of 'false consciousness' in the Marxist tradition in that it 'denotes "denial" of the economic and political interests present in a set of practices' (Schwartz 1997, p. 43).
42. Bourdieu 1998a, p. 102.
43. Bourdieu 2000a, p. 170.
44. Bourdieu 1998a, p. 17.
45. Thompson 1984, pp. 53, 59–60.
46. Thompson 1984, pp. 60–1.

the state, but also to the gift-exchanges of the 'potlatch',[47] which in their early forms as mechanisms in pre-state societies were however still embedded in egalitarian social relationships. This might be due to the fact that the Kabyle society in northern Algeria, whose potlatch-rules Bourdieu investigates during the Algerian War (1958–62), was of course no longer a pre-state society, but was already influenced by a long class- and state-history, not least by French colonialism, which had a particularly devastating and corrupting effect on the traditional rules of potlatch-exchanges. As critical ethnologists have pointed out, it is of great methodological importance to distinguish between the grotesquely competitive distortions of potlatch-forms in modern history and its elementary functioning in pre-state societies, which was to continuously redistribute the socially produced wealth in a way that prevented the emergence of durable social inequalities.[48] From the perspective of a critical ideology-theory, Bourdieu's lack of analytical distinction falls back behind his own reconstruction of the 'field' from the separation of manual and mental labour and the underlying genesis of classes and the state. This discrepancy can be found again and again: whereas Bourdieu's concrete studies usually analyse the institutional and discursive generation of symbolic violence with great perspicacity and rich materials, his theoretical elaboration of the concept lacks analytical sharpness and remains vague.

I think that the particular strength of the concept of symbolic violence can be seen somewhere else, namely in the way Bourdieu links it to the concept of 'habitus'. A first indication is given in the definition of symbolic violence as violence extorting submission, which is not perceived as such, because it is based on 'socially inculcated beliefs', so that the theory of symbolic violence 'rests on a theory of belief or, more precisely, on a theory of the production of belief'.[49] To fully understand the meaning of this statement, it is important to consider that in Bourdieu's sociology, 'belief' or 'faith' [*croyance*] is not used in a spiritualised sense. 'Practical belief is not a "state of mind", still less a kind of arbitrary adherence to a set of instituted dogmas and doctrines ("beliefs"), but rather a *state of the body*',[50] a 'product of quasi-bodily dispositions', 'social necessity . . . converted into motor schemes and body automatisms',[51] a 'bodily hexis' as a 'political mythology realized, *em-bodied*, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling

47. Bourdieu 1998a, pp. 93 et sqq., 100 et sqq.
48. Cf. Sigrist 2005, pp. 176 et sqq.; Wagner 2004, pp. 68 et sqq.; Wagner 2010, pp. 237–8.
49. Bourdieu 1998a, p. 103.
50. Bourdieu 1990, p. 68 (my emphasis).
51. Bourdieu 1990, pp. 68–9.

and thinking'.[52] The concept of 'belief' can be found again when Bourdieu takes his distance from the concept of ideology, after having identified it with false consciousness: 'to speak of "ideology" is to place in the order of *representations*, capable of being transformed by the intellectual conversion . . ., what belongs to the order of beliefs, that is, at the deepest level of bodily dispositions'.[53]

Bourdieu calls these bodily dispositions *habitus*.[54] Produced by the 'incorporation of a social structure in the form of a quasi-natural disposition', habitus becomes the '*vis insita*, the potential energy, the dormant force, from which symbolic violence . . . derives its mysterious efficacy'.[55] This efficacy is exerted not in the logic of 'knowing consciousness, but in the obscurity of the dispositions of habitus', which are 'durably inscribed in the bodies of the dominated'.[56] To express the pre-conscious characteristics of this incorporation, Bourdieu borrows from phenomenology the concept of *doxa*, to the extent that 'doxic submission' is, at times, used as a synonym of *habitus*.[57] *Doxa* designates the ' "lived" experience' of a 'primary relationship of familiarity with the familiar environment', the pre-verbal 'apprehension of the social world as self-evident, "taken for granted" '.[58] 'What is "learned by body" is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is'.[59]

The Latin term *habitus* (Greek *hexis*) that Bourdieu introduced as a sociological neologism can be related to the German term *Haltung*, whose meanings range from bodily 'posture', 'bearing' through 'attitude', 'stance', to psychological dispositions such as 'character'. Starting from Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*, Bertolt Brecht developed the concept of *Haltung* as a 'micro-unity of praxis for the acting subject', with the help of which it is possible to overcome the dichotomies of inside world/outside world, subjective/objective, individual/social etc.[60] The similarities with Bourdieu's definitions of *habitus* are so obvious that a direct inspiration by Brecht seems likely. Several of Brecht's theatre-pieces were available in French from the early 1960s onwards. According to Darko Suvin, the Brechtian concept was received through the mediation of Roland Barthes.[61]

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52. Bourdieu 1990, pp. 69–70. It is notable that Bourdieu's 'materialist' concept of belief/faith intersects with the ancient meanings of the term: faithfulness, confidence, relations of loyalty and reciprocity (cf. Rehmann 2001, p. 787).
53. Bourdieu 2000a, p. 177.
54. For an introductory discussion of the concept, cf. Dölling 2001, Krais and Gebauer 2002 and Krais 2004.
55. Bourdieu 2000a, p. 169.
56. Bourdieu 2000a, pp. 170–1.
57. Bourdieu 2000a, p. 177.
58. Bourdieu 1990, pp. 25, 68.
59. Bourdieu 1990, p. 73.
60. Cf. Suvin 2001, pp. 1134, 1137.
61. Cf. Suvin 2001, p. 1141.

However, to reject the concept of ideology in the name of *habitus*, as Bourdieu does, is in my view a strangely displaced argument. Since he locates *habitus* on a 'deeper' (bodily) layer which underlies both the (rejected) concept of ideology and its substitute, the concept of *symbolic violence*, it is logically inconsistent to utilise it for a rebuttal of ideology-theories. In order to do so, Bourdieu would be compelled to compare concepts of the same level, i.e. in this case he would need to demonstrate why it is theoretically useful to replace *ideology* with *symbolic violence*. The notion that the ideological both impinges upon and feeds on different 'underlying' realities, is of course not alien to ideology-theories, for example as 'objective thought-forms' of bourgeois society (Marx), a heterogeneous and contradictory 'common sense' (Gramsci), the subjects' 'imaginary' relations to their conditions of existence 'represented' by ideology (Althusser) or 'structures of feeling' (Raymond Williams). This would be the domain in which the strengths and weaknesses of the concept of *habitus* could be investigated, and one could for example argue that Bourdieu's insistence on the bodily 'incorporation' of relations of domination was an important corrective to the traditional overestimation of 'consciousness'.

I would like to argue that it is only after disentangling Bourdieu's confused arrangement of concepts that a productive translation of his basic argument into an ideology-theoretical paradigm becomes possible: ideological interpellations and transformations can only function if they connect with a habitus by which and in which social structures were already translated into incorporated dispositions. One of the strengths of Bourdieu's concept of habitus lies in the understanding of the mechanisms 'by which ideology takes hold in everyday life',[62] or, conversely, by which ideology is continuously supported by habitualised everyday patterns.

This strength becomes all the more discernible when we confront it with the weaknesses of Althusser's model of interpellation and subjection.

8.4. Bourdieu's contribution to the development of Althusser's model of interpellation

As we have already seen (see above, Section 6.7.), Althusser's model of subjection is divided into two different types of explanation, namely into a 'situationalist' notion of subjecting interpellations by various concrete ideological state-apparatuses, which leaves open under what conditions such subjections function, and an underlying omnipresent Lacanian concept of 'eternal' subjection. Contrary to this division, Bourdieu claims to mediate the concrete historical

62. Eagleton 1991, p. 156.

relations of power and hegemony with the respective attitudes, praxis-forms and dispositions of the subjects, without falling into the trap of objectivism or subjectivism. In this sense, his methodological approach is more akin to a historical-critical ideology-theory of the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT*) than an Althussererian concept of 'ideology in general' that is handed over to an ahistorical psychoanalysis.

In this context, the concept of *habitus* designates the complex mechanisms by which specific structural positions in the relations of class, gender, race, and generations are inscribed into subjects and fixated as generic schemes. These schemes engage the 'most fundamental principles of construction and evaluation of the social world', namely those 'which most directly express the division of labor (between the classes, the age groups and the sexes)'.[63] The network of commonplace dichotomies between high and low, spiritual and material, fine and coarse, brilliant and dull etc. is ultimately based on the 'opposition between the "elite" of the dominant and the mass of the dominated'.[64] As Bourdieu shows for the domain of aesthetic distinctions, the class-axis is also crossed by the male-female gender-axis: amongst the French working classes of the 1950s, for example: 'fish tends to be regarded as an unsuitable food for men, not only because it is a light food, insufficiently "filling", . . . but also . . . it is one of the "fiddly" things which a man's hand cannot cope with', and because it has to be eaten in a way that contradicts the 'masculine way of eating, that is, with restraint, in small mouthfuls, chewed gently, with the front of the mouth, on the tips of the teeth'.[65] According to the 'practical philosophy of the male body', female 'nibbling and picking' is opposed to the 'whole-hearted male gulps and mouthfuls'; *la bouche* as the front of the mouth is opposed to *la gueule*, the whole mouth, esp. the back of the mouth, the throat; and in a similar way, the plebeian-male 'belly laugh, with wrinkled nose, wide open mouth and deep breathing' is opposed to the 'repressed laughter'.[66]

According to Bourdieu, a thorough analysis of these gender-oppositions in posture, in the gestures and movements of the body, the ways of eating, and such like, 'would require a full analysis of the division of labour between the sexes'.[67] As a case in point, he derives the traditional gendered dichotomy between the straight and the bent from the division of labour in the Kabyle olive-harvest, where the man stands and knocks down the olives with a pole, while the woman stoops to pick them up.[68] In many societies, this opposition becomes central to

63. Bourdieu 1984, p. 466.
64. Bourdieu 1984, p. 468.
65. Bourdieu 1984, p. 190.
66. Bourdieu 1984, pp. 191–2.
67. Bourdieu 1990, p. 71.
68. Ibid.

most of the 'marks of respect' used to symbolise relations of domination: bending the head, lowering the eyes, kneeling, curtseying, prostration, so that the fundamental oppositions of the social order 'are always sexually overdetermined, as if the body language of sexual domination and submission had provided the fundamental principles of both the body language and the verbal language of social domination and submission'.[69]

Habitus is not just the subject-effect of an interpellation, but constitutes its own relatively autonomous world in the world. Since the habitus is 'the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product', it 'gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present'.[70] Bourdieu describes habitus not only as a 'structured' but also as a 'structuring structure', which has the creative capacity – comparable to Noam Chomsky's 'generative grammar' – of generating innumerable practices (within the range of a certain set of rules) to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations.[71] By this capacity, it can also react back on the field, constituting it 'as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one's energy'.[72]

The ideological subjection which Althusser explains by a series of successful interpellations, appears in Bourdieu's paradigm as the result of continuous interactions between field and habitus. These interactions constitute a 'long dialectical process, often described as "vocation", through which the various fields provide themselves with agents equipped with the *habitus* needed to make them work'.[73] Using these dialectics, Bourdieu tries to explain what Nietzsche had described as 'love of one's fate' [*amor fati*], namely the mechanism by which 'an agent has what he likes because he likes what he has':[74] by the social construct of 'taste', the social classes in fact 'like' the characteristics that are applied to them, so that the dominated 'tend to attribute to themselves what the distribution attributes to them, refusing what they are refused ("That is not for the likes of us"), adjusting their expectations to their chances, defining themselves as the established order defines them'.[75] In these cases, which are however not to be universalised, *amor fati* means that the *habitus* is 'pre-adjusted' to the objective conditions and their objective demands.[76]

69. Bourdieu 1990, p. 72.
70. Bourdieu 1990, p. 56.
71. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, pp. 18–19, 139.
72. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 127.
73. Bourdieu 1990, p. 67.
74. Bourdieu 1984, pp. 175, 573–4, n. 5.
75. Bourdieu 1984, p. 471.
76. Bourdieu 1990, p. 63.

I think it is, therefore, not only possible, but also very fruitful, to re-interpret Bourdieu's *habitus* as a connecting link between ideological interpellations and people's everyday life. Contrary to Althusser, Bourdieu is aware that symbolic violence 'can only be exerted on a person predisposed (in his habitus) to feel it, whereas others will ignore it'.[77] The concept of habitus is thus helpful to investigate concretely what is merely assumed in Lacanian psychoanalysis on a general ahistorical level, namely the fixed and habitualised patterns in everyday practices and common sense, on the basis of which certain ideological interpellations are 'recognised' (or not). It thus thematises a significant dimension of what the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT*) discusses with the concept of the 'proto-ideological' (see Section 9.3.). But the incorporated *habitus* not only enables individuals to recognise and accept the ideological interpellations, it also keeps the ideological alive: it allows the individuals to 'reactivate the sense objectified in institutions', to 'inhabit' and 'appropriate' them practically, 'and so to keep them in activity, continuously pulling them from the state of dead letters, . . . [and] at the same time imposing the revisions and transformations that reactivation entails'.[78]

We seem to find here what we missed in Althusser's approach, namely a dialectical relationship between ideological fields and habitualised dispositions of everyday life.

8.5. A new determinism?

However, such expectations are dampened by formulations portraying the interaction between field and habitus in terms of 'homology' (a concept taken from Emile Durkheim) which seems to cancel out any contradiction and dialectical tension. According to Bourdieu, field and habitus are just two modes of existence of history, one of which is deposited in 'things', the other in 'bodies'. 'Social reality exists, so to speak, twice: in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a ' "fish in water": it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted'.[79] The 'doxic experience' formulated in Marx's ideology-critical remark concerning the self-evident 'feeling at home' in estranged forms,[80] is described as the effect of a 'coincidence of the objective structures and the internalized structures, which provides the illusion of immediate understanding'.[81] In another definition, the habitus is portrayed as

77. Bourdieu 1991a, p. 51.
78. Bourdieu 1990, p. 57.
79. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 127.
80. Marx 1981, p. 969.
81. Bourdieu 1990, p. 26.

'an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted', so that it engenders 'all the thoughts, all the perceptions, and all the actions consistent with those conditions, and no others'.[82] In these and similar statements, it seems as though the different instances, between which Bourdieu had tried to neatly distinguish, have no other function than to reflect and reinforce each other. Numerous critics have therefore criticised Bourdieu's sociology for following the schema that 'structures produce habitus, which determine practices, which reproduce structures', a schema, which, despite the recurrent claims of inserting some agency into it, harbours an inescapable determinism with little room for innovation or deviance.[83] Klaus Holzkamp argues that Bourdieu 'never leaves behind the usual sociological position of a *one-linear determination of the individual by the social structure* and therefore considers habitus . . . as a dependant instance'.[84] Holzkamp proposes instead the concept of 'conduct of life' [*Lebensführung*], which in contrast to the better-known notion of 'life-style' grasps the '"*active achievement*" of the individual that thereby obtains certain qualities of liberty . . ., a day-to-day activity of organization, integration and construction of everyday life in a way that the contradicting demands are rendered compatible'.[85]

But was it not Bourdieu himself who argued against the tendency to reduce social agents to structural effects, claiming to develop the aspect of their own activity? This is why he characterises habitus as a *structuring* structure conceived by analogy with Chomsky's 'generative grammar'. But whereas Chomsky considered its 'deep structure' as an anthropological invariant, Bourdieu understands it as a 'historically constituted . . . and thus socially variable, generative matrix'.[86] In a similar fashion to Chomsky's assumption of a limited set of generative structures by which the speaking subject engenders innumerable meaningful sentences, Bourdieu's *habitus* is to be understood as a 'dynamic process of creation by the subjects themselves'.[87] This corresponds to Bourdieu's description of habitus as an 'art of inventing' that produces an 'infinite number of practices that are relatively unpredictable . . . but also limited in their diversity'.[88]

However, it remains unclear to what degree the praxis-forms and activities of subjects can actually be grasped in the framework of a 'generative structuralism' analogous to Chomsky's generative grammar. Although Bourdieu highlights habitus's nature as 'an *open system of dispositions* that is constantly subjected

82. Bourdieu 1977, p. 95.
83. Cf. Jenkins 2002, pp. 141–2, 149.
84. Holzkamp 1995, p. 823.
85. Holzkamp 1995, pp. 838, 842.
86. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 19.
87. Krais and Gebauer 2002, pp. 32–3.
88. Bourdieu 1990, p. 55.

to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them',[89] his notion of underlying limited 'rules' generating innumerable possible practices is too static to account for the activity of learning-processes by ever new experiences. As a general frontline, Bourdieu argues against a 'voluntarism' that he sees in liberal, postmodern and also in emphatic leftist concepts of action. He therefore puts the emphasis on the habitus's 'conservative' mechanisms of adaptation: as a 'matrix generating responses adapted in advance to all objective conditions . . . homologous with the (past) conditions of its production', the habitus functions as selective perception that 'tends to confirm and reinforce it rather than transform it'.[90] Although Bourdieu emphatically invokes the concept of praxis in Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*, he defines 'practical sense' merely as 'social necessity turned into nature, converted into motor schemes and body automatisms', with the specific function to render practices '*sensible*, that is, informed by a common sense'.[91]

Indeed, these definitions suggest that the die has already long been cast. In a similar way to Althusser's account, people are 'always-already' subjected, and this applies all the more when they imagine their practices to be in line with their 'common sense'. Bourdieu is not very interested in investigating how habitus could create impulses of transformation, nor whether there are other possible sources for these impulses. According to Schwartz, there is space for discontinuities in Bourdieu's approach, but not for 'contradiction and revolution'.[92] It thus remains unclear how Bourdieu would conceptualise the contradictions in common sense, and how he could identify what Gramsci called a 'good sense' (*buon senso*) that is open to new experiences and experiments and could therefore become a anchorage-point for a *philosophy of praxis*.

In my view, this does not mean that it is impossible to open up Bourdieu's framework for a conceptualisation of such contradictions and potentials for transformation. A first element can be found when one takes the plurality of social fields seriously: since the different fields have different types of 'capital' and rules, and furthermore, since individuals might occupy different positions in each field, the social agents are exposed to contradictory demands or interpellations, which are incorporated in the habitus as well. The intersections and discrepancies of the fields are therefore 'at the root of a divided or even torn habitus'.[93] Even if Bourdieu does not seem to have much interest in pursuing this further, this opens the investigation to the Gramscian question of how these discrepancies and contradictions are balanced in common sense and possibly rendered coherent.

89. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 133.
90. Bourdieu 1990, p. 64.
91. Bourdieu 1990, p. 69.
92. Schwartz 1997, p. 214.
93. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 127.

A second source of contradiction is the discrepancy between habitus's conditions of formation and its actual realisation: since the habitus is 'the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product',[94] it tends to come into conflict with the further development of the respective fields of action and their corresponding habitus-forms. Bourdieu discusses these frictions with the term 'hysteresis', literally 'lagging behind', i.e. a system's dependence not just on its current, but also its past environment. The distance between the habitus's new environment and its conditions of formation explains, for example, 'the structural lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them which is the cause of missed opportunities and, in particular, of the frequently observed incapacity to think historical crises in categories of perception and thought other than those of the past'.[95] There are different possibilities of mismatch between fields and habitus, including the potentially revolutionary one that in crisis-situations, 'the dialectic of mutually self-reproducing objective chances and subjective aspirations may break down', which in turn might rupture 'the tacit acceptance which the dominated classes . . . previously granted to the dominant goals, and so to make it possible to invent or impose the goals of genuine collective action'.[96]

And thirdly, even if there is on the one hand a 'probability . . . that experiences will confirm habitus' and therefore a '*relative* closure of the system of dispositions that constitute habitus',[97] one has to consider on the other hand that habitus is not the sole instance that generates concrete practices and changes, which instead result from the *encounters* between fields and habitus. 'It is only *in the relation* to certain structures that habitus produces given discourses or practices', so that 'the very same habitus will generate different, even opposite, outcomes'.[98] It is in this active mediation of habitus and fields that Bourdieu sees a space for critical 'socio-analysis': even if it is difficult to control the first inclination of habitus, 'reflexive analysis . . . allows us to alter our perception of the situation and thereby our reaction to it'.[99] Agents can to a certain extent 'consciously master the relation they entertain with their dispositions', and with the support of 'explicit clarification' it is possible that they can pit one habitus-disposition against another, fight one passion with the help of another, and so on.[100]

Dealing with these multiple contradictions in fact requires continuous active intervention and experimentation, including a critical awareness and multiple struggles for coherence, which play a crucial role in Gramsci's analyses of common sense and in Klaus Holzkamp's concept of the everyday *conduct of life*.

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94. Bourdieu 1990, p. 56.
95. Bourdieu 1977, pp. 78, 83.
96. Bourdieu and Passeron 1979, p. 97.
97. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 133.
98. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 135.
99. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 136.
100. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 137.

Chapter Nine

Ideology-Critique with the Hinterland of a Theory of the Ideological: The '*Projekt Ideologietheorie*' (*PIT*)

The '*Projekt Ideologietheorie*' (*PIT*), founded by Wolfgang Fritz Haug in 1977, carried on essential aspects of Gramsci's theory of hegemony and Althusser's ideological state-apparatus theory. The main difference with Althusser is that it did so on the basis of a theoretical elaboration of the ideology-critical approaches of Marx and Engels. What distinguishes it from more traditional versions of ideology-critique is that the ideological is not conceptualised on the level of 'false consciousness', so that the analysis, in turn similar to Gramsci and Althusser, focuses on the functioning of ideological powers, apparatuses, praxis and thought-forms.

9.1. The resumption of Marx and Engels's critical concept of ideology

The approach is ideology-critical in the sense that the *PIT* deals with the functioning of ideological powers, practices, and discourses from the perspective of their 'withering away' in a society without class-, state- and patriarchal domination. To avoid a widespread misunderstanding, it must be clarified from the outset that this is not about a utopian vision of a society without 'power-relations'. The concept of 'domination' is not to be confused with the concept of 'power', which is, as Max Weber put it, 'sociologically amorphous'.[1]

1. Weber 1978, p. 53.

The term furthermore contains in both Germanic and Romance languages the etymological root of ability/capacity – the German term *Macht*, for example, goes back to the Gothic *mahts* and *magan*, to be capable (still present in *vermögen*), which in turn corresponds to the French verb *pouvoir* that underlies the Romance nouns (*le*) *pouvoir, puissance*, and *power*. When Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri describe the 'power of the multitude' in terms of its 'becoming-subject', they refer to the Latin verb *posse* – 'power as a verb, as activity', part of the Renaissance triad 'esse-nosse-posse', being-knowing-having power, and expressing 'what a body and what a mind can do'.[2] Tied to the complex of capacities, *power* might express both reciprocal relationships and unequal ones (such as in a paedagogical constellation), both competences monopolised by elites or a cooperative capacity to act from below in the sense of Spinoza's *potentia agendi*.[3] Whereas *power* is in principle open to democratisation, the concept of *domination* (German: *Herrschaft*) is formed around the ancient figure of the *dominus* (master), in German *der Herr*, which embodies the intersection of patriarchal and class-rule. It cannot therefore be conceived without its constitutive meanings of hierarchy and verticality. Whereas *power* is to be found on opposites sides of the class- and gender-divides, *domination* is 'an institutionalised, structurally anchored asymmetric power relation of superiority and subordination'.[4] Max Weber defines it by the successful issuing of 'commands' to others, bolstered by an 'administrative staff' ready to exercise the 'necessary compulsion'.[5] The 'withering away of the state' envisaged by Marx and Engels is not to be understood as an abolition of superstructural institutions and administrative functions altogether ,but rather as a phasing-out of their hierarchical character, the end of their functioning as a form and medium of domination.[6] For Marx, 'human emancipation' is a perspective in which individuals no longer 'separate social power from [themselves] in the shape of *political* power', but rather organise

2. Hardt and Negri 2000, pp. 407–8.

3. On the etymology of *power/Macht*, cf. Röttgers 1980; regarding the revolutionary potentials of Spinoza's *potentia agendi* and its relationship to Marx's productive forces, see Negri 1998, p. 272; for a comparison of Spinoza's *potentia agendi* as a cooperative power from below and Nietzsche's verticalistic and ultimately exterministic *will to power*, cf. Rehmann 2004a, pp. 52–60.

4. Goldschmidt 2004, p. 83.

5. Weber 1978, pp. 53–54.

6. 'The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not "abolished". *It dies out* [*Er stirbt ab*]'. (Marx and Engels 1975–2005, Vol. 25, p. 268; cf. Marx and Engels 1957, Vol. 20, p. 262). For Gramsci as well, it is the coercive element of the state that 'withers away' as the former state-functions are 'dissolved into regulated society' (Cf. Q6, §65, §88; Q7, §33; Gramsci 1971, p. 263).

their '"*forces propres*" ["own powers"] as *social* forces' and 're-absorb in [themselves] the abstract citizen'.[7]

The *PIT*'s ideology-critical perspective can thus be summarised in the following hypothesis: in an 'association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all',[8] and in which the 'associated producers govern the human metabolism with nature in a rational way, bringing it under their collective control instead of being dominated by it as a blind power',[9] ideology in the sense of a 'voluntary' subjection to class-, state-, and patriarchal domination loses its functional necessity. If in a developed classless society the 'enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therefore also the antithesis of mental and physical labour has vanished',[10] there is no longer any need for an 'illusory community'[11] that hovers *above* actual social life. This is not to be confused with the assumption that *all* illusions and projections would be replaced by complete transparency, which is in my estimation no more than a rationalist illusion rendered obsolete by Freud's discovery of the unconscious. A critical ideology-theory deals with systemic illusions supporting relations of domination rather than with the epistemological question of 'truth' and error in general. Since the ideological powers and apparatuses emerged together with antagonistic classes and alongside the social divisions of manual and intellectual labour, they can in principle be liberated from their alienated position, reclaimed, and reintegrated into the 'horizontal' structures of a democratic-socialist society.

Of course, such a perspective should not be understood as an empirical prognosis but rather as a methodical principle for analysis. The methodical question of how to determine the standpoint and perspectives of critical theory does not coincide with the immediate political question of whether such a society would be possible in the foreseeable future, in what way short-term or medium-term goals should be formulated etc. Such a methodical distance does however not mean that a critical ideology-theory is detached from leftist politics, which cannot manifest itself without a convincing and tangible perspective of reclaiming and reappropriating the common. To work on the contradictions between the distant goals of human emancipation and what is possible in the here and now is the main subject-matter of a political dialectics that Rosa Luxemburg summarised with the formula of 'revolutionary *Realpolitik*'.[12] Taking up Luxemburg's critique of Lenin's dismissal of parliamentary democracy, Poulantzas reformulated

7. Marx 1843, p. 168.
8. Marx and Engels 1848, p. 506.
9. Marx 1981, p. 959.
10. Marx 1875, p. 87.
11. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 46.
12. Luxemburg 1970–5, 1/1, p. 373.

and concreticised the 'withering away of the state' as a twofold process in which the 'extension and deepening of political freedoms and the institutions of representative democracy . . . are combined with the unfurling of forms of direct democracy and the mushrooming of self-management bodies'[13] (see above Section 3.3.). A critical ideology-theory can contribute to such a democratic-socialist approach by its heuristic capacity to analytically dissect the complex and contradictory character of ideological phenomena, and to thus help identify and 'set free elements of the new society with which . . . bourgeois society itself is pregnant'.[14]

By connecting the different strands of ideology-critique and ideology-theory, the *PIT* responded to a blockade that Juha Koivisto and Veikko Pietilä have described as the main 'dilemma' of the research on ideology so far.[15] By this they mean a polarisation between ideology-critical approaches, fixated however on the critique of consciousness (such as Larrain), and ideology-theories that break with the critique of consciousness, but instead reintroduce a 'neutral' concept of ideology (such as Althusser and Stuart Hall). The former have major difficulties taking into account the discursive struggles in the hegemonic apparatuses of civil society, the latter lose the ideology-critical dimension of Marx and Engels and thereby the analytical sharpness of the concept altogether. To illustrate the problem, Koivisto and Pietilä developed a two-by-two table whose left column (a) represents ideology as a 'phenomenon of consciousness', whereas the right column (b) represents ideology as something that 'constitutes consciousness'. Both columns are horizontally divided into two sections, namely (c) 'neutral conceptions' and (d) 'critical conceptions'.[16] The first field at the crossroads of (a) and (c) would represent 'neutral' dealings with class- or group- world-views, meaning approaches as different as those of Lenin, Mannheim, and Stuart Hall; the second field at the crossroads of (a) and (d) contains the critique of 'false consciousness' and thus would entail major aspects of Lukács, Horkheimer and Adorno; the third field at the crossroads of (b) and (c) would entail the predominant interpretation of Gramsci's theory of hegemony (but only if we abstract from his throughout ideology-critique) and Althusser's ideological state-apparatus theory (insofar as we follow his concept of an eternal and omnipresent ideology in general).

However, the fourth field at the crossroads of (b) and (d) is left open: what was missing up until then was an approach that accounts for both the material and 'alienated' existence of ideology and is able to connect the two strands in an organic way. This is what the *PIT* was doing by developing a 'critical-structural

13. Poulantzas 1978, p. 256.
14. Marx 1871, p. 335.
15. Koivisto and Pietilä 1993, p. 243.
16. Koivisto and Pietilä 1993, p. 238; cf. Kovisto and Pietilä 1996–7, p. 43.

conception of ideology'.[17] Thus an ideology-critique becomes possible which operates with a theory of the ideological as 'conceptual hinterland'.[18]

9.2. The ideological at the crossroads of class-domination, state and patriarchy

Following Engels's concept of 'ideological powers',[19] the *PIT* distinguishes between particular ideologies and the 'ideological'. It comprehends the latter not primarily as an edifice of thought and consciousness, but rather as a set of social relations determining human practices and thought-forms. Since superordination does not follow from reverence, but reverence from superordination, the ideological is to be analysed first and foremost as an 'external arrangement' in the 'ensemble of social relations', namely as a specific organisational form of class-societies reproduced by the state.[20] It constitutes the basic structure of ideological powers 'above' society, and thus the functioning and efficacy of an 'alienated socialisation from above'.[21]

Corresponding to the ideological powers, specific ideological 'forms' are developed, such as politics, the religious, juridical, moral, philosophical and aesthetic. When Marx speaks of the 'legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms, in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out',[22] there is more at play than reflections and phenomena of consciousness (see above, Section 2.3.). In a similar way to the 'objective thought forms'[23] referring to the fetishism of the commodity, the wage-form, and capital, ideological forms are to be investigated as objective formations of praxis and discourse which the individuals must navigate in order to be capable of acting. Against the background of these social forms and the processes of subjectivisation taking place in them, the edifices of ideas are secondary, and represent 'what is most variable and tactical, a site where all possible differences, even including the driving forces of individual ideologists, can be represented'.[24]

The emergence of the state, which according to Engels is the 'first ideological power over man', a power, 'having arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it',[25] is foundational for the

17. Koivisto and Pietilä 1993, p. 243.
18. W.F. Haug 1993, p. 21.
19. Cf. Engels 1886, p. 392.
20. W.F. Haug 1987a, pp. 60–2; *PIT* 1979, pp. 179–81.
21. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 68; *PIT* 1979, p. 187.
22. Cf. Marx 1859, p. 263.
23. Marx 1976, p. 169; cf. Marx 1867, p. 87.
24. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 69; *PIT* 1979, p. 188.
25. Cf. Engels 1886, pp. 392–3; Engels 1892, p. 269.

ideological. Putting aside external conditions like the submission by wars, the emergence of states can in general be explained by polarisations in which the social antagonisms reached a level that made it no longer possible to arbitrate them in 'horizontal' forms or to resolve them by the split of the group and the secession of one section.[26] The result of this is that competences of socialisation (of labour and other forms of life-activity) that were initially exercised 'horizontally', without 'vertical' interference, were transferred to superstructural instances and their bureaucratic apparatuses.[27] In the course of the separation of manual and intellectual labour, the state is elevated to a '*beyond* of society' in the sense of a 'socially transcendent instance' that fixes and regulates the antagonistic class-interests from above.[28]

However, this genealogy of the ideological should be differentiated by the analysis of patriarchal gender-relations which were already exercised in pre-statal gerontocracies, and this, above all, by a specific rule of the elders that the French anthropologist Claude Meillassoux described as 'matrimonial management', as the directive of the elders over the exogenous marriage of women.[29] According to Meillassoux, this patriarchal rule is connected to two main developments: firstly the frequent capture and abduction of women by male hunters turned 'warriors' degrade power-position of women, not only *vis-à-vis* the men who abduct and submit them, but also *vis-à-vis* those of her own group who protect them. 'Made inferior because of their *social* vulnerability, women are put to work under male protection and are given . . . the most tedious . . . tasks'.[30] Secondly, the specific production-cycles in agriculture require the relatively older generation to advance food and seeds to those who will work in the following season. This creates a hierarchy of 'anteriority' between those 'who come first' and those 'who come after'. The elders become those to whom the seed and subsistence-goods are 'owed'. The oldest 'owes nothing to any living person, only to the ancestors, while he concentrates on himself all that junior people owe to the community, which he therefore comes to embody'.[31] According to Meillassoux, the pre-state gerontocracy already requires, in order to preserve itself, 'a coercive and authoritarian ideology' imposed on young people, and, above all, pubescent women: 'Endogamy becomes incest, and sexual prohibition a taboo'.[32]

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26. As Christian Sigrist showed with the example of pre-state 'segmentary societies' in Africa, across the centuries large communities were able to balance their economic inequalities by egalitarian mechanisms such as derision and the possible exclusion of 'prominent figures', or by a group seceeding (Sigrist 2005; cf. Haude and Wagner 2004).
27. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 62; *PIT* 1979, p. 181.
28. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 61; *PIT* 1979, pp. 180–1.
29. Meillassoux 1981, p. 82.
30. Meillassoux 1981, p. 29; cf. pp. 75–6.
31. Meillassoux 1981, p. 42.
32. Meillassoux 1981, p. 45.

W.F. Haug tried to reconcile the emergence of 'ideology' from patriarchal gender-relations and from the state, which is arguably one of the most fundamental and trenchant transformations in human history. He proposed to consider the 'pre-statal' patriarchy as a type of 'state before the state', which essentially supports the emergence of the state and also later continues to exist as the 'basic cell of the state'.[33] The fundamental fact of patriarchy's control over female labour-power, which Marx and Engels described as the first form of property ('latent slavery in the family') or the 'first class antithesis' and 'class oppression' in monogamous marriage,[34] also marked the mode of functioning of the ideological: while the community of genders is actually destroyed in reality, it is restored in an imaginary way in the 'beyond' of ideology. The ideological is borne by the symbolic representation of gender-relations, the familial becomes an emotional and imaginary vehicle of any subordination and supraordination. This obviously resembles Bourdieu's analysis of the sexual overdetermination of the social order (see above, Section 8.4.) It is preferably women who represent the illusory community of the family: they are, according to an encyclopaedia of 1818, the 'representatives of love', whereas the men represent 'the law'.[35]

In an attempt to concretisise Althusser's conception of the subject, Haug developed the concept of a 'sexual subject-effect', by which social gender is imposed on individuals as a pre-shaped ideological form that they 'have to be', without ever being able to fully correspond to it. The subject 'takes itself on [*übernimmt sich*]' in the double sense this term has in German: on the one hand, that of taking up responsibility for oneself and, on the other hand, that of taking on more than one can handle, of making overwhelming demands upon oneself. Gender thus becomes the most intimate form in which the order of domination is inscribed in the individual: it is 'the missing being that one has to be'.[36] In a different theoretical framework, Judith Butler developed a similar argument in her concept of 'performativity': like the 'artificial' *drag*, the 'normal', hegemonic heterosexuality is not a fixed identity, but rather a 'constant and repeated effort to imitate its own idealizations . . ., beset by an anxiety that it can never fully overcome, that its efforts to become its own idealizations can never be finally or fully achieved'.[37]

33. W.F. Haug 1993, p. 197. Gerhard Hauck objected that the connection between pre-statal patriarchy and the state by the notion of a 'state before the state' was only metaphoric and thus demonstrated that Haug's concept of the ideological was too fixated on state-rule (Hauck 1995, pp. 719–20).
34. Cf. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 46; Engels 1892, p. 173.
35. Quoted in W.F. Haug 1993, pp. 200–1.
36. W.F. Haug 1993, p. 201.
37. Butler 1993, p. 125.

In the anti-sexual formation from circa 1850–1950, which at the same time was the most intense period of modern racism so far, the ideological values of *health, beauty and spirit* were linked with sexual abstinence, while 'syphilis' functioned as a catalyst for a medicalisation of the public's body.[38] "Self-control' . . . becomes . . . the individual form of *uncompelled subjection*'.[39]

9.3. '*Vergesellschaftung*' – vertical, horizontal, and proto-ideological

The German term '*Vergesellschaftung*', often used by Marx, is difficult to translate into English. Some scholars employ the neologism 'societalisation', which is literally accurate, but remains a foreign word with no chance of connecting it with common sense. However, translating it in the usual way as 'socialisation' is not without a loss: whereas 'socialisation', besides its special meaning referring to 'socialised' or 'nationalised' enterprises, is usually employed in the sense of *adapting* individuals to society by means of interiorised social norms, '*Vergesellschaftung*' has the more encompassing and more active meaning of 'making society', in the sense of shaping and realising social relationships on all levels.[40] It is in this general sense that the concept of *Vergesellschaftung* can be analytically separated into vertical and horizontal 'socialisation'.

In contrast to Althusser's concept of the ideological state-apparatuses (and similar to Gramsci), for the *PIT* the ideological does not primarily signify a social 'region', but rather the *dimension* of a socialisation from above which penetrates different social levels. A counter-concept to the ideological is the perspective of a horizontal 'self-socialisation' [*Selbstvergesellschaftung*] in the sense of a common-consensual control of the conditions of social life.[41] This concept is designed not only for outlining a remote goal, but also for taking account of ever present realities and experiences, even if partial, fragmented, or distorted. Aspects of horizontal socialisation can be found whenever individuals try to regulate their social life and to develop corresponding social competences without, or against the intervention of, repressive and ideological superordinate apparatuses. Its presence can be observed and studied wherever people are oriented towards the '*Gemeinwesen*' (literally: 'common-being'), which, according to Engels, 'is a good old German word that can very well do service for the French "Commune" – whenever socialist programs articulate their goal in terms of a "free" or "popular" *state*, they should therefore replace the term 'state' this with the

38. W.F. Haug 1986b, pp. 126 et sqq.
39. W.F. Haug 1986b, p. 145.
40. Cf. W.F. Haug 1987b, p. 91; Koivisto and Pietilä 1996–7, p. 47.
41. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 59; *PIT* 1979, p. 178.

term 'Gemeinwesen'.[42] Taking up this state-critical orientation in the works of Marx and Engels, the *PIT* approach anticipated what was later discussed in the Anglo-Saxon world under the headline of the 'common' and its relevance for a new concept of 'common-ism'. Horizontal self-socialisation thus takes place whenever the 'common', the 'commune' which has been alienated by ideological powers, is reclaimed and reappropriated.[43]

One of the merits of this distinction is that it allows us to analyse the subversive articulations from below that Althusser's over-general concept of ideology was unable to identify. Cultural history is replete with anti-ideological impulses that desacralise and ridicule verticalist interpellations by unveiling the 'naked' class-interests of the respective ideological powers and their ideologues in a plebeian fashion – see, for example, the literary figures of 'Hans Wurst' (literally 'John Sausage', the German brother of the English 'Pickle Herring' or the French 'Jean Potage'), or the subversive strategies exposed in Jaroslav Hašek's novel *The Good Soldier Švejk*.[44] Mikhail Bakhtin's famous work *Rabelais and his World* investigated Renaissance carnival in Europe as a temporary 'suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions', with a 'peculiar logic of the 'inside out' [*à l'envers*], of the 'turnabout', of a continual shifting from top to bottom'.[45] Carnival immerses the world in festive laughter and mobilizes the resources of what Bakhtin calls 'grotesque realism',[46] which aims at 'lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity'.[47]

But the carnival is at the same time a *controlled* reversal of hierarchies, its anti-ideological impulses coexist with elements of containment and accommodation, its subversive practices 'remain rule-governed in ways that do not fundamentally challenge the prevailing relations of power'.[48] The example shows that

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42. Cf. Engels's letters to Bebel, 18 and 28 March, 1875, in: Engels 1875, p. 64; cf. Marx and Engels 1957, Vol. 19, p. 7.

43. On *Gemeinwesen* as a state-critical marker against the statism of 'real-existing socialism', cf. Jehle 2001a, pp. 189 et sqq.). For Rancière, 'politics is the sphere of activity of a common' (Rancière 1999, p. 14) and thus coincides with the part of 'those without part'. As Hardt and Negri point out, the common is not only the common wealth of nature, such as air, water, the fruits of the soil, but also the results of social production (Hardt and Negri 2009, p. VIII). The purpose of their book *Commonwealth* is, amongst others things, to 'help readers begin to retrain their vision, recognizing the common that exists and what it can do', and this as a first step in a 'project to win back and expand the common and its powers' (ibid. IX). Cf. the debate between Balibar and Negri on the common in Curcio and Özselçuk 2010.

44. Hašek 1985.

45. Bakhtin 1984, pp. 10–11.

46. Bakhtin 1984, p. 18.

47. Bakhtin pp. 19–20.

48. McNally 2001, p. 150. McNally pointed out the ambivalences of carnival, which were in part overlooked in Bakhtin's analysis (cf. McNally 2001, pp. 141–59); cf. also Haude and Jehle 2008, pp. 397–406.

ideology-theoretical concepts are not to be understood in an empiristic way: the ideological and the 'anti-ideological' cannot be considered as opposite 'essences' located in separate regions. It is impossible to identify self-socialisation in state-administered class-societies in any pure form, as an 'innocent' way of life, but rather as a dimension that in empirical reality is necessarily intermingled with both alienated economic forms and ideological practices. But as a *dimension* it is nevertheless *real*, and this both as anticipation of (and tendency towards) co-operative self-determination and on the level of lived experiences, however partial and precarious. Without 'horizontal' experiences of sharing similar life-conditions, of actual cooperation and solidarity, the South-African poor of Ashwin Desai's *We are the poors* would not be able to reject the racist interpellations and to formulate their own counter-subjectivity (see above, Section 6.7.).

The terms of the *PIT* are thus not used as immediately descriptive but as abstractive concepts designed to analytically lay out different aspects of the activities of socialisation. The ideological is just *one* dimension, although a pervasive one, in the 'ensemble of social relations', coexisting with others.[49] Let me note in passing that such a method of constructing concepts is not at all unusual in critical social theory. When Marx dissected the commodity in its different components, he was by no means suggesting that its use-value and its exchange-value henceforth live an independent existence. For the commodity to function in circulation, both aspects must coexist in the same commodity-body; the same is true with labour, which in capitalist commodity-production does not exist as *either* concrete *or* abstract labour but as both together. Marx was well aware that he analysed the unfolding of the value form in a typical and pure form that existed only under conditions of a laboratory and not in empirical history. Max Weber took up some of these considerations, without of course acknowledging the source, when he elaborated on the necessity of abstractive concepts in sociology and developed the category of 'ideal types', that are to be construed by the 'analytical [*gedankliche*] accentuation of certain elements of reality'.[50]

Another dimension to be distinguished from the ideological is that of the *cultural*, in which individuals and groups affirm themselves (and each other) as ends in themselves, arrange their activities in a 'meaningful and sensuously enjoyable

49. When Seppmann criticised Haug and the *PIT* for reducing everyday practices to the ideological reproduction of class-domination, and thus for ending up in 'neo-mechanistic social theory' (Seppmann 2007, p. 164), he overlooked the multi-dimensional character of *Vergesellschaftung* that distinguishes the *PIT* approach from Althusserian functionalism.

50. Weber 1949a, p. 90. For a critical evaluation of Weber's 'ideal type' and comparison of the methods of abstraction in Marx and Weber, cf. Rehmann 2013a, 205–11 and F. Haug, W.F. Haug and Küttler 2004, pp. 622–31.

way', and 'practice what appears to them to be worth living'.[51] This concept of the *cultural* was inspired by Marx's distinction between the 'realm of necessity', namely the domain of labour, which can and must be democratically organised, its labour-time reduced and so on, and the 'realm of freedom', portrayed as the domain where human powers and potential [*menschliche Kraftentwicklung*] can be developed as an 'end in itself'.[52] The young Lukács drew the conclusion of directly identifying culture with the 'realm of freedom' and defined it as that which 'comprehends all valuable products and capacities that are not necessary for the immediate livelihood' and thus represents 'the idea of being-human [*Menschsein*] of human beings'.[53] The definition is one-sided insofar as it overlooks the cultural development of human powers and potential *within* the 'realm of necessity'. But I think Lukács is right in his attempt to identify a specificity of the cultural that needs to be kept apart from ideological socialisation. Both the *cultural* and the *ideological* cut across different domains. According to the *PIT*, the analytical distinction between these dimensions is necessary in order to grasp the specificity of ideological transformation: 'cultural flowers are continually picked by the ideological powers and handed back down from above as "unwithering" artificial flowers, integrated into the vertical structure of the ideological'.[54]

Again, it must be emphasised that the cultural dimension has no 'pure' existence neatly separated from the ideological. It can be hijacked by the aesthetics of commodities and colonised by a capitalist culture-industry.[55] In empirical reality the dimensions overlap, so that 'the positivity of affirming oneself for one's own sake is permanently on the verge of tipping over into the negativity of Not-wanting-to-be-like-others'.[56] Under the conditions of class-societies and ideological socialisation, 'culture' becomes one of its apparatuses and functions (among other things) as an ideological form in which competitive struggles over social prestige are fought out. This is what Bourdieu analysed as cultural 'distinctions' by taste (see above, Section 8.4.). The main difference is that whereas Bourdieu tends to identify the competitive distinctions in the hierarchies of

51. Cf. W.F. Haug 1987c, p. 31; W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 65; *PIT* 1979, p. 184.
52. Marx 1981, p. 959; cf. Marx and Engels 1957–, p. 828.
53. Lukács 1985, pp. 194, 209.
54. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 65; *PIT* 1979, p. 184.
55. Cf. W.F. Haug 2011, pp. 171 et sqq. Commodity-aesthetics specifically tries to occupy the cultural impulses of children, in particular their here and now pleasures of playing games, which it turns against the other main spheres of activity, namely formal learning in school (future-oriented) and contribution to family duties like tidying one's room, doing the dishes, and so on. Parents, teachers and children are thus forced into a dysfunctional generational battle, 'in which they can only do everything wrong' (cf. W.F. Haug 2011, pp. 177–8, 184).
56. W.F. Haug 2011, p. 85.

social prestige with cultural phenomena as such, Haug is looking for a general concept of 'cultural distinction' in the sense of how people differentiate between what is 'instrumental' and what is enjoyable as an end in itself – a distinction which taken by itself does not coincide with its alienated forms in antagonistic class-societies. A critical theory of culture needs to reconstruct the specifically 'cultural in culture', the 'cultural moment',[57] without which the dialectic relationship between ideology and culture cannot be grasped. Whereas the ideological is bound up with systems of class- and gender-domination, the *cultural* belongs to human history in general: whenever people produce and reproduce their lives, engage in cooperation and interaction, they do all of this not for the sake of labour as such, nor for the ideals of achievement or duty-fulfilment. The striving for enjoyment and self-affirmation and self-love are always part of human practice.[58]

The inner contradictoriness of the cultural field can already be demonstrated with the example of the etymology of the term *culture* itself: the Latin term *cultura* (as well as *cultus*) is derived from *colere*, which means to till, to farm a piece of land, and consequently to inhabit the place, to cultivate and cherish it etc. Culture is originally connected with agriculture and refers back to the Neolithic revolution.[59] But in language the term reproduces what happens to the agricultural products as they become the main source of exploitation in antiquity: by producing an agricultural surplus, the peasants also produce the opposite pole of agriculture, the city-state, the site of economic and infrastructural planning, of commerce and trade, administration and the military, the temple as a major beneficiary of the surplus, the development of ideological sanctions for the ruling order on the base of scripture etc. It also becomes the site of 'culture', ranging from customs and taste based on urban wealth to the philosophers' cultivation of body and soul. In the context of the domination of town over country, of intellectual labour over manual labour, *culture* becomes ideologised and alienated from its agricultural origins. From the perspective of the now '*higher culture*', the original cultivator, the peasant (*rusticus*) becomes the epitome of the uncultivated 'other': simple, dumb, uneducated, coarse, vulgar, barbarian. The cultural 'form' now comes from above, as something more elevated, ultimately divine, and it is imposed on 'matter', which is degraded to something formless.[60] Nietzsche is one of the few philosophers who, in an aristocratic recklessness that is both cynical and revealing, described the 'grand culture' of the ancient Greek state as a 'blood-stained victor, who in his triumphal procession carries the defeated

57. W.F. Haug 2011, pp. 41, 44.
58. W.F. Haug 2011, pp. 46–7.
59. W.F. Haug 2011, p. 65.
60. Ibid.

along as slaves chained to his chariot, slaves whom a beneficent power has so blinded that, almost crushed by the wheels of the chariot, they nevertheless still exclaim: "Dignity of labour!" "Dignity of Man!"'[61]

Another dimension introduced by the *PIT* is described as 'proto-ideological'. The concept signifies the differentiations and specialisations of competence that nourish and support from below the ideologisation from above. In pre-state societies, for example, this can be observed in the form of the elders that stand out against the community and are equipped with particular powers as described by Meillassoux. What distinguishes this patriarchal and gerontocratic power-position from state-domination is that it still lacks the criterion described by Weber as a permanent 'administrative staff' ready to exercise the 'necessary compulsion'.[62] The category of the 'proto-ideological' could cover, for example, the worship of ancestors, the status of medicine men with secret knowledge or pre-statal sanctuaries, which are then reorganised during the emergence of the state in ideological form.[63] A sanctuary can embody the integration of a tribe 'without being connected with a religion that demands submission to an otherwordly, superordinated instance'.[64] From the perspective of this ideology-theory, we are dealing with 'religion' or religious ideology only from the moment that the different proto-ideological functions are integrated into the early state-form of a theocracy (cf. the similar reconstruction of the 'religious field' by Bourdieu: see above, Section 7.1.). As part of a theocratic state-apparatus, the priesthood is able to effectively monopolise the relevant intellectual leadership-competences that reach from mathematics for the observation of 'heavenly bodies', to the engineering of irrigation-plants and other infrastructural projects, to economic planning in general. It is also under the conditions of existing state-rule and ideological socialisation that proto-ideological differentiations, practices and world-views develop, and are continually exposed to the reach and further processing of ideological powers. The *PIT* also counts the fetishised 'objective thought-forms' of capitalist commodity-production among these 'proto-ideological' forms, because they are on the one hand forms of alienated socialisation, regulated only afterwards and without planning, on the other hand not regulated from above by the state- and ideological apparatuses.[65] (See above, Section 2.2.5.).

As Frigga Haug showed with the example of female self-subjugation, individuals themselves are actively entrapped in their ideological subjection.[66] Everyday life, which in bourgeois society is extensively marked by market-competition and

61. Nietzsche 1999, Vol. 1, pp. 768–9.
62. Weber 1978, pp. 53–4.
63. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 64; *PIT* 1979, pp. 183–4.
64. Ibid.
65. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 67; *PIT* 1979, p. 186.
66. Cf. F. Haug 1980.

'possessive individualism' (Macpherson), creates not only the 'reified' thought-forms that, according to Lukács, engender an overall 'contemplative' passivity (see above Section 4.1.), but also unleashes multifarious private-egoistical activities which are directed against each other, not only on the individual level, but also on the level of multiple groups competing with each other. Under these conditions of competition, 'self-determination' might take on the form of a social distinction from others as analysed by Bourdieu.[67] In this context, identity is determined on the basis of antagonism. It is the decomposition of solidarity and community that becomes the 'body of resonance' for the functioning of the ideological. The void created by privatisation and isolation provides the respective ideologies with the appeal and consensual power over human minds and hearts. 'The frightened mutually accuse each other of being cowards'.[68] Institutionalised ideological practices have their informal correspondences in everyday life as a 'multiformed *Do it Yourself* of ideology', in which individuals struggle over the constitution of their own 'normality'.[69]

9.4. The dialectics of the ideological: compromise-formation, complementarity and antagonistic reclamation of the common

To avoid the danger of re-reifying theoretical categories that are designed to grasp moving dynamics, one has to be aware that 'vertical' and 'horizontal' socialisation, the cultural, the proto-ideological etc. are not fixed characteristics, but rather in constant movement and interaction. Not only are 'cultural flowers' continually picked, transformed, and estranged by ideological powers and apparatuses, ideological phenomena can also be '"profaned", appropriated by the popular masses and assimilated in their own process of culture and identity'.[70]

It is also important to consider that analytical distinctions should not be confused with 'normative' value-judgments. Critical ideology-theory has nothing to do with a romantic populism that pretends to know once and for all that every anti-ideological rebellion from below is a 'good thing', whereas every claim derived from ideological values is 'bad'. The famous indifference of *Hans Wurst* towards higher ideological values makes him an anti-ideological plebeian hero *par excellence*, but 'what distances him from the higher values, might distance him also from revolution'.[71] Carnevalesque laughter that derided the hegemonic ideological powers could also quickly turn against Jews and Muslims, who were

67. Cf. Bourdieu 1984.
68. W.F. Haug 1986b, pp. 106, 124–5.
69. W.F. Haug 1993, pp. 172, 227.
70. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 65; *PIT* 1979, p. 184.
71. W.F. Haug 1987b, p. 96; W.F. Haug 1993, p. 87.

often portrayed as dogs or pigs.[72] This tipping over is reminiscent of Horkheimer's reflections on humans' mimetic faculties that break out as a regressive and destructive force exploited by fascism and other reactionary formations (see above, Section 4.5.). As Paul Willis's investigation, *Learning to Labour*, has demonstrated, anti-ideological impulses can have the unintended consequence of cementing subaltern positions in the labour-process: the rebellion of the working class youngsters in Hammertown against 'those on top' was carried out as a 'male white working class counter-school culture',[73] directed primarily against the school-teachers, against the diligent students derided as effeminate "ear'oles' and values of education in general. 'Two other groups against whom the lads' exclusivity is defined, and through which their own sense of superiority is enacted, are girls and ethnic minority groups'. The girls are divided into the categories 'girlfriend' and 'easy lay', they are 'asked to be sexy and inviting as well as pure and monogamous: to be consumed and not be consumed'.[74] The lads' revolt thus ends up in the most extreme conformism. By taking on the form of anti-intellectualism, of sexist affirmation of a machismo body-culture, which denounces the 'eggheads' as faggots, of a racist identity against 'Asians' and 'West Indians', the anti-elitist resentment not only shuts itself off from vital popular alliances, but also condemns itself to a life in subalternity. At the same time as the lads 'successfully' sabotage the teaching and learning environment in school,[75] they prepare themselves to occupy the most unqualified positions in the labour-process. What appears to start out as a counter-cultural resistance to paedagogic ideologies in fact confirms and stabilises the ideological reproduction of class-domination.

On the other hand, the elaboration of the ideological can also occur under pressure from below. This can be seen in an exemplary form in the genesis of law, which according to Engels is the second ideological power after the state. The first written constitution of Athens under the regime of Draco in the seventh century BCE also contained some demands for the protection of the people against arbitrary and violent attacks from the aristocracy – in Greece, most of the

72. The carnevalesque celebration of 'Negro Election Day' in New England, where in the eighteenth century former slaves chose their own black 'governors' and other officials, later developed into a manifestation of white racism: 'bands of white working-class youths, many of them with their faces painted black, attacked Black people and their homes and churches' (McNally 2001, pp. 154–5).

73. Willis 1981, p. 2.

74. Willis 1981, pp. 43, 44, 146.

75. '"The lads" specialize in a caged resentment which always stops just short of outright confrontation. Settled in class, as near a group as they can manage, there is a continuous scraping of chairs, a bad tempered 'tut-tutting' at the simplest request, and a continuous fidgeting about which explores any permutation of sitting or lying on a chair'. (Willis 1981, pp. 12–13)

lawgivers were members of the middle classes, since the nobility was opposed to codification. To a large extent it was precisely the pressure from below which forced class-domination into the ideological form, in this case the juridical form. A dialectical analysis of the ideological therefore needs to analyse how such pressure from below 'amalgamates with the operative mode of the superordinated instance from above', so that 'the interest of those dominated is *aufgehoben*, i.e., preserved and denied from the start'.[76]

In order to grasp this inner contradictoriness of ideological socialisation, the *PIT* proposes adopting certain key concepts from psychoanalysis. It does so, however, not like Althusser, who handed over the theory of ideology in general to an unhistorical Lacanian psychoanalysis, but conversely by translating and reconstructing psychoanalytical concepts in the framework of a historical-materialist theory. The Freudian 'super-ego' is thus to be reinterpreted as an internalised representation of a 'super-us', of superordinated instances of the ruling order.[77] Of particular importance is the concept of 'compromise-formation', by which Freud described the constitution of the neurotic symptom: the forces of the two opposite instances, of the punishing superego and the repressed Id, 'meet once again in the symptom and are reconciled, as it were, by the compromise of the symptom', which for Freud also explains why the neurotic symptom is so resistant: 'it is supported from both sides'.[78] The symptom can be described as a 'condensation' [*Verdichtung*], whose common elements are servants of two or more servants. Translated into an ideology-theoretical discourse, compromise-formation signifies 'a condensation of antagonistic forces . . . in the framework of the structure of domination'. It is a contradictory form, 'in which the dominated forces are compelled . . . and in which the system of domination concedes them an outlet'.[79]

The juridical codification described above can be analysed as a compromise-formation. In order to be acknowledged as 'just', it must to a certain degree contain reference-points in which both the peasants interested in protection from arbitrary aristocratic violence and the elites interested in a legally ordered exercise of domination (without permanent civil war) can at least partly recognise their claims. A prime example of compromise-formation is the Bible, like when in the Hebrew Bible the liberation-impulses of the exodus from Egyptian slavery are channelled into an idealisation of Israel's kingdom, which is, of course, based on a similar system of exploitative debt-slavery as that in Egypt; this sys-

76. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 70; *PIT* 1979, p. 189.
77. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 72; *PIT* 1979, p. 191.
78. Freud 1953–74, Vol. 16, pp. 358–359; Freud 1940–52, Vol. 11, p. 373.
79. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 72; *PIT* 1979, pp. 190–1. For an ideology-theoretical reinterpretation of the Freudian concepts of *Verdichtung* [condensation] and *Verschiebung* [displacement], see W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 71; *PIT* 1979, pp. 189–90.

tem of debt-slavery was, in turn, sharply attacked and vigorously condemned by the social criticism of the prophets as well as strongly limited in the Sabbath and Jubilee regulations. The New Testament weaves the accounts of a distributive communism of the early congregations, where all have *everything in common* (*omnia sunt comunia*),[80] into the pro-imperial and pro-Roman narrative predominant in Luke's *Acts*.[81] Ton Veerkamp argues that *God* marks a specific 'concentration in the ideological arrangement', which condenses the most different strands of loyalty. It is a 'point of concentration' that can be 'reclaimed by opposite sides': 'It is invoked as an absolute guarantor of the ruling order, but it can also be called upon as legitimizing authority for attempts to revoke existing loyalties'.[82] I think one could summarise the various examples with the hypothesis that ideologies with popular appeal need to contain compromise-formations binding together antagonistic interests and impulses. Ideologies are thus supported and held by opposite sides of the social antagonism.

Some aspects of what the PIT analyses as compromise-formation were taken up by the complementary notions of *mimicry* and *hybridity* developed in the framework of postcolonialism. Homi Bhabha described mimicry as one of the most effective strategies of colonial power, namely its educational project to create the colonised as a 'reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*'.[83] The goal is to produce 'a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect' – such a 'mimic man' is thus 'Anglicised' but never properly 'English'.[84] In order to be effective, mimicry is necessarily 'built around an *ambivalence*' and must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference'.[85] This is what constitutes *hybridity*: it creates an 'agonistic space', which is 'at once a mode of appropriation and of resistance',[86] it opens up to a 'contestation of the given symbols of authority that shift the terrains of antagonism',[87] and can thus be understood as a 'colonial representation', in which 'other "denied" knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority'.[88] This raises, however, the question of why all the ambivalence and subversion

80. *Acts* 2:43–7, 4:32.
81. For the interpretative struggles about the Israelite kingdom, cf. Wielenga 1988, pp. 165 et sqq.; for the compromise-formations in Luke's *Acts*, cf. Kahl 2002, pp. 72 et sqq., 86.
82. Veerkamp 2001, p. 917.
83. Bhabha 1994, p. 122.
84. Quoted in Bhabha 1994, pp. 124–5.
85. Bhabha 1994, p. 122.
86. Bhabha 1994, p. 172.
87. Bhabha 1994, p. 277.
88. Bhabha 1994, p. 162.

emphasised by Bhabha did in fact not hamper the relative durability of colonial rule. His potential insights are marred by the fact that he confuses the aspect of ideological hybridity with colonialism in general. When he declares that the effect of colonial power is 'the *production* of hybridisation rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions',[89] he construes an alternative between ideology and command/repression that is far removed from the reality of colonial rule, which according to Frantz Fanon's observation created a 'world divided in two', whose dividing line was 'represented by the barracks and the police stations'.[90] While Fanon could be criticised for an absolutisation of colonial (and oppositional) violence, which underestimated the aspect of hegemony, Bhabha leaves out both the underlying goal of colonial exploitation and the overall framework of violence and repression within which the 'production of hybridity' with relatively privileged parts of the colonised could only operate. He dissimulates that ideological compromise-formations are usually characterised by an asymmetrical structure of domination.

In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, the young Marx had already encountered a peculiar characteristic of the ideological that he later further expanded upon when differentiating between modern societies, namely 'that each sphere applies to me a different and opposite yardstick . . ., for each is a specific estrangement of man'.[91] In the *Jewish Question*, he unpacked one of these contradictory claims: in the modern bourgeois state, 'man – not only in thought, in consciousness, but in *reality*, in *life* – leads a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly life: life in the *political community*, in which he considers himself a *communal being* [*Gemeinwesen*], and life in *bourgeois society* [*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*], in which he acts as a *private individual*'.[92] This division into opposed 'value spheres', as Weber would later call them,[93] is understood by the *PIT* as the 'law of complementarity of the ideological'.[94] Relations of domination are reproduced via 'imaginary counter communities' that establish a 'complementary counter-appearance' to capitalist private property and state-oppression.[95] Where in patriarchy and class-societies the principle of division actually rules over the common, 'the ideological imaginary compensatorily places the common over the element of division'.[96] The same polarised class-, gender- and race-relations that actually undermine or destroy the possibilities of democratic and

89. Bhabha 1994, p. 160.
90. Fanon 2004, p. 3.
91. Marx 1844a, p. 310.
92. Marx 1844, p. 154 (translation modified).
93. Cf. Weber 1984–, 19, pp. 485 et sqq.
94. '*Komplementaritätsgesetz des Ideologischen*' (W.F. Haug 1993, p. 19).
95. W.F. Haug 1993, pp. 143, 147, 183, 199.
96. W.F. Haug 1993, p. 197.

communal self-determination are also concealed by the 'illusory community'[97] produced and disseminated by ideological instances.

This opens up a whole range of contradictory dynamics. For example, it is quite possible that imaginary counter-communities, which at first function as a compensatory complement to the ruling order and thus contribute to its ideological reproduction, under certain conditions shift their meaning and turn into resources of a counter-hegemony. This occurs regularly when oppositional movements successfully claim the 'common good', or simply the compromise-form of the 'social contract' against the ruling classes's particularistic interests, which are thus revealed as hostile to and destructive for the community. Conversely, it is also possible that manifestations of protest lose their oppositional edge and morph back into a compensatory complement that might help the ruling power-bloc to modernise its hegemony. This happened when the counter-cultural articulations of the 1968 movement were picked up by commodity-aesthetics and marketed as a new lifestyle. The anti-authoritarian criticism of the state and its bureaucracies was quickly captured by neoliberalism, which successfully turned it against the Fordist welfare-state. Using the example of France, Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello observed a massive 'transfer of leftist skills to management', in the course of which the political expectations regarding the leftist theme of self-management 'were, at least in part, able to be reinvested at the beginning of the 1980s in flexibility, the decentralization of industrial relations, and new forms of management'.[98] The demands for sexual liberation, which for a certain time went hand in glove with the critique of a moralistic and puritan variety of capitalism, 'found itself emptied of oppositional charge, when the lifting of former prohibitions proved conducive to opening up . . . an expanding market in sex-related goods and services'.[99] Neoliberalism not only successfully internalised the typical 1968 demands for 'authenticity', but also what were seemingly their opposite, the demands for radical deconstruction of the exigency of authenticity.[100] Lacanism and other deconstructive schools facilitated the construction of a new kind of adaptability, namely 'the ability to treat one's own person in the manner of a text that can be translated into different languages'.[101]

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97. Marx and Engels 1845, p. 46.
98. Boltanski and Chiapello 2007, p. 197.
99. Boltanski and Chiapello 2007, p. 326.
100. Boltanski and Chiapello 2007, pp. 441 et sqq., 451 et sqq.
101. Boltanski and Chiapello 2007, p. 461; cf. p. 498. The new consultants of the 1980s 'had become experts in the Foucauldian critique of power, the denunciation of union usurpation, and the rejection of authoritarianism. . . . Contrariwise, they specialized . . . in the supreme value of direct encounters, personal relations, particular exchanges' (Boltanski and Chiapello 2007, pp. 197–8). For a critical review of Boltanski and Chiapello's *New Spirit of Capitalism*, see Baratella and Rehmann 2005.

Since ideologies, insofar as they are effective among the masses, nourish themselves permanently from 'horizontal' energies of the common, they need to a certain degree be open to an 'antagonistic reclamation of community',[102] in which antagonistic classes and genders claim and interpret the 'common good' and related attitudes and values in opposite ways. This concept has in my view the potential of 'dialecticising' Althusser's one-way interpellation-model: it is not only the ideologies that interpellate (and thereby constitute) the subjects, but the subjects also call upon the ideological values, in whose name they in turn appeal to other subjects. The antagonistic interpellations are of course not of equal power, and their point of condensation is dependent on the relations of power and hegemony of the social forces. But however asymmetrical the antagonistic claims may be, they need to meet at least in part in the same ideological instances, concepts or symbols, be it God or justice, morality, freedom etc. What is identical in the antagonistic articulations is the symbolic form. But 'underneath' the identical interpellative instances, the ideological is multifariously divided, and the concrete meanings fall apart immediately.[103]

Furthermore, the ideological powers compete with each other over where to draw the boundaries between their fields of competence, which must be redefined over and again.[104] In a crisis of hegemony there are regularly divisions between the hallowed values of an ideological power and its necessarily 'unholy' apparatus, so that the ideological 'above' doubles into a material and an ideal part, into a 'worldly heaven and a heavenly world'.[105] In such periods, ideological powers are haunted by the contradiction between their apparatus-interests and the celestialised aspirations of their believers, sometimes of their most faithful ones. As can be shown, for example, by the emergence of Protestant Reformations in the sixteenth century, this potential cleavage can in specific constellations be effectively used by oppositional forces: whereas 'heretic' and reformatory movements were over several centuries again and again destroyed by the Inquisition or coopted (in line with the Franciscan model), the Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century succeeded in deploying the central ideological instances Scripture/Grace/Faith against the 'devilish' church-apparatus of the Catholic Church – until they built up their own church-apparatuses and were in turn integrated into a modernised ruling power-bloc.

102. W.F. Haug 1987b, p. 94; W.F. Haug 1993, p. 84.
103. Cf. W.F. Haug 1987b, p. 95; W.F. Haug 1993, p. 85.
104. Cf. Nemitz 1979, pp. 67 et sqq.
105. W.F. Haug 1987b, p. 95; W.F. Haug 1993, p. 85.

The dialectic of the ideological consists in the fact that it can only compensatorily contribute to the reproduction of domination when it also represents, in however displaced a form, a 'liberation' from domination: every ideological power articulates a relation to the common, to community, which is in fact negated by class-society.[106] It is this double character that makes it possible for ideological subjugation to be performed in the form of self-activity, and also, on the other hand, that anti-ideological, plebeian elements can be combined with the claims of the highest ideological values: 'Self-subordination under the celestialized communitarian powers can become a vital form of the liberation struggles of the oppressed'.[107] Conversely, resistance can also be weakened again via the ideological form in which it is articulated and incorporated into the order of domination, so that, for example, the 'sigh of the oppressed creature' contained in the religious form can fuse with the organisation and reproduction of oppression.[108]

An ideology-critique informed by ideology-theory will therefore seek to decipher the elements and functions of the *Gemeinwesen*, the *commune* or *common* represented in the ideological, unhinge them and retrieve them so as to develop new capacities to act in solidarity.

9.5. Fascistic modifications of the ideological

A historical concretisation of ideology-theory followed subsequently in a two-volume study on *Fascism and Ideology* (first published in 1980, followed by a second edition in 2007). Pointing out the omnipresent violence in Nazism is obviously insufficient in explaining how the German fascists successfully mobilised the masses until the end and unleashed an enormous potential of youth 'idealism' for their purposes. Any ideology-theoretical analysis is confronted with the crucial question of how the instances of fascism were able to win and to maintain power over the 'hearts of the people' (Goebbels). Framed by unrestrained, legally unbound violence, all types of appealing elements, regardless of their heritage, were integrated. 'Everything that marked everyday life as its disruption' was occupied, 'any interest, any love, any idealism and any capacity for enthusiasm – everything was roped in'.[109]

Marxist theories of fascism usually did not deal with the problem of ideological efficacy in a systematic way. Historically, the Marxist contributions of the time can roughly be divided into two main camps. On the one hand, there were the

106. Cf. *PIT* 2007, p. 108.
107. W.F. Haug 1987b, p. 96; W.F. Haug 1993, p. 86.
108. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 74; *PIT* 1979, pp. 192–3; cf. Marx 1843, p. 175.
109. *PIT* 2007, pp. 111–12.

explanations of the Third International, which followed the official Comintern definition of fascism as the 'undisguised terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialistic elements of finance capital'; on the other hand, there were the explanations of Marxist 'dissidents' like August Thalheimer, Leon Trotsky, Paul Sering (R. Löwenthal), and Otto Bauer, who started out from Marx's analysis of 'Bonapartism' (arising from an 'equilibrium' between the two main class-forces) and highlighted the 'relative autonomy' of the fascist movement and state *vis-à-vis* the dominant classes. The former tended to reduce the appeal of fascist ideologies to deliberate manipulation and demagogical seduction, in which Hitler and the 'National Socialist German Workers' Party' (NSDAP) were mere 'tools' of monopoly-capital; the latter identified the ideology of fascism as predominantly 'petty-bourgeois' or, like Thalheimer, as a direct reflection of a loss of economic status.[110] In regards to a critical ideology-theory, both sides of the contemporary debate shared the reductionist and economistic tendency of identifying fascist ideology with a determinate class-consciousness, be it of the monopoly-bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie, and did not devote much attention to the specific ideological efficacy of binding together different classes in an imaginary 'people's community' [*Volksgemeinschaft*].

It is in particular in regards to this inter-classist appeal that the left in general lacked an appealing counter-strategy. Clara Zetkin was one of the few Communist politicians and thinkers who realised this from early on. In 1923, one year after the victory of Italian fascism, she rejected the widespread interpretation that saw in fascism merely a 'militarist and terrorist movement without any profound social basis'. She also fully understood that it was not a 'united, coherent force', but included many contradictory elements, from which she, however, drew the illusory conclusion that it would 'tear itself apart'. Zetkin rightly insisted that before it defeated the proletariat by acts of terror, it had already won an 'ideological and political victory over the working class'. And she admonished the leaders of the international Communist movement: 'only if we understand that fascism has a stirring and rousing effect on broad social masses, . . . will we be able to take up the fight against it'.[111]

In 1933, the year of Hitler's rise to power, Ernst Bloch tried to explain fascism's ideological appeal with the assessment that the Nazis' attraction was to be explained by their 'thefts from the commune'.[112] This coincides with the *PIT*'s thesis that the ideological in general permanently feeds upon 'horizontal' energies

110. Cf. the critique of the reduction of fascist ideology to manipulation and demagogy in Kühnl (1979, pp. 117, 212) and *PIT* (2007, pp. 30 et sqq.); for a critical evaluation of the explanations inspired by Marx's concept of 'Bonapartism', cf. *PIT* 2007, pp. 33 et sqq.

111. Cf. Zetkin 1967, pp. 88–112, in particular pp. 90, 99.

112. 'Entwendungen aus der Kommune'; Bloch 1990, p. 64.

of the common that are displaced and alienated in the process. The Nazis 'stole', according to Bloch, 'the colour red, stirred things up with it', they stole 'the street, the pressure it exerts, . . . the dangerous songs which had been sung, . . . the forest of flags, the marching entry into the hall', and the socialist May Day tradition. At the same time, they substituted the figure of the class-conscious proletarian with the image of a de-proletarianised 'worker' and thus prescribed that 'there are of course no exploiters, class struggles, let alone exploited people'.[113] Not least, they also claimed to 'think of nothing except what will change things' and thereby occupied a decidedly 'anti-contemplative' stance that seemed to copy the 'Marxist relationship between theory and practice'.[114] In sum, 'the enemy is not content with torturing and killing workers. He not only wants to smash the red front but also strips the jewellery off the supposed corpse'.[115]

Bloch came to the strategic conclusion that the Nazis' 'theft from the commune' was facilitated by contemporary Marxism's tendency towards economism and class-reductionism, combined with a shallow rationalism without 'dialectical wisdom' that misses people's longings and 'almost supports the caricature . . . of "mechanical" reason':[116] 'Nazis speak deceitfully, but to people, the Communists quite truly, but only of things'.[117] The widespread tendency to denounce fascist invocations to communitarian peasant-traditions as nothing but 'barren clichés', 'abstractly cordons off dangerous depths of older ideology instead of dialectically analyzing and practically grasping them'.[118] When 'vulgar Marxism had forgotten the inheritance of the German Peasant War . . ., the Nazis streamed into the vacated, originally Müntzerian regions'.[119] The fascists were thus particularly able to mobilize contradictions of 'non-contemporaneity' [*Ungleichzeitigkeit*]: medieval thought-forms among peasants and the middle classes, antagonisms between town and country, young and old, and so on.[120] The socialist labour-movement, therefore, needs a 'multi-layered' and 'multi-spatial' dialectics that is capable of releasing 'those elements even of the non-contemporaneous contradiction which are capable of aversion and transformation, namely those hostile to capitalism, homeless in it, and to remount them for functioning in a different connection'.[121]

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113. Bloch 1990, pp. 64–5.
114. Bloch 1990, pp. 67–8; 'Goebbels expressly declared the film "Battleship Potemkin" to be a model for the German film, so far does the formal consent go, as the crook and deceiving perverter imagines it'. (Bloch 1990, p. 67)
115. Bloch 1990, p. 68.
116. Bloch 1990, p. 139.
117. Bloch 1990, p. 138.
118. Bloch 1990, p. 140.
119. Bloch 1990, pp. 139–40.
120. Bloch 1990, pp. 97 et sqq.
121. Bloch 1990, p. 113; cf. Bloch 1990, p. 116.

The starting point of Poulantzas's analysis of fascist ideology was the rupture of the relationship of representation between classes and political parties in the Weimar Republic: since both the large and petty bourgeoisie no longer felt represented by their political parties, the focus shifted from 'political' to 'ideological' representation, which led to a 'break between the political representatives of the bourgeoisie (the parties and politicians) and its ideological representatives (the "watchdogs" and "ideological spokesmen")'.[122] Not only did the 'ideological' representatives veer earlier and to a larger extent to fascism than the political representatives, they were also able to frame the struggle for their own hegemony effectively in terms of an offensive against 'the' parties and their 'professional politicians'.[123]

Based on his differentiation between popular and class-discourses (see above, Section 7.2.), the early Laclau came to the conclusion that German fascism was able to intervene into the manifold contradictions between the ruling power-bloc and the 'people' during the Weimar Republic and to incorporate the Jacobin and potentially 'popular-democratic interpellations' into a racist anti-democratic discourse.[124] Similarly to Bloch (but without referencing him), he argued that this hegemonic strategy was facilitated by a communist political discourse that 'excluded as a matter of principle its articulation with any interpellation which was not a class interpellation' and thus 'lacked any hegemonic will in relation to the exploited classes as a whole'.[125] Due to their class-reductionism, both wings of the labour-movement overlooked how 'the basic ideological struggle of the working class consists in linking popular-democratic ideology to its discourse, avoiding both class sectarianism and social-democratic opportunism'.[126]

Taking up these (and other) attempts to grasp the ideological appeal of fascism, the *PIT* investigated how the Nazis understood in an unprecedented manner 'how to organise self-alienation as enthusiastic self-activity'.[127] Whereas Horkheimer and Adorno abandoned the ideology-concept for German fascism, because it did not correspond to their definition as a classically bourgeois-liberal form of consciousness (see above, Section 4.3.),[128] the *PIT* approach followed the methodological decision of not looking for a specific content of ideas,

122. Poulantzas 1974, pp. 72 et sqq., p. 78.
123. Poulantzas 1974, p. 77.
124. Laclau 1977, pp. 120–1, 142.
125. Laclau 1977, pp. 125, 127.
126. Laclau 1977, p. 141.
127. *PIT* 2007, p. 107.
128. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, there is no longer 'objective spirit' in the Nazi world-view, so that the concept of ideology as a necessarily false consciousness gets nowhere. What the Nazis used instead was manipulation and the threat of repression, together with the promise to their followers 'that they get something from the booty' (IFS (ed.) 1956, p. 169; Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 8, p. 466).

instead concentrating from the outset on the Nazis' practices of ideological transformation.[129] Indeed, the material-studies showed a continuous primacy of ideological arrangements, practices and rituals over the edifice of ideas.[130] Much more than any fascist ortho*doxy*, there was an 'ortho*praxy*' (literally: 'correct practice'), to be understood as a sequence of 'performative acts' with ideological subject-effects, for example marching, mass-assemblies, collecting foodstuffs and money for those exposed to the cold [*Winterhilfswerk*], living in camps, company-fêtes.[131]

As such, the specificity of fascism did not lie in a specific single 'idea', but in the effort to occupy the entirety of the ideological and to transform, anti-democratically, the bourgeois power-bloc. As could be shown with the example of Mussolini's 'Doctrine of Fascism', this was done by an intense articulation of 'struggle', 'life-risk', and 'faith', which tied the 'war-experience' and the soldier's readiness to fearless self-sacrifice ('sacred death') to an ideologised form of 'religious faith' considered as the ultimate foundation of reality. The occupation and transformation of the ideological was thus organised from the standpoint of ideological subjection as such.[132] The fascist state was portrayed as a spiritual force, which sinks deep down into the subjects' personality where it dwells as the 'soul of the soul', *anima dell'anima*, the instance that 'animates' the soul – an exact formula for the intended ideological subject-effect.[133]

From the outset, Hitler unequivocally intended to reorganise the ideological reproduction of bourgeois rule. To this end, 'National Socialism' was construed as radical anti-Bolshevism, and this in the 'terrible double sense' of 1) a determined antagonist ready to completely exterminate the Bolshevik enemy (together with the social-democratic one) and 2) an ideological counterpart which adopts manifold elements of the opposite formation, such as the 'party of a new type', the militant rhetoric of struggle, the methods of mass-mobilisation.[134] It is not surprising that such similarities resulting from the fascist hijacking of 'Bolshevik' organisational forms and discourse-elements were then exploited by Cold War ideologues who tried to validate the propagandist slogan 'red = brown', or even, as in the case of 'Holocaust revisionists' like Ernst Nolte, to demonstrate that Nazism was just a 'copy' of the October Revolution, that Nazi crimes were only a 'defensive' reaction against Soviet crimes, that the 'racial genocide' was only an 'overshooting reaction' [*überschießende Reaktion*] to Soviet 'class-genocide' and

129. PIT 2007, p. 72.
130. PIT 2007, p. 77.
131. PIT 2007, pp. 104–5; cf. *PIT* 2007, pp. 118 et sqq., 208 et sqq., 228 et sqq., 258 et sqq.
132. PIT 2007, pp. 72–3, pp. 79–80, 87.
133. PIT 2007, p. 75.
134. *PIT* 2007, pp. 87–8.

'Asiatic barbarism', and so on. The observation that 'brown reacts to red' (so that it can destroy it more efficiently) was thus effectively converted into 'brown is just a pale copy of red'.[135]

Also characteristic was a specific ideological displacement that enabled the Nazis to articulate the enemy-image of a proletarian world-revolution as one of a Jewish world-conquest.[136] The latter is in turn connected to a specific 'Jewish' finance-industry representing 'money-grubbing' [*raffend*] capital as opposed to 'productive' [*schaffend*] German industrial capital. The function of anti-Semitism is at first to intervene into the multiplicity of populist [*völkisch*] ideological discourses (this 'jumble of opinions', as Hitler described them disparagingly in *Mein Kampf*)[137] and to arrange their elements according to a strict supra/sub order between the different 'races', as well as within one race so that they are strictly kept apart from any democratic-egalitarian articulation.[138] The ideological construct of a German *Volk*, subjected to the *Führer*, was constituted discursively through opposition to the enemy-construct of a Jewish *Gegenvolk* ('counter-people'), whose places were however open: 'whoever stood against the Nazis fell into this position and that means, finally, in the domain of the SS'.[139]

9.6. Policies of extermination and church-struggle in Nazi Germany

In a further investigation on the *Fascistisation of the Bourgeois Subject*, W.F. Haug showed with the example of the annihilation of 'life unworthy of life' that the Nazis' policies of extermination did not break into psychiatry and medicine from the outside but were actively supported by the respective ideological strata. Gassing was organised as a 'medical competence': the participating doctors were involved in all levels of the killing, even when it came to pressing the gassing lever; they were not forced to do so, but rather, 'authorised' or 'empowered' [*ermächtigt*].[140]

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135. Cf. *PIT* 2007, pp. 87 et sqq. A more recent pattern of such 'Holocaust Revisionism' can be found in Peter Sloterdijk's *Rage and Time* (Sloterdijk 2010); cf. the critique in Rehmann and Wagner 2010, pp. 41–4.

136. *PIT* 2007, pp. 89 et sqq. In a similar way, Domenico Losurdo explained the change from the socialist-proletarian to the Jewish enemy-image in terms of a shift from a 'transversal racialisation' [*razzizzazione trasversale*] (directed against the popular classes and the poor) to a 'horizontal racialisation' [*razzizzazione orizzontale*], directed against other nations and races (Losurdo 2004, pp. 823 et sqq., pp. 851–2, pp. 877–8).

137. '*Gemengsel von Anschauungen*' (Hitler 1939, p. 422).

138. *PIT* 2007, pp. 92–3.

139. *PIT* 2007, pp. 103–4.

140. W.F. Haug 1986b, pp. 26 et sqq.

The question of the ideological constellation underlying the complicit perpetration of these deeds leads into an extensive network of 'powers of normalisation' that already worked towards a fascistisation of the bourgeois subject a long time before 1933. They intervened into multiple practices of normalisation in everyday life, which were part of a '*Do it yourself* of ideology', imposing and shaping the images of what was to be considered 'normal' and as 'abnormal'.[141] Psychological apparatuses and a widely spread counsellor-literature were engaged in the effort to ensure the 'responsiveness' (*Ansprechbarkeit*) to ideological interpellations and thus to guarantee the 'capacity' of ideological subjection under higher instances.[142] On the one hand, this occurred through the constitution of idealised images of health and beauty, which were increasingly articulated in racist terms; on the other hand it occurred through the constitution of 'asociality' and 'degeneration', which were approved for eradication.

In a complementary study on the 'Churches in the Nazi State', I investigated how in both the Roman-Catholic and Protestant churches collaboration with the Nazi state and the resistance on specific partial issues were indivisibly intertwined with each other: 'The same churches that acknowledged the murderous fascist state right up until the very end as divinely established authority had the capacity, like no other ideological power, of defying its attempts at forcing them into line [*Gleichschaltung*] and destroying their zones of influence'.[143] Both churches insisted on their traditional juridical status as a 'corporation of public law' [*Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts*], which guaranteed them a certain internal autonomy and influence in the ensemble of ideological powers, particularly in the system of education. They claimed to be a power both *in* and *alongside* the state. and were overwhelmingly ready to support the 'authority established by God' as long as they were accepted as relatively autonomous ideological powers.

However, as soon as the Nazis violated this hegemonic arrangement, particularly on the part of the Catholic Church there was a bitter 'war of position' (Gramsci) over ideological competences in public education and morality, during which the Nazi government had to withdraw on numerous occasions, like in the battle over crucifixes in classrooms [*Kreuzeskampf*] and like when the Catholic bishop Galen publicly denounced the practice of 'euthanasia' in 1941.[144] On the Protestant side, the violation of church-autonomy meant that the

141. W.F. Haug 1986b, p. 71. The concepts of 'power of normalisation' and 'normalisation practices' were developed by Robert Castel in his study, *L'Ordre psychiatrique*, of 1977 (cf. Castel 1988).
142. W.F. Haug 1986b, p. 74.
143. Rehmann 1986, p. 13.
144. Rehmann 1986, pp. 76 et sqq., 88–9.

traditional unity of internal attachment to state-authority and to the church's creed entered a state of crisis and disintegrated, which was experienced and articulated by many pastors and faithful believers as painful 'pang of conscience'.[145] The 'dialectical theology' of Karl Barth, which refused any connection with other ideological values in the name of the reformatory principle of 'scripture alone' [*sola scriptura*], was able to mobilise the contradiction between the proper values of the ideological power and its 'unholy' apparatus. The important role of this theology showed in an exemplary fashion that resistance can be articulated effectively in the form of ideological subjection, which in this case means obedient and unique submission to the *holy word* that is vigorously turned against any mixture with the 'state' and its ideologies. 'It is precisely the authoritarian adherence to the exclusive and unconditional submission to "God's word" that set free forces that fascism couldn't integrate anymore in its church politics: the specific capacity of unflinching no-saying in opposition to the hegemonic claims of other powers'.[146] It comes as no surprise that, when the churches were reorganized as 'normal' ideological powers after 1945, the radical, 'fraternally organized' ['*brüderrechtliche*'] wing of the *Confessing Church* inspired by Karl Barth was marginalised again.

9.7. Further ideology-theoretical studies

The studies initiated by the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* on ideological powers in German Fascism were followed by a subsequent research-project at the Philosophical Institute of the Free University in Berlin, from which emerged several studies on the role of philosophy in German fascism, such as '*German Philosophers in 1933*',[147] '*Philosophy-relations in German Fascism*',[148] '*Heidegger in Context*',[149] '*Platonic Violence. Gadamer's Political Hermeneutics*',[150] '*Triumph of the Will to Power. Nietzsche-Reception in the NS-State*'.[151]

Another research-focus of the *PIT* related to the emergence of bourgeois hegemonic apparatuses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[152] With the example of Romance languages and literature in academia, Peter Jehle investigated the hostile opposition to France that was constitutive for the 'German'

145. '*Gewissensnot*'; Rehmann 1986, p. 111.
146. Rehmann 1986, p. 118.
147. W.F. Haug (ed.) 1989.
148. Laugstien 1990.
149. Leaman 1993.
150. Orozco 2004.
151. Zapata Galindo 1995.
152. Cf. *PIT* 1987.

constellation of the ideological.[153] Another study used Gramsci's theory of hegemony for a reconstruction of Max Weber's political and sociological writings in the context of the discourse-formations of German 'cultural Protestantism' during the Wilhelmine Empire of the nineteenth century. Against the backdrop of the 'German' ideological constellation marked by a bourgeois-feudal class-compromise, Weber's political-ethical interventions could be deciphered as an intensive preparation of a new hegemonic formation, marked by a Fordist class-compromise between the bourgeoisie and the 'labour-aristocracy'. Weber's modernisation-theory could thus be interpreted as a 'passive revolution' of the bourgeois power-bloc.[154]

153. Jehle 1996.
154. Cf. Rehmann 2013a.

Chapter Ten

Friedrich Hayek and the Ideological *Dispositif* of Neoliberalism

'If money, according to Augier, "comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek", capital comes dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt', wrote Marx in the chapter of *Capital* entitled 'so-called primitive accumulation'.[1] It is no exaggeration to apply this statement to the emergence of neoliberalism as well, whose economic doctrine was first put into practice within the framework of Chile's military dictatorship under Pinochet. Shortly after the *putsch* in 1973, the neoliberal economists around Milton Friedman and Arnold Harberger, the so-called 'Chicago boys', sent the generals their proposals for new economic policies, which were then realised in shock-therapy from 1975 onwards. After around 1978, another neoliberal tendency, the 'Virginia School' or 'Public-Choice-School' around James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock became predominant – a school which was mainly concerned with the 'marketisation' of the state.[2] From 1975 onwards, Friedrich A. Hayek was in regular contact with Chilean government-circles. Personally welcomed by Pinochet in 1977, he had a significant influence on the Chilean dictatorship's new constitution in 1980, whose title 'Constitution of Liberty' was allegedly adopted from Hayek's 1960 book of the same name.[3]

1. Marx 1976, pp. 925–6.
2. Cf. Walpen and Plehwe 2001, pp. 45 et sqq., 56–7.
3. Walpen and Plehwe 2001, pp. 60–1. Hayek declared in a 1981 interview that he did not 'know of any totalitarian governments in Latin America. The only one was Chile

10.1. The formation of neoliberal hegemony

Neoliberalism has become the general designation for economic policies that claim to realise a market-order that is 'free' from government-interference, especially from any attempt to redistribute wealth to the benefit of the lower classes or marginalised groups. Its proponents advocate the dismantling of the welfare-state, the deregulation of labour-relations and the weakening of trade-unions' bargaining power, all in the name of a 'free-market society' and its entrepreneurial spirit, both of which are in danger of being stifled by a patronising state-bureaucracy. Proclaiming 'individual freedom', neoliberalism proposes to bring all human actions and desires into the domain of the market, since it considers market-exchange to be an 'ethic in itself', capable of substituting for all previously held ethical beliefs.[4]

The term 'neoliberalism' goes back to an international conference of liberal economists in 1938 in Paris on the occasion of the French translation of the book *The Good Society* (1937), written by the philosopher and New Deal critic Walter Lippmann. Among other things, the discussions dealt with the question of how to wage an 'international crusade for a constructive liberalism', which would be clearly distinguished from the failed 'Manchester liberalism'.[5] A slight majority finally decided to choose the term '*néo-liberalisme*' for the intended new formation, over against competing terms like '*néo-capitalisme*', '*libéralisme positif*' and even '*libéralisme social*' or '*libéralisme de gauche*'.[6] Notwithstanding the different tendencies, two commonalities could be identified from the outset, namely a rejection of any 'collectivism', which comprised not only communism and socialism, but also Keynesianism and the class-compromise of the Fordist welfare-state, and secondly, against the 'narrow economic conception' of classical liberalism, a stronger emphasis on the state, which, according to Hayek, had the task of establishing and securing market-competition as the organising principle of the economy.[7] The goal was a 'liberal interventionism', which does not intervene 'against market-laws, but in the direction of market-laws'.[8] As Otto Graf Lambsdorff highlighted in his introduction to the new German edition of Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, the neoliberal doctrine is not about competition alone, but about a 'competition order to be set up by the state'.[9] This self-definition provides a first

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under Allende. Chile is now a great success. The world shall come to regard the recovery of Chile as one of the great economic miracles of our time'. (Quoted in Ebenstein 2003, p. 300)

4. Cf. Harvey 2005, p. 3.
5. Cf. Walpen 2004, pp. 56–7.
6. Walpen 2004, p. 60.
7. Cf. Walpen 2004, pp. 58, 64.
8. Röpke, quoted in Walpen 2004, p. 70.
9. In Hayek 1994b, p. 12.

indication that the frequent neoliberal rhetoric against state-interventions into the economy should not be misunderstood as principled hostility to the state.

From the outset, the international character of the neoliberal movement was significant. The Mont Pèlerin Society, founded in April 1947 in Switzerland, comprised leading liberal intellectuals from ten countries (such as Walter Eucken, Friedrich A. von Hayek, Milton Friedman, Wilhelm Röpke, Ludwig von Mises, Karl Popper). This transnational elite-network became the starting point for numerous think-tanks, which fine-tuned the criticisms of the then predominant Keynesianism to the given national context and effectively set about influencing public opinion. Largely unnoticed by both the leftists connected to the 1968 movement and the Keynesian intellectuals, in the early 1970s the neoliberals proceeded to conquer the Conservative Party in the UK (such as through the Institute for Public Affairs) and the US Republican Party (such as through the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation).

For about thirty years, neoliberalism was a minority movement of intellectuals that could not match the predominance of Keynesianism in public opinion. But this began to change when, in the late 1970s, the ideological interventions hit upon the economic crisis of Fordism, during which the economic and political elites came to the conviction that Keynesian strategies no longer worked and that the Fordist class-compromise could not been maintained. The changing tide could be seen in 1974 and 1976, when first Friedrich Hayek and then Milton Friedman received the Nobel Prize in economics. With the electoral victories of Margret Thatcher in 1979 and Ronald Reagan in 1980, neoliberalism was for the first time able to conquer the 'commanding heights' of the state in developed capitalism. It can be seen as a parable for the reversed hegemonic constellation, that the former Leninist term 'commanding heights' was hijacked and became the title of a successful neoliberal propaganda-film and -book.[10] From then on, neoliberalism became the predominant capitalist formation determining global development for more than thirty years (thus far). Since the collapse of state-socialism in 1989, it has had no noteworthy competition.

Seen from its overall result, neoliberalism can be understood as a political project to restore the power of economic elites.[11] In October 2011, shortly after the first occupations by *Occupy Wall Street*, the report of the *Congressional Budget Office* about the distribution of household-income in the US confirmed the main slogan of the movement, 'We are the 99 percent', by documenting that between 1979 and 2007 (that is, between the beginning of neoliberalism and the outbreak of the economic crisis) the top 1 percent more than doubled its share of the nation's income, whereas that of all other segments of the remaining

10. Yergin and Stanislaw 1998.
11. Cf. Harvey 2005, pp. 16, 19.

99 percent fell.[12] Based on the fact that the beginning of the neoliberal era also coincided with the transition from the Bretton-Woods system to a new 'dollar/Wall-Street regime' in the early 1970s, through which most of the international financial relations were taken out of the control of state central banks and turned over to private financial operators,[13] many critics defined neoliberalism as a 'financialised' capitalism seeking profits through speculation, or in terms of a replacement of 'industrial capitalism' by a 'capitalism driven by finance'.[14]

W.H. Haug objected that definitions focusing on the financial sector neglected the fact that the distinction between industrial and financial capital is only a relative one, so that General Electrics could be called a 'gigantic Hedge-Fund, which also produces refrigerators', and BMW a profitable bank lumbered with an ailing auto-industry.[15] They also overlooked the foundation of global corporations like INTEL (1968), AMD (1969), Apple (1976), Oracle (1977), Adobe (1982), Symantec (1982), Cisco (1984), Yahoo (1995), Google (1998) and many others.[16] According to Haug, the hegemonic appeal and perseverance of neoliberalism are therefore more adequately explained by the organic connection with the new mode of production of a 'transnational High-Tech Capitalism'.[17] Starting from Poulantzas's concept of 'inner bourgeoisie', Robert Cox and Stephen Gill explained the transnational hegemony of neoliberalism by its reliance on a globalised managerial class and a widely internationalised civil society.[18]

In the following subchapters, we will focus on Friedrich A. Hayek, who is considered to be one of the most influential precursors and 'organic intellectuals' of neoliberalism. Born in 1899 in Vienna, he started as an Austrian economist of the 'marginal-utility school' led by Ludwig von Mises. In 1931, he emigrated to London, where he taught at the London School of Economics. During the Second World-War, he turned from economics to philosophy. In 1950, he moved to the US and taught at the University of Chicago until 1962, when he returned to Europe to be a professor of economics in Freiburg and then Salzburg. He was called the 'father of the Freiburg School', which in turn influenced, among others, the economic doctrines of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (*FAZ*). Hayek not only played a crucial role in the foundation of the Mont Pèlerin Society, he also oriented its work towards the elaboration of a long-term strategy of gaining hegemony. In a 1949 article, 'The Intellectuals and Socialism', he pointed out that

12. Cf. Wolff 2011c.
13. Cf. Gowan 1999, pp. 17 et sqq.
14. Cf. Wallerstein 2009, p. 12; Huffschmid 2010, p. 46.
15. Quoted in W.F. Haug 2012, p. 49.
16. W.F. Haug 2012, pp. 95–6.
17. W.F. Haug 2003, p. 41.
18. Cf. Gill 1993, Cox 1987; discussed in Candeias 2004, pp. 252 et sqq.

the realisation of the new liberal ideas would certainly take two to three generations, because that is how long it takes to change 'the characteristic climate of opinion, the dominant *Weltanschauung*'.[19] His 1944 book, *The Road to Serfdom*, became a foundational text for the British neoliberals around Margret Thatcher. According to the neoliberal propaganda-film, *Commanding Heights*, Thatcher, in a controversial discussion within the Conservative Party, interrupted her more 'moderate' opponent, reached into her briefcase and pulled out Hayek's book *The Constitution of Liberty*.[20] She held it up for all to see. 'This', she said sternly, 'is what we believe'.

Highlighting Hayek's importance as an organic intellectual does of course not mean that I am of the view that the actual formation of neoliberalism could in any sense be 'derived' from his work. This would be to fall for the one-sided approach described by Gramsci as 'ideologism', which is ultimately based on an idealistic and intellectualist concept of history. What I, instead, want to do is to use a small selection of his texts as a guide through neoliberalism's ideological *dispositif*, and as a symptom of its underlying contradictions.

10.2. Hayek's frontal attack on 'social justice'

When, in his 1976 *The Mirage of Social Justice*, Hayek turned to an explicit critique of social justice, he was well aware that he was challenging a concept that was closely connected to the ideologies of the Keynesian class-compromise and still anchored in the common sense of the time. In order to destroy its appeal, he set out on a harsh and uncompromising attack: 'the term "social justice" was entirely empty and meaningless', to expect a modern society to be socially just made as much sense as talking about a 'moral stone'; to employ the term was either thoughtless or fraudulent, a dishonest insinuation, intellectually disreputable and destructive of moral feeling.[21]

Looking at Hayek's opponents, one can distinguish between two different components, melted into one. The overall enemy-image is, of course, the syntagm Marxism-socialism-totalitarianism, which hides its perspective of revolutionary transformation behind the veil of social justice. Nevertheless, the opponent he is specifically targeting is a certain 'social' deviation within the liberal tradition itself. According to Hayek, this deviation had its origins in John Stuart Mill, who in his 1861 essay, *Utilitarianism*, had introduced the concept of 'social and distributive justice', which he defined by the principle that 'society should treat

19. Quoted in Walpen 2004, p. 113.
20. Hayek 1960.
21. Hayek 1976, pp. XI–XII, 78, 97.

all equally well who have deserved equally well of it',[22] so that 'justice' means 'that each person should obtain that (whether good or evil) which he deserves'.[23] For Hayek, this so-called 'equitable principle', and the entitlement-attitude connected to it, was 'the Trojan Horse through which totalitarianism has entered'.[24] The floodgates were opened,[25] as the concept 'leads straight to full-fledged socialism'.[26]

Hayek's decision to identify social-liberalism's original sin with John Stuart Mill was not without some plausibility. Whereas early liberalism from Locke to James Mill manifested itself predominantly as 'possessive individualism', which was explicitly opposed to any political or social demands for 'democracy', John Stuart Mill, who wrote after the revolutionary events of 1848, introduced a new period of liberalism that had to react (and to a certain degree also to adapt) to both the democratic movements of the nineteenth century and the early socialist criticism of Saint Simon, Charles Fourier, Louis Blanc, Robert Owen and others.[27] However, the conventional description of Mill as a 'democratic liberal' tends to gloss over the symptomatic contradictions of his position: on the one hand, he approximated radicalism and even declared to be inclined towards 'socialism'. On the other hand he warned against extending voting-rights which would lead to a 'tyranny of the majority' and its 'class legislation'. The very same Mill who condemned slavery as violation of liberal principles, also advocated 'despotism' as a legitimate form of government in dealing with non-European 'barbarians'.[28]

Hayek clearly did not try to dissimulate that 'social' justice was only one out of Mill's five definitions of justice and that the other four definitions were restricted to individual behavior. It was however precisely this social-liberal combination of individual and social rights that Hayek rejected. For example, he saw this aberration in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which contained not only individual rights, but also economic human rights to decent jobs, housing,

22. Mill 1949, p. 225.
23. Hayek 1976, p. 208.
24. Hayek 1976, p. 136.
25. Hayek 1976, p. 140.
26. Hayek 1976, p. 64.
27. The concept of 'possessive individualism' was introduced by Macpherson, who used it for the classical period of liberalism, in particular with the example of Hobbes, Harrington and Locke. It described a concept of the individual 'as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them. . . . The relation of ownership . . . was read back into the nature of the individual. . . . Political society becomes a calculated device for the protection of this property and for the maintenance of an orderly relation of exchange'. (Macpherson 1962, p. 3; cf. Macpherson 1962, pp. 263–4). With regards to the distinction between different periods of liberalism, cf. Macpherson 1973, pp. 5 et sqq., 25 et sqq., 32 et sqq. and Macpherson (ed.) 1975, p. 75.
28. Cf. Losurdo 2011, pp. 179–80, 225–6, 246 et sqq.; Ercolani 2012.

health-care, free education and cultural participation (cf. the articles 22–7).[29] He perceived the same aberration in President Roosevelt's proclamation of the 'Four Freedoms', which claimed to combine two individual freedoms, freedom of speech and of worship, and two social freedoms, freedom from want and from fear.[30] All of these social demands were, for Hayek, 'totalitarian in the fullest sense of the word', because they were based on an interpretation of society as a 'deliberately made organization by which everybody is employed'.[31] In this sense, in his introduction to the German edition of Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, Otto Graf Lambsdorff praised Czech president and Hayek disciple Václav Klaus for recognising that the 1968 reform-socialists around Alexander Dubček were more dangerous than the orthodox Communists.[32]

10.3. Overcoming 'economy' by the game of 'catallaxy'

Hayek's objections to social liberalism converged toward the argument that the claim of social justice had its place in the primitive traditions of the small group, and could not be applied to modern market-society, which, because of its abstract and anonymous nature, was not an intentional being.[33] In order to conceptualise the specifics of market-society, Hayek proposed to supplant the traditional term 'economy' with the term 'catallaxy': 'economy' literally means the law [nomos] of a household, that is, the way to manage a household, farm, or enterprise pursuing certain goals 'in accordance with a unitary plan'. Describing a 'deliberate arrangement of the use of the means which are known to some single agency', the concept remains bound to the notion of a planned economy.[34] The neologism 'catallaxy' is derived from the Greek term *katallattein*, which has a double meaning. Firstly 'to exchange', 'to exchange money' in particular, and secondly to 'admit into the community', to 'change from enemy into friend'.[35] This ambiguity of the term allowed Hayek to reemploy the old conjurer's trick of the bourgeois ideologues, namely to associate the market-exchange with the constitution of communities in general. 'Catallaxy' specifies that the market-order is a 'system of numerous interrelated economies' without a unitary goal. It describes 'the

29. Article 22: 'Right to social security'; Article 23: 'Right to work under just conditions, equal pay for equal work, right to form unions; Article 24: 'Right to rest and leisure'; Article 25: 'Right to a decent standard of living'; Article 26: 'Right to a free education'; Article 27: 'Participation in cultural life'.
30. Hayek 1976, pp. 103–4.
31. Hayek 1976, p. 104.
32. In Hayek 1994b, p. 8.
33. Hayek 1976, pp. 67, 70.
34. Hayek 1976, pp. 107–8.
35. Hayek 1976, p. 108.

special kind of spontaneous order produced by the market through people acting within the rules of the law of property, tort and contract'.[36] Contrary to the widespread view that neoliberalism is sceptical towards the state, the market-order is tightly framed by and embedded in the juridical, that is, the ideological forms of the modern state. The double meaning of *katallattein* can also be read in the sense that 'admission' to the community is dependent on the property invested in the exchange-process: in order to become a full member of the community, one has something to offer for exchange that exceeds one's own labour-power.

By excluding any deliberate planning, the results of the market-economy become 'fate'. Hayek introduces this notion through an analogy with a tragic accident: when a 'succession of calamities befalls one family while another steadily prospers, when a meritorious effort is frustrated by some unforeseeable accident', it is strictly speaking absurd to revolt against 'injustice', because there is no one to blame for it. The same applies to the distribution of goods in a 'society of free men'.[37] Hayek frankly admits that 'in a sense it is even true that such a system gives to those who already have. But this is its merit rather than its defect'.[38] The anonymous order is governed by the principle of grace, not of merit: since 'in the cosmos of the market we all constantly receive benefits which we have not deserved in any moral sense', we are also obliged 'to accept equally undeserved diminutions of our income'.[39] 'We all' is, of course, an imaginary subject that has eliminated the contradictions of class, gender, and race. It creates the impression that it is usually the same people who sometimes win or lose.

However, the immanent logic of Hayek's argument harbours the danger that the objective fatalism of the market translates into a subjective fatalism of the individuals involved. Remember Lukács's observation of a comprehensive passivity, by which people's attitudes become 'contemplative' with regards to society as a whole, that is, they do not go 'beyond the correct calculation of the possible outcome of the sequence of events . . ., without making the attempt to intervene in the process by bringing other "laws" to bear'.[40] I had made the criticism that this diagnosis underestimated the ability of bourgeois society to set free manifold activities, even if they are restricted to private-egoistical forms (see above, Section 4.1.). Hayek now informs us that it is possible to combine the fate-aspect of alienated socialisation with a passionate private-egoistical activism, namely through the metaphor of the 'game', which, in the case of the 'game of catallaxy', is determined by a mixture of skill and chance.[41]

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36. Hayek 1976, pp. 108–9.
37. Hayek 1976, pp. 68–9.
38. Hayek 1976, p. 123.
39. Hayek 1976, p. 94.
40. Lukács 1971, p. 98.
41. Hayek 1976, pp. 71, 115.

It is no coincidence that the concept of 'game' plays such an important role in neoliberal ideology.[42] This is, among other reasons, because the game-metaphor has the advantage of reducing human practice to restricted capacities to act, while at the same time rendering the restrictions invisible.[43] Taking up Foucault's terminology, one could speak of a *dispositif* producing attitudes and subjectivities, an arrangement which by its very structure determines beforehand: 1) that human practice is identified by the procedure of following pre-given 'rules' which are themselves not to be discussed, so that the possibilities of active self-determination and a collective agreement on common rules drop out of sight; 2) that the cooperative character of human practice, its orientation toward common goals and its embedment in relations of reciprocity are either cast out entirely, or, in case of team-games demanding internal co-operation, subordinated to the competitive logic of winning; 3) that the game-metaphor creates the illusion of starting out on an equal playing field, which eclipses the fact that in real life, the economic field is structured by pre-existing power-asymmetries.

In addition, the game-paradigm creates an ideological effect that seems immediately 'evident' for common sense, namely that overall demands of distributive justice are out of place. Whoever has experienced children's tantrums (including one's own) in games knows how difficult it is to learn the 'grown-up' lesson that the concepts of justice and injustice relate merely to the question of whether the pre-given rules are followed or violated. If life actually were a 'game', then Hayek's position would be difficult to refute: while it is justified to insist that the game is 'fair and that nobody cheat, it would be nonsensical to demand that the results for the different players be just'.[44]

10.4. Hayek's construct of 'negative' justice

According to Hayek, the misuse of 'social justice' motivated thinkers, 'including distinguished philosophers',[45] to give up the concept of justice altogether. In doing so, however, they jettison 'one of the basic moral conceptions on which the working of a society of free men rests'.[46] It is one of the paradoxes of Hayek's theory that at the very moment that he tries to give a positive description of his concept of justice, he must define it as a 'negative conception of justice', which

42. On the relationship between game theories and neoliberalism, cf. Schui and Blankenburg 2002, pp. 79–80, 95 et sqq.

43. With regards to the contradictory relationships between restricted and generalised capacity to act, cf. Holzkamp 1983, pp. 461 et sqq., 491 et sqq., 500 et sqq.

44. Hayek 1976, p. 71.

45. Hayek's main example is the Nietzschean philosopher Walther Kaufmann (Hayek 1976, p. 182, n. 41).

46. Hayek 1976, p. 97.

needs to be set off from a 'positive conception' of a social justice that is being imposed on society. As indicated by the game-paradigm, this 'negative' conception is only concerned with the 'rules of individual conduct'.[47] Like morality in general, it rests on the 'freedom of personal decisions', and is founded on the 'traditional postulate that each capable adult is primarily responsible for his own and his dependants' welfare'.[48]

By introducing justice as a 'negative' concept, Hayek defined it as incompetent for the regulation of social life. The concept is designed to exclude the risk that the economic and social order of modern capitalism is confronted with postulates of justice and thereby revealed as 'unjust'. This happens, for example, when the Catholic social doctrine is interpreted in a way that the legitimacy of an economic order is made dependent on a conception of 'human dignity' and the 'sacredness' of the human person that is to be 'realized in community with others', as the Catholic pastoral letter *Economic Justice for All* of 1986 formulated.[49] Hayek complains that the Roman Catholic church 'especially has made the aim of "social justice" part of its official doctrine', which, however, only reflects the broader tendency that a 'large section of the clergy of all Christian denominations, who, while increasingly losing their faith in a supernatural revelation, appear to have sought a refuge and consolation in a new "social" religion which substitutes a temporal for a celestial promise of justice'.[50] He obviously has no hesitation in intervening in the religious field. By playing 'celestial' justice against this-worldly justice, he allies himself with the most conservative church-milieus that condemn liberation-theology and 'social gospel' as secularised, ultimately Marxist ideologies. His own proposal to forestall such tendencies operates on the conceptual level itself: justice is to be reduced to the skills and the cleverness of using the given 'rules' of the market-game to one's own benefit. It thus becomes an immediate expression of what Macpherson had analysed as 'possessive individualism'.

There is, however, more to it than that. Hayek's concept of 'negative justice' is not only restricted to one's private-egoistical 'freedom of personal decisions', it is also defined as the 'justice which the courts of justice administer'.[51] The same Hayek, who argues that no state has the right to impose any criteria of distributive justice on the market-order, is ready to equate the concept of justice with

47. Hayek 1976, p. 101.
48. Hayek 1976, p. 99.
49. National Conference of Catholic Bishops 1986, p. 15. The pastoral letter, which was arguably the clearest anti-neoliberal document of the Catholic bishops in the US, specified: 'Wherever our economic arrangements fail to conform with the demands of human dignity lived in community, they must be questioned or transformed'.'
50. Hayek 1976, p. 66.
51. Hayek 1976, p. 100; cf. p. 97.

the juridical ideological state-apparatus (and its repressive organs). The constitutive distinction between justice and state-law is thus eliminated. This would mean, for example, that the initial event of the Civil Rights Movement in the US, Rosa Parks's refusal to give up her seat on the segregated bus, would not only be 'unlawful', but also 'unjust'.

'Possessive individualism' is thus not just tolerated or advocated, it is established as the law of the land, as '*nomos*' that regulates the whole society. Hayek also described this as a system of 'viable morals' which is designed to 'produce a functioning order, capable of maintaining the apparatus of civilization which it presupposes'.[52] Against the illusory demand that we should 'equally esteem all our fellow men', he insisted that 'our whole moral code rests on the approval or disapproval of the conduct of others'.[53] Accordingly, Hayek's 'viable morals' needs for its functioning a forceful enemy-image which signifies alternately 'non-viable morals' or the destruction of moral feelings altogether: the 'gospel of "social justice"' aims at 'sordid sentiments' like the 'dislike of people who are better off than oneself', the 'animosity towards great wealth', the wish 'to despoil the rich'.[54]

As soon as one confronts Hayek's 'negative justice' with critical theories of justice, it becomes clear that it is an untenable construct. When, in his *Lectures on Ethics*, Ernst Tugendhat declared that morality deals with 'the objective characteristics of the human as a cooperative being',[55] this applies in particular to justice. Hayek's generalisation of the game-paradigm obscures that, in real life, conceptions of justice are embedded in ethics of reciprocity, which in turn emerge from the co-operative nature of human labour, social reproduction, and communication. One of the main specifics of human cognition is the capacity to participate 'in collaborative activities involving shared goals and socially coordinated action plans',[56] namely, precisely those characteristics that Hayek's 'game of catallaxy' tries to eliminate. Were it not for the peculiar combination of food-sharing, reciprocal gift-giving and the capacities of empathy and mind-reading, our foraging Pleistocene ancestors might not have survived at all, and we would not have evolved into humans. Feminist investigations into evolutionary anthropology have developed a 'cooperative breeding hypothesis', according to which it was primarily the collective ('alloparental') assistance in the care and provision of the young that reduced the child mortality-rate and also developed the children's social abilities to attract attention and elicit assistance from both their

52. Hayek 1976, p. 98.
53. Hayek 1976, p. 99.
54. Hayek 1976, pp. 97–8.
55. Tugendhat 1997, p. 224.
56. Tomasello, quoted in Hrdy 2009, p. 9.

parents and their alloparents.[57] It is widely acknowledged that rules of reciprocity in pre-state societies were able – through marriage-rules, potlatch-systems and multiple egalitarian sanctions – to prevent the accumulation of wealth and power over long periods. 'Virtually all African people who were living by gathering and hunting when first encountered by Europeans stand out for how hard they strive to maintain the egalitarian character of their groups, employing sanctions against bullies, braggarts, or those deemed stingy, consciously keeping social stratification or extreme skews in access to resources or in reproduction to a minimum'.[58]

The emergence of class- and state-societies leads to a contradictory dialectic: at the same time as the pre-state ethics of reciprocity were destroyed as real functioning institutions, they were transposed into the imaginary of the new relations of domination. According to Meillassoux, the norms of reciprocity, which in the 'domestic mode of production' reflected the predominantly egalitarian forms of circulation, were maintained in aristocratic class-societies, but this time as 'ideology of reciprocity' and designed to justify relations of exploitation.[59] As Barrington Moore observed, the notion of reciprocity readily becomes 'a form of mystification, an ideological cover for exploitation': 'In general, rulers and dominant groups talk in terms of reciprocity . . . to stress *their* contribution to the social units they head, and to praise the virtues and necessities of harmonious social relationships therein'.[60] Since the norms of reciprocity are also claimed by subaltern classes, one can speak of a 'universal code',[61] whose concrete interpretation is at stake in ideological struggles: to keep this code, defines what is perceived as 'just', to violate it defines what is perceived as 'unjust'.

Moore's analysis of justice as a disputed 'universal code' of reciprocity can be combined with what the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* conceptualised as 'compromise-formation', in which antagonistic forces find a 'condensed' imaginary expression in the framework of structures of domination. Discourses of justice are able to gain hegemonic appeal to the degree that they are open for 'antagonistic reclamation' (see above, Section 9.4.). Like other ideological discourses, they must feed on 'horizontal' energies and therefore need to relate – in however displaced a fashion – to horizontal relations of reciprocity. This also applies to John Rawls's

57. Hrdy 2009, pp. 30 et sqq., 107 et sqq. 'Whether older sisters, grandmothers, or great-aunts, in every study it was alloparents willing to help who permitted mothers to produce more children likely to survive'. Cf. Frigga Haug's review-article, in which she tries to mediate Hrdy's emphasis on co-operative childrearing with the more labour-centered Marxist approach of *Critical Psychology* (F. Haug 2011).

58. Hrdy 2009,p. 204. Cf., for example, Sigrist 2005, pp. 176 et sqq.; Meillassoux 1981, pp. 61 et sqq.; Haude and Wagner 1998, pp. 372 et sqq.; Haude and Wagner 2004, pp. 149–50.

59. Meillassoux 1981, p. 66.

60. Moore 1978, p. 508.

61. Ibid.

theory of justice, which reflected the Fordist class-compromise in the most developed capitalist countries: from the fictitious state of original equality, in which the participants are unaware of their class-position and social status ("veil of ignorance"), Rawls derived the principle that inequalities are only 'just' to the extent that they are advantageous for all, in particular for the disadvantaged strata.[62] As long as Fordism in developed capitalism was capable of delivering steadily increasing real wages, Rawls's principle of justice was widely seen as credible and realistic, and could therefore function as part of a hegemonic ideology. As soon as the economic upswing came to an end with the crisis of Fordism in the late 1970s, Rawls's theory of justice came under increasing attack from neoliberal ideologues.[63]

Against this backdrop, Hayek's 'negative' concept of justice should be understood as an attempt to preempt any possibility of 'antagonistic reclamation'. As soon as the concept is by definition limited to individual acts, it can no longer be invoked against the ruling market-order. In this respect, Hayek's concept of justice resembles the general definition in Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, in which the just coincides with the lawful.[64] The difference is, of course, that the *nomos*, to which Hayek's concept of justice invokes us to conform, is no longer that of an aristocratic slaveholder-society, but of the capitalist market-order. This is the reason why Hayek on the one hand frequently refers to Aristotle's rule of law, but on the other hand cannot adopt his principle of 'distributive justice'. By the prohibition of antagonistic reclamation, justice (and the ideological in general) tends to lose its ambiguity and to be degraded to a mere virtue of submission.

10.5. The religious structure of Hayek's market-radicalism

Even if Hayek's catallaxy-game dissimulates the actual importance of economic planning in capitalism (including neoliberal capitalism), his argument that the outcomes of the capitalist market are ruled by 'fate' is not easily refuted. To counter it with reference to the individual's freedom and creativity would be naïve and illusory. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels wrote that the market 'hovers over the earth like the fate of the ancients, and with invisible hand allots fortune and misfortune to men, sets up empires and wrecks empires, causes

62. Rawls 1971, pp. 12 et sqq., 60 et sqq.

63. I leave out the problem that Rawls himself was not able or willing to develop the critical potential of his theory and, under the pressure of neoliberal criticism, moved considerably to the right in his later works (Cf. Pogge 1989, pp. 4 et sqq., 10 et sqq.).

64. Aristotle 1953, 1129b.

nations to rise and to disappear'.[65] Indeed, Hayek articulates some aspects of the reification in bourgeois market-society analysed in Marx's critique of fetishism, except, of course, that he celebrates and establishes as a universal norm what Marx had deconstructed as alienation. Hayek and the Chicago school have substituted Marx's critique of fetishism with a 'happy fetishism'.[66] The method resembles the procedure of the vulgar economists, who reproduce the 'objective thought-forms' of capitalist commodity-production and immediately translate them into a doctrinaire language.[67]

However, the ideology-theoretical problem is that it is easier to debunk Hayek's method from the high ground of Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* as an intellectually poor and fallacious construct than it is to break its appeal. Remember Stuart Hall's argument that the most important question regarding an 'organic' ideology is 'not what is *false* about it but what about it is *true*', namely, what 'makes good sense', which is usually 'quite enough for ideology'.[68] The plausibility-effect of Hayek's discourse is due to the fact that it speaks the language of what Marx described as the 'religion of everyday life' in bourgeois society, in whose estranged and irrational forms the agents of production 'feel completely at home'.[69] Hayek's portrayal of the market as an impersonal and anonymous system that cannot be effectively questioned by moral objections seems to summarise everyday experiences under reified conditions in a succinct and realistic way. Why bet on well-sounding definitions of social justice when they cannot be claimed at the very moment when they are most urgently needed (for example, during and after the crisis of Fordism)?

Marx's reflection on capitalism's 'religion of everyday life' might be helpful in better understanding Hayek's intervention. In fact, he does more than just reproduce 'objective thought-forms' of bourgeois society in the sense of vulgar economics. His main effort consists in elevating the capitalist 'game of catallaxy' to an *inner sanctum* that is perfectly protected against any interference from human intelligence, will or moral judgement. We can distinguish at least three such protective walls. Firstly, the functioning of catallaxy is shielded by the instruction that it cannot be *known*. Any trespassing is regarded as a kind of hubris. In the closing section of the third volume of *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, Hayek portrays himself as 'turning the tables' against the age of reason, chiefly connected with the names of Marx and Freud, which is, in his view, an 'age of

65. Marx and Engels 1856, p. 48.
66. Hinkelammert 1985, p. 74.
67. Cf. Marx 1976, p. 169; Marx 1969–71c, p. 453.
68. Hall 1988, p. 46.
69. Marx 1981, p. 969.

superstition' where people, in their overestimation of science, imagine that they know more than they do: 'Man is not and never will be the master of his fate'.[70] Secondly, the market-order is untouchable because it is the highest achievement of 'cultural Evolution', which is not driven by human reason and intention. Hayek supports a modified version of social Darwinism, which no longer relates the 'survival of the fittest' to certain species and their development, but to 'institutions'. Each transition, from the small band to the settled community to the open society, 'was due to men learning to obey the same abstract rules'.[71] Again, any aspect of deliberate planning is to be excluded: the humans brain 'can absorb, but not design'.[72] Human practice and thinking is reduced to a passive adaptation to pre-given surroundings. And thirdly, as we have seen in Hayek's attack on social justice, there is no moral claim whatsoever that can be raised against the capitalist market-order and its game of catallaxy.

As discussed above (see Section 2.2.1.), Walter Benjamin was one of the few philosophers who took the religious analogies in Marx's critique of fetishism seriously, and described capitalism as a 'cultic religion' functioning as a pitiless mechanism that does not redeem but engenders debt and guilt.[73] Hayek provides this merciless machine with a suitable deity. Well protected against humans' knowledge, initiative, and ethical judgment, the 'invisible hand' of his market-order shows significant functional similarities to the hidden God, the *deus absconditus*, in traditional Calvinist theology, where humans are not supposed to know its decrees, to challenge them, or to interfere. Hayek's doctrine takes on the form of an authoritarian theology, but without its former Judaic-Christian substance, which has been replaced by the reified rule of money, capital, and shareholder-values. Ton Veerkamp described the ideological system of neoliberalism as 'a religion of secularized bourgeois': 'The positive-religious dogmas of traditional religions are evacuated, but the religious structure of submission is completely maintained'.[74]

Notwithstanding the perfection with which Hayek tries to establish a monolithic structure of submission, his construct is traversed by contradictions, which are now to be deciphered with the help of a 'symptomatic reading'.

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70. Hayek 1979, pp. 175–6. Hinkelammert characterised the Chicago School as a radical irrationalism with an aggressive posture *vis-à-vis* the previous rationalist tradition (Hinkelammert 1985, pp. 74–5).
71. Hayek 1979, p. 160.
72. Hayek 1979, p. 157.
73. Benjamin 1996, p. 288.
74. Veerkamp 2005, p. 129.

10.6. A symptomatic contradiction between market-destiny and subject-mobilisation

I have already touched upon Althusser's concept of 'symptomatic reading' as a textual ideology-critique over and against which Foucault developed his 'happy positivism' (see above, Section 7.4.2.). The concept was designed to identify the 'lacunae . . . and blanks' in a text, to unveil the inner link between what is seen and what is unseen, and to lay open the textual ruptures or fissures that indicate the interference of a second text in latency with an opposite logic.[75] Such a rupture can be observed when Hayek is confronted with the contradiction that he, on the one hand, reduced justice to the pursuit of a private and egoistic *nomos* of society, and, on the other hand, in his polemics against John Stuart Mill's 'equitable principle', rejected any clearly determined connection between achievement and reward. As we have seen, Hayek had to radically sever this nexus so as to invalidate any claim to 'social justice' and to protect the unconditional game of catallaxy (see above, Section 10.3.). However, by invalidating the link between effort and reward, he endangered the agency even of the typical private-egoist of bourgeois society, who now loses any moral right to a 'fair' share of wealth.

Hayek acknowledges this to be a 'real dilemma', and describes it as follows: to what extent should we 'encourage in the young the belief that when they really try they will succeed', or should we rather emphasise 'that inevitably some unworthy will succeed and some worthy fail'? On the one hand, energetic and efficient individuals need to believe 'that their well-being depends primarily on their own efforts and decisions'. On the other hand, this might lead to an 'exaggerated confidence', which must appear to those who lose in the market-game as 'a bitter irony and severe provocation'.[76] The 'dilemma', therefore, consists in the contradiction that the neoliberal ideology of achievement harbours the dangerous tendency to flip over into resentment and to engender claims of 'social justice', which Hayek had just tried to delegitimise.

It is symptomatic that, at this very point, Hayek's discourse loses its habitual tone of high-sounding self-assurance. He does not even attempt to give a coherent answer, but only asks whether a certain 'over-confidence' in the appropriate reward is perhaps necessary for being industrious and whether without such 'partly erroneous beliefs the large numbers will tolerate actual differences in rewards'.[77] In plain language, this means that in order to 'tolerate' the enormous polarisation of wealth during the last thirty years, the 99 percent must believe that the upper 1 percent 'earned' their riches by their own efforts and

75. Althusser and Balibar 2009, pp. 28–9.
76. Hayek 1976, p. 74.
77. Ibid.

achievements. The same 'moral' connection between achievement and reward that Hayek has attacked on theoretical grounds needs to be advocated as a necessary practical illusion, which, by rationalising the polarisation of income and power, secures class-domination in bourgeois society and upholds the subjects' motivation to achieve. Enlightened knowledge for the experts, superstition for the popular classes!

We are dealing here with an incoherence that is symptomatic for the functioning of the ideological in general. Taking up Althusser's model of interpellation, one could argue that the voluntary subjection to the capitalised SUBJECT of the capitalistic market systematically requires the little subjects' illusory misconception about their own agency and impact. The equation 'recognition = misrecognition', which Althusser had taken over from Lacan's theory of the mirror-stage, could be applied in a way that overcomes its over-generalised formulation (see above, Section 6.5): insofar as the subjects 'recognise' themselves in the interpellations of the ideology of achievement, they necessarily tend to 'misrecognise' their subjection to alienated market-relations, because the full recognition of their subjection could in fact threaten their practical capacity to act. The principle that 'every man is the architect of his own future' can only be maintained on the basis of illusions.

This contradiction is particularly characteristic of the neoliberal *dispositif*: neoliberalism presents itself as liberating agency from a patronising state-bureaucracy, it mobilises its subjects by permanently interpellating them to be active and creative, to show initiative and to believe optimistically in the success of their efforts. At the same time it calls upon the subjects to submit to the fateful order of the market that regularly and increasingly fails and frustrates the efforts of the many. It needs to permanently engender the faith in everyone's success, and at the same time it has to prevent this faith from turning into a moral claim, or even into a fundamental critique of the overall irrationality of capitalism.

As I will argue using the example of Hayek's notions of liberty and of the state, it is this contradiction between subject-mobilisation and ideological subjection to the 'market-order' that pervades the key concepts of neoliberalism.

10.7. State and liberty: neoliberal discourse is permeated by its opposite

With regards to Hayek's notion of liberty, we could already observe a peculiar combination of obedience and adaptation, which are both traditional virtues of submission. As soon as he tries to define the concept in his *Constitution of Liberty* of 1960, he invests his main efforts in restricting its meaning: firstly, freedom is not to be confused with 'political freedom'. Whether people have the right to

participate in the 'choice of their government, in the process of legislation, and in the control of administration', has nothing to do with freedom, because these people may also vote or contract themselves into slavery;[78] secondly, freedom has nothing to do with John Dewey's definition of 'effective power to do specific things', and it is 'questionable' whether such a usage 'should be tolerated', as he impatiently declares.[79]

Hayek is well-aware that any connection with the 'power to do something' would bring the question of material resources back onto the agenda and could legitimise demands for a redistribution of wealth. He tries to fend off this danger by stating that 'to be free may mean freedom to starve'.[80] As absurd as such a definition might be for anyone who is actually poor and hungry, this restriction is strictly necessary for Hayek's purposes. If one started to develop a notion of liberty from the perspective of a Spinozian concept of capacity to act (*potentia agendi*), one would soon be confronted with the problem of specific social relations that restrict one's agency, in particular the lack of adequate means of life (food, shelter, embeddedness in communities) and the lack of access to the means of labour. From there it is not far-fetched to arrive at Marx's perspective that freedom in the 'realm of necessity', which is in turn the basis upon which the 'true realm of freedom, the development of human powers as an end in itself' can build, coincides with the process by which 'the associated producers govern the human metabolism with nature in a rational way, bringing it under collective control instead of being dominated by it as a blind power'.[81]

No, Hayek responds, only 'coercion' creates infringements on liberty, not any 'restraint' on actions.[82] Similarly to Hayek's 'justice', liberty is a 'negative' concept, which only designates the 'absence of a particular obstacle – coercion by other men'.[83] By limiting coercion to the immediate relations between persons,[84] Hayek is not able to grasp the impersonal and anonymous characteristics of the modern relations of domination, which he both expresses and dissimulates with his catallaxy-game. What Marx described as the 'silent compulsion of economic relations'[85] drops immediately out of sight and can no longer be identified as unfreedom. This applies to other manifestations of structural violence as well, from patriarchal gender-relations to racism, at least insofar as there is no immediate personal coercion involved. The state-monopoly over coercion is, in turn,

78. Hayek 1960, pp. 13–14.
79. Hayek 1960, pp. 17–18.
80. Hayek 1960, p. 18.
81. Marx 1981, p. 959.
82. Hayek 1960, p. 16.
83. Hayek 1960, p. 19.
84. Hayek 1960, pp. 20–1.
85. Marx 1976, p. 899.

justified as long as it serves to protect private spheres and prevents coercion by private persons.[86]

This is the point where the 'negative' concept of liberty, already hollowed out and stripped of any content and cooperative purpose, flips into its opposite: since the unfreedom caused by personal coercion can only be limited and overcome by the obedient acceptance of the pre-given abstract rules, 'liberty' coincides with subordination to the 'law' of the market-order and its state. When Hayek contrasts Anglo-Saxon liberalism to the 'rationalist' democratic tradition of France, he emphasises the liberal conviction that a free society cannot exist without 'a genuine reverence for grown institutions, for customs and habits'.[87] And *vice versa*: 'It is against the demand for submission to such [moral rules of conduct] that the rationalistic spirit is in constant revolt'.[88]

This leads me to what is often believed to be neoliberalism's opposite of liberty, the state. Hayek's polemics against the Fordist welfare-state and its social compromise-formations were often interpreted as a 'libertarian' critique of the state, which would therefore stand in opposition to 'neoconservatism', which emphasises authority over and against market-freedom and individual choice.[89] The same author however informs us that Hayek's 'conservative individualism' enabled him to bridge the differences between neoliberals and neoconservatives.[90] This gives us a first indication that it would be fallacious to interpret the existing differences as insurmountable opposites. In 1972, the Mont Pelèrin Society tried to convince leading neoconservatives, such as Irving Kristol, William Kristol and Gertrude Himmelreich, to become members. This attempt failed. On the other hand, since the 1950s and 1960s, numerous US intellectuals worked on the project of a 'fusionism' between 'libertarians' and 'traditionalists'.[91] Their success manifested itself towards the end of the 1970s, when a neoliberal-neoconservative bloc made the electoral victory of Ronald Reagan possible. According to Irvin Kristol, 'what happened was that around 1980, the free-market school of thought and the neoconservative school of thought fused. Maybe Reagan did it'.[92]

Taking Hayek's anti-government rhetoric at face-value, many observers did not consider that his model-constitution established a powerful 'legislative assembly' as a kind of 'council of sages', which was neither democratically elected

86. Hayek 1960, p. 21.
87. Hayek 1960, p. 61.
88. Hayek 1960, pp. 64–5.
89. Cf. Gamble 1996, pp. 112–13.
90. Cf. Gamble 1996, p. 124.
91. Cf. Walpen 2004, pp. 172–3, 203–4; Diamond 1995, pp. 29 et sqq. 'Reverence for the past and an enduring social order balanced the fusionists' adjoining commitment to individualism' (Walpen 2004, p. 30).
92. Quoted in Yergin and Stanislaw 1998, p. 332.

nor democratically controlled. Hayek started his deliberations with a complaint about the 'miscarriage of the democratic ideal':[93] the division of powers, originally designed to control an autocratic government, changed its character and led to an 'omnipotent sovereign parliament', which in turn undermined the 'rule of law' and the concept of law itself.[94] The main mistake was that the legislature was entrusted with both the task of stating general rules of 'just conduct' and the task of controlling the government and directing its particular activities. Hayek's own model-constitution aims at separating these functions and institutions, so that it distinguishes between a 'legislative assembly', which as a kind of 'upper house' decides on the general rules of conduct, and a 'governmental assembly', which controls government by the 'power of the purse'.[95]

The 'legislative assembly', which Hayek sees in continuity with the Athenian *nomothetae*, decides about the 'laws' in the sense of 'universal' rules of just conduct and thus establishes an 'abstract order' that sets the frame for all governmental activities.[96] Whereas the 'governmental assembly' should reflect the wishes and interests of the citizens, the *nomothetae* of the 'legislative assembly' are obliged to 'uphold justice impartially', which requires 'probity, wisdom, and judgment'.[97] Since their decisions are fundamental for all branches of government, their legislative competences are virtually unlimited. 'All enforceable rules of conduct' need their approval. They are in charge of an 'adequate framework for a functioning competitive market', including principles of taxation and even 'regulations of production and construction'.[98]

Judging by these statements, it does not seem that neoliberalism would want to regulate the economy any 'less' than Keynesianism. Rather, the difference concerns the content of these regulations and the way they are determined:[99] according to Hayek's neoliberal utopia, the economic elites no longer need to consider the opinions of the multitude, but through their *nomothetae* can ensure that such regulations *only* conform with the requirements of the capitalist market. According to his model-constitution, the 'legislative assembly' is not elected according to universal suffrage. It consists of members 'who have already proved themselves in the ordinary business of life' and are therefore of the mature age

93. Hayek 1979, p. 98.
94. Hayek 1979, pp. 101–2.
95. Hayek 1979, pp. 105–6.
96. Hayek 1979, 109, pp. 111–12.
97. Hayek 1979, p. 112.
98. Hayek 1979, pp. 114–15.
99. As Leo Panitch points out, the neoliberal United States has the 'most regulated financial system in the world by far if you measure it in terms of the number of statutes on the books, the number of pages of administrative regulation, the amount of time and effort and staff that is engaged in the supervision of the financial system. But that system is organized in such a way as to facilitate the financialization of capitalism' (Panitch 2011).

of 45 or older.[100] They are elected once, solely by their own age group of 45 year-olds. They fulfil their legislative function during the 15 years between their 45th and 60th years, removable only for gross misconduct or neglect of duty, so that one-fifteenth of the legislative assembly is replaced every year.[101] They therefore have no incentive to pander to public opinion. Hayek's project of organising society according to age-classes is linked to the expectation of 'bringing together the contemporaries of all social classes',[102] which reveals the intention of blocking any class-formations from below and, therefore, of preempting class-struggles. The selection of a member of the 'legislative assembly' would come to be regarded by each age-class 'as a sort of prize to be rewarded to the most highly respected of their contemporaries', which motivates Hayek to propose an 'indirect method of election, with regionally appointed delegates electing the representative from their midst'.[103] No information is given about who in turn 'appoints' these regional delegates.

The suppression of democratic rights seems to apply to the governmental assembly as well. In *The Constitution of Liberty*, Hayek thinks it 'possible for reasonable people to argue that the ideals of democracy would be better served if . . . all the servants of government or all recipients of public charity were excluded from the vote'.[104] A footnote reminds the reader that 'in the oldest and most successful of European democracies, Switzerland, women are still excluded from the vote and apparently with the approval of them'. In his view, even a 'suffrage confined, say, to landowners would produce a legislature sufficiently independent of the government to exercise effective control over it'.[105]

We thereby get exactly what we were first made to believe Hayek was warning us against: a state, whose legislative body cannot be democratically challenged, and whose power is not restricted either, except by the 'market-order' itself, whose laws it must guarantee. Given the enormous competences of the 'legislative assembly', the division of powers is in fact abolished, so that it is hardly possible to differentiate Hayek's model from what is usually discussed as 'totalitarianism'. This becomes all the more evident in Hayek's argument that the assembly's 'rules of just conduct' are designed to define and protect 'the individual domain of each', but that this basic clause does not contain any 'traditional Rights of Man', that is, not even the *individual* rights such as 'freedom of speech, of the press, of religion, of assembly and association, or of the inviolability of

100. Hayek 1979, p. 113.
101. Hayek 1979, pp. 113–14.
102. Hayek 1979, p. 117.
103. Hayek 1979, p. 114.
104. Hayek 1960, p. 105. Milton Friedman develops a similar argument to exclude the poor, who rely on a negative income-tax, from voting (Friedman 2002, p. 194).
105. Hayek 1960, p. 443, n. 4.

the home or of letters'.[106] Hayek justifies this exclusion with an argument that sounds like a decree of a dictatorial regime: none of these rights are 'absolute rights that may not be limited by general rules of law'.[107] The fact that Hayek supported the neoliberal state-terrorism of the Pinochet regime is thus perfectly compatible with his model-constitution.

10.8. The road to 'disciplinary neoliberalism'

Hayek's 'council of sages' was neither the only neoliberal model to restrict and undermine democracy, nor was it the most influential. Other projects proposed to organise the political itself according to an 'exchange principle' and to dissolve it into private contracts.[108] If neoliberalism inherited its overall mistrust of democracy from classic liberalism, then this should, as we have seen on several occasions, not be confused with a principled hostility to the state. From the first international meetings of 1938 and 1947 onwards, neoliberal intellectuals distanced themselves from 'Manchester liberalism' by placing a strong emphasis on state-intervention to establish and secure the functioning of 'market-laws' (see above, Section 10.1.). Neoliberal criticisms of the 'state' were, in fact, specifically directed against a 'redistributive' welfare-state together with a Keynesian economic policy that aimed at strengthening the demand-side, for example by increasing real wages, so that people had enough money to buy the commodities businesses produced. In fact, neoliberalism in power never reduced the state as such, but solely those institutions in and through which substantial social compromises had been hammered out during the preceding period of Fordism. Whenever neoliberal parties conquered the 'commanding heights' of the state, they strengthened the military and repressive apparatuses and reorganised the state's internal structure through marketising it.

In order to grasp the specifics of neoliberalism, the ideology-theories developed in the 'social-democratic' epoch of the 1970s and 1980s need to be modified. Althusser's thesis that the school is the dominant ideological state-apparatus in bourgeois society was inspired by the traditional educational state-system in France, and can hardly hold true under conditions where the public school-system has been downsized and destabilised over a long period of time. In addition, the original approach of the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* that fixed the ideological above all in the 'socially transcendent instance' of the state[109] was co-determined by the model of the European social state in the period of the competition between Western capitalism and Eastern administrative state-socialism. As

106. Hayek 1979, pp. 109–10.
107. Hayek 1979, p. 110.
108. Cf. Schui and Blankenburg 2002, pp. 125 et sqq., 140 et sqq.
109. Cf. W.F. Haug 1987a, p. 61; *PIT* 1979, p. 180.

Haug later admitted, the *PIT*'s focus on the 'classic' ideological powers (state, law, religion, and so on) 'might be bound to European conditions' and could not for instance be applied directly to the US, where the privatisation of the churches, for example, led to their immense multiplication.[110]

I think a first modification should complement the focus on 'ideological state-apparatuses' by the US tradition, already noted by Marx and Max Weber, of an ideological socialisation through sects and private associations, which – even though they are also components of the 'integral state' (Gramsci) – are immediately linked to bourgeois business-interests.[111] Referring to Hegel, Gramsci described the parties and associations as the '"private" fabric of the state', by which the state produces an organised consensus, but in a way that left the educational function to the 'private initiative of the ruling class'.[112] When he made an inventory on 'Americanism and Fordism' in his Notebook 22, it contained among others the Rotary Club, whose 'essential program seems to be the diffusion of a new capitalist spirit'.[113] In his analysis of Thatcherism, Stuart Hall stressed the predominant role of 'private' apparatuses, which were the 'trenches and fortifications' (Gramsci) and 'advanced outposts in civil society itself, from which the counteroffensive to the reigning consensus was launched'.[114] Using the example of the Mont Pèlerin Society, Bernhard Walpen investigated the 'rhizomatic' networks of neoliberal associations and the development of a new type of organic intellectuals within an emerging transnational bourgeoisie thus constituting the 'superstructure of global capitalism'.[115]

As shown by Joan Roelofs, private foundations in the US (above all the *Ford Foundation*, founded in 1936) played a crucial role in subordinating civil-society associations to the interests of large corporations, even those of the left and of anti-poverty movements: they function as 'prime constructors of hegemony' and 'induce consent by creating an ideology that appears to be common sense and incorporates all newly emergent challenging trends'.[116] However, what Gramsci described as the '"private" fabric of the state' today contains much more than hegemonic and ideological apparatuses. Using the example of a 'disaster capitalism complex' in Iraq and in New Orleans, Naomi Klein analysed the comprehensive privatisation of former state-domains and functions: crucial areas

110. W.F. Haug 1993, p. 252, n. 10.

111. Cf. Marx's observations in the *Jewish Question* (Marx 1844, pp. 149 et sqq.) and Max Weber's account in *The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 1988, pp. 215 et sqq.; Weber 2001, pp. 127 et sqq.). For a comparison of Marx and Weber in this respect, cf. Rehmann 2013a, 42 et sqq.

112. Gramsci 1992, pp. 153–4; Gramsci 1975, Q1 §47, p. 56.

113. Gramsci 1996, p. 269; Gramsci 1975, Q5, §2, p. 541; cf. Gramsci 1975, Q22, §1, p. 2140.

114. Hall 1988, p. 47.

115. Walpen 2004, pp. 17–18, 62 n. 52; pp. 283, 285.

116. Roelofs 2003, pp. 198–9.

of catastrophe-management have been delegated to a 'corporate shadow state', which, although built and maintained with public resources, functions like a for-profit enterprise. This leads, among other things, to a 'disaster apartheid', in which survival is determined primarily by one's ability to pay.[117] 'The actual state, meanwhile, has lost the ability to perform its core functions without the help of contractors. Its own equipment is out of date, and the best experts have fled to the private sector'.[118]

A second modification relates to the relationship between the repressive and ideological apparatuses. As Loïc Wacquant has shown, neoliberalism's 'deliberate atrophy of the welfare state corresponded the dystopic hypertrophy of the penal state'.[119] The sensational build-up of a *prison-industrial complex* in the US started in the late 1970s, that is, together with the beginning of neoliberal hegemony. The result was that, twenty years later, the US became, apart from post-Soviet Russia, 'the biggest incarcerator on the planet, with a rate of confinement exceeding 700 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants in 2000 that stands six to twelve times higher than those of the countries of the European Union'.[120] Foucault's prognosis of an increasing 'normalisation' through the social paedagogisation of punishment[121] overlooked the bifurcation of social controls between the 'self-policing' among the 'middle classes', in which the therapeutical services of the psychological market play an important role,[122] and an external disciplinisation of potentially 'dangerous classes', which is marked by ostentatious state- and police-violence as well as a rhetoric of evil and war.[123]

In order to conceptualise the importance of repression and surveillance, which was already formed before the attacks of 11 September 2001 and was then increasingly expanded during the 'war on terror', Stephen Gill coined the term 'disciplinary neoliberalism'.[124] It describes a constellation in which the Fordist modes of regulation that were based upon a class-compromise with relevant components of the labour-movement and oriented toward a consensual inclusion of the subaltern classes were displaced by strategies of 'supremacy' primarily based upon the depoliticisation and fragmentation of oppositional forces.[125] The increased

117. Klein 2007a, pp. 51 et sqq.; Klein 2000b, pp. 417 et sqq.
118. Klein 2007b, p. 417.
119. Wacquant 2009, p. 58.
120. Wacquant 2009, pp. 59, 61. See the comparative table, Wacquant 2009, p. 61.
121. Foucault 1977, p. 306.
122. Cf. Castel, Castel and Lovell 1982.
123. Cf. James 1996, p. 34; Parenti 1999, pp. 135–6. 'Social control has bifurcated in ways Foucault never fully examined', and the 'seemingly soft-shell, scientific discourses of "deviance" and "rehabilitation" have given way to a new, more cynical rhetoric of war, law enforcement armies, lost generations, and "bad guys"' (Parenti 1999, p. 138).
124. Bakker and Gill 2003, pp. 116 et sqq.
125. Bakker and Gill 2003, pp. 60, 65, 118.

importance of incarceration and coercion goes hand in hand with new developments of 'panoptic' surveillance based on video-cameras, bugging systems, network-technologies, Trojans, and such like, which, contrary to Bentham's panopticon-project and its theoretical evaluation by Foucault, are no longer bound to a specific architectural form.[126]

A third modification concerns the inner composition of ideological socialisation. To the extent that the 'socially transcendent', that is, the redistributive and compromise-building sectors and functions of the state were rolled back by the instrumental aspects of neoliberal class-domination, the notion of a human community represented in the ideological imaginary receded and was largely substituted by more particularistic patterns. This changed the relation between political-ethical consensus-formation on the one hand, and manipulation and distraction based on corporate media and high technologies on the other. As Bourdieu observed with regards to television-news, the predominant sensationalism 'attracts notice, but also diverts it', 'hides by showing'.[127] Whereas Fordism in the developed capitalist countries constituted a relatively stable bloc between the bourgeoisie and the higher layers of the industrial working class, traditionally called the 'labour-aristocracy', neoliberal capitalism has divided the working class 'into a worn-out precariat, an individualized cybertariat, and a residual, more or less organized industrial proletariat, all of which are again split alongside national, ethnic, and gender lines'.[128] The social reproduction of the classes increasingly occurs in separated residential locations with, on the one pole, the 'gated communities' of the rich and, on the other, the 'hyperghettos' of the poor.[129] The different cultures are no longer integrated, but rather kept at a distance from each other. Traditional forms of 'normalisation' are replaced with the management of separation and exclusion.

The ideological constellation of 'disciplinary neoliberalism' appears to link up with some traits of the 'ancient' socialisation, glorified by Nietzsche, in which the relation of violence between classes is complemented by a socially stratified 'pathos of distance'.[130] Under such conditions, the ideological could once again

126. Bakker and Gill 2003, pp. 136, 181, 188, 200, 207 et sqq.
127. Bourdieu 1998b, pp. 17, 19.
128. Candeias 2004, p. 205.
129. Gill speaks of a 'process of *social enclavisation*', which, by eroding the urban tax-basis, undermines the capacities for the social reproduction of less affluent communities (Bakker and Gill 2003, 198–9). Wacquant describes the 'hyperghetto' as a space which is the object of a relentless four-corner contest between 1) independent and organised street-predators (hustlers and gangs), 2) local residents and their grass-roots organisations; 3) state-agencies of surveillance and social control; 4) outside institutional predators, primarily realtors, who aim at converting fringe sections of the ghetto for the middle and upper classes (Wacquant 2008, p. 243).
130. Cf. Nietzsche 1999a, p. 259.

approach the ancient paradigm of the Pergamon Altar analysed by Peter Weiss, in which the victory of 'highbred' aristocratic forms is exalted over the 'barbaric mongrels',[131] while the aesthetic forms in which the rulers immortalise themselves are gained by imitating the ruled. Similarly to the paradigm of the Roman pantheon of gods, a 'postmodern' superstructure could rise over the relations of domination regulated by military violence – an ideological constellation in which the particularistic differences and identity-politics of the coopted beneficiaries are celebrated and elevated.

10.9. Is the hegemony of neoliberal capitalism exhausted?

Social movements against the deregulation of labour-relations and the dismantling of the welfare-state are regularly confronted with the difficulty that neoliberalism, by its very function of managing the mode of production of high-tech capitalism, has several lives and is resurrected again and again in different political conjunctures.[132] A first conservative period of neoliberalism in the 1980s focused on the dismantling of the Fordist bloc-formations of different national states. After the shrinking of its electoral base, a second social-democratic period was able to integrate entire oppositional groups into the class-compromise of a 'new centre' and thus to generalise neoliberal hegemony.[133] As could be seen with the example of the red-green government in Germany, this bloc ultimately failed as well, because the radical dismantling of the welfare-state discredited its promises of 'socially responsible reforms' and drove away its own base, thus opening the space for the foundation of a new leftist party, *Die Linke*. When the economic crisis hit in September 2008, the neoliberal doctrine of deregulation and privatisation seemed completely discredited. However, this did not prevent its enduring predominance in both the economic politics of the Obama administration and the furious 'opposition' of the Republican Party and the Tea-Party movement. Thus far, the obvious failures of neoliberalism have not resulted in a serious systemic crisis: as long as credible and appealing democratic-socialist alternatives are either not yet worked out or effectively barred from a wider public, neoliberal capitalism is still able to rely on a 'passive consensus' amongst the population. The constellation then corresponds to what Gramsci described as an 'interregnum', where the 'old is dying and the new cannot be born': the ruling class 'has lost consensus', is no more 'leading', but only 'ruling', whereas the masses are sceptical towards all general formula.[134]

131. Weiss 2005, p. 8.
132. Cf. W.F. Haug 2003, pp. 203, 206.
133. Candeias 2007, pp. 11 et sqq.
134. Gramsci 1996, pp. 32–3; Gramsci 1975, Q3, §34, pp. 311–12.

For an understanding of neoliberalism's appeal and resilience, I propose to return to the hypothesis that ideologies with popular impact function as a 'compromise-formation', which holds together opposite elements and is therefore to a certain degree open to 'antagonistic reclamation' (see above, Section 9.4.). This suggestion might seem paradoxical, since we just observed how Hayek tried to exclude every 'antagonistic reclamation' from the concept of justice (see above, Section 10.5.). However, we have to take into account that he was not the kind of neoliberal ideologue that needed to gain the consent of the subaltern classes (for example in winning elections) and could, therefore, afford to express the neoliberal core-doctrine with an almost Nietzschean brutality. My assumption is that wherever neoliberal ideologues organise popular hegemony they need to feed on the energies of 'horizontal' socialisation, which they tie together with the logic of marketisation and commodification. What distinguishes the neoliberal constellation from the Fordist class-compromise mediated by Keynesian economic policies and a redistributive welfare-state, is a significant shift from collective representations (such as in the name of 'social justice') to the promise of individual emancipation and self-activation. It is this aspect that governmentality-studies tried to capture with the aid of Foucault's concept of 'self-conduct'. What they missed however is what Hayek articulated as a 'real dilemma', namely the contradiction between the neoliberal appeal to self-mobilisation and its strict subordination to the market-order (see Section 11.4.).

This contradiction can be observed by the example of Peter Hartz. Hartz was the former human-resources executive at Volkswagen and adviser to the Social-Democratic chancellor Gerhard Schröder. He also developed the so-called 'Hartz reforms', welfare-reforms that reduced unemployment-benefits and introduced laws on mini-jobs, 'Ich-AG's' (me, Inc.) and such like, that enhanced the development of a low-wage sector of contingent jobs. However, his 2001 book Job Revolution articulated numerous catchwords, which, taken as such, could well be part of alternative and even leftist discourses: the self-determined definition of labour, the employee's 'sovereignty of labour time', the 'wholeness' and 'meaningfulness' of the labour-process, the full self-realisation of each individual, 'colleagues turning into co-entrepreneurs', an activating discourse that in hindsight seems to anticipate the campaign-slogan of the Obama campaign: 'Move something – you can do it!'[135] As Frigga Haug showed, the markers of hope and self-determined activity are simultaneously merged with the figure of the capitalist 'entrepreneur', and reassembled in such a way that the invoked capacities to act are strictly subordinated to one's own 'employability' and 'marketability', which in fact comes down to the 'flexibility' to be brought into action at any time and location, as well as to the quasi-unlimited readiness to work overtime.[136] 'The

135. Hartz 2001, pp. 21, 53, 55, 66.
136. F. Haug 2003, pp. 610–11.

utopia is brought down to this world and surfaces at the very spot where we are in for it'.[137]

Hartz's slogan, 'emotion turns into capital',[138] can be evaluated as a symptom that neoliberalism has moved the logic of commodification deeper into the realm of emotions, which in the period of Fordism had still been protected as 'private'. As Christina Kaindl showed, the popular German television-shows *Big Brother* and *Popstars* (both with English titles!) work intensely on a neoliberal *dispositif* of subjectivity in which 'authenticity' and 'creativity' are 'lifted to the surface' and aggressively invested in one's efforts of self-valuation.[139] In correlation with the respective positions in class-, gender- and race-relations, the field permanently polarises between those who are able to convert their emotions into an asset of promotion and those 'who do not succeed in self-mobilising themselves or who fail despite their efforts in self-mobilisation'.[140]

Of course, a critical ideology-theory has to be continuously fine-tuned to the concrete transformations and conjunctures of the society in question. One of the main (and most difficult) questions is whether or to what extent neoliberal high-tech capitalism has lost (or is going to lose) its ideological capacity for subject-mobilisation. The period of neoliberal expansion from 2001 to 2007 in the 'developed' capitalist countries seems to have ended and to have been replaced by a period of protracted slump. When the financial institutions and large corporations lined up for government-support, the neoliberals in power appeared to have turned into Keynesians. However, this was soon revealed to be merely tactical, in order to gain time to repair the neoliberal apparatus. Instead of the state carrying through the primacy of politics over and against financial markets, the financial institutions invaded and conquered the state. Even if neoliberalism was intellectually discredited, it continues to determine the actual 'operating system' of high-tech capitalism.

Gramsci had cautioned that economic crises cannot by themselves produce fundamental historical events, but only 'create a terrain more favourable to the dissemination of certain modes of thought'.[141] He even expected the ruling class to be able, due to its 'numerous trained cadres', to adapt to the situation, to make some sacrifices, change 'men and programmes' and, with greater speed than is achieved by the subordinate classes, to 'reabsorb the control that was slipping from its grasp', to reinforce power for the time being and to use it 'to crush its adversary and disperse its leading cadres, who cannot be very numerous or highly trained'.[142]

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137. F. Haug 2003, p. 608.
138. Hartz 2001, p. 57.
139. Kaindl 2005, pp. 357–8.
140. Kaindl 2007a, p. 160.
141. Gramsci 1971, pp. 184, 235.
142. Gramsci 1971, pp. 210–11.

On the other hand, it must be taken into account that ideological interpellations need some economic substratum to be effective in the long run.[143] To the extent that this substratum is no longer sufficient, neoliberalism's hegemonic capacity is in danger of being eroded. The initial project of launching a 'Green New Deal', as advocated among others by the former 'Special Advisor for Green Jobs', Van Jones,[144] immediately came under attack from the Tea-Party movement and the Republican Party and was soon abandoned by the Obama administration. Not only is there no credible strategy to deal with the ecological crisis, there is no new productive force in sight that could have the potential to overcome the economic crisis and the long-term tendencies of unemployment and underemployment. The huge bail-out in 2008 certainly put a halt to the domino-like wave of bank-collapses, but this had the effect of transforming private debt into public debt, and the bank-crisis morphed into a sovereign-debt crisis.[145] The massive government-interventions were enacted after a long period of rising national debts, so that governments can no longer easily use deficits and rising debt to prevent economic crises from becoming social crises and crises of hegemony.[146] 'Now the corporations and the rich want the state, whose budget they looted, to cut back social supports and services for the working class whose wages and productivity they also looted'.[147] As could be seen with the example of Greece, the nation-states and their governments are increasingly cornered between the creditors' demands on the one hand, and the refusal of growing parts of the working and middle classes to comply with austerity politics on the other.

Given the shrinking economic 'substratum' available for new class-compromises, job-creation programmes and public services, neoliberalism might lose its 'organic' social function in managing transnational high-tech capitalism. To the extent that its capacity to engender mass-consent is eroding, the authoritarian and disciplinary-panoptic tendencies 'grow in significance'.[148] It cannot however be determined beforehand for how long and to what extent the elites, the governments and the mainstream ideologues will succeed in shifting the blame onto the policies of former governments, onto the 'greed' of the bankers, to trade-unions, immigrants and other enemy-images, or at what point the fundamental

143. As Poulantzas observed, 'the relation of the masses to power and the State – in what is termed among other things a *consensus – always possesses a material substratum*.' (Poulantzas 1978, pp. 30–1).

144. Cf. Jones 2008, pp. 79 et sqq., 142 et sqq.

145. Cf. McNally 2011, pp. 2 et sqq.

146. Cf. Wolff 2011a, Wolff 2010, pp. 72–74, 153–4.

147. Wolff 2011b.

148. Cf. Candeias 2009, p. 6. Gill diagnosed a 'new constitutionalism' designating a political and juridical framework for global capitalism 'that seeks increasingly to "lock in" the rights of capital, whilst simultaneously locking out democratic control over key aspects of the political economy' (Bakker and Gill 2003, p. 12; cf. pp. 30–1).

contradiction between capitalism and democracy becomes visible and opens the way to new anti-capitalist movements and alliances.

It was this contradiction that the *Occupy Wall Street* movement so effectively articulated with its slogan 'We are the 99 percent', which according to the *New York Times* (1 December 2011) became 'a national shorthand for the income disparity. Easily grasped in its simplicity and Twitter-friendly in its brevity, the slogan has practically dared listeners to pick a side'. Taking up a simple and undeniable statistical percentage, one that was immediately confirmed by the Congressional Budget Office, the slogan broke through the different ideologies of fragmentation and identity-politics and brought a fundamental dimension of the class-divide back onto the agenda.[149] By combining a symbolic reappropriation of the common in the midst of the Wall Street sanctuary of private property with the claim of radical democracy, the movement created multiple synergy-effects in an astonishingly short period. Its enormous popular support showed that there is a strong base for fundamental change.[150]

In *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions* (1906), Rosa Luxemburg argued against the 'bureaucratic' notion that fixed organisations are a precondition for successful mass-actions. She maintained that in the Russia of 1905 the new organisations were 'born from the mass strike', which became 'the starting point of a feverish *work of organisation*'.[151] To the extent that the new social movements inspired by the Arab Spring – from the *indignados* in Spain via the resistance-movement in Wisconsin to the manifold Occupy movements – are able to co-operate with the labour-movement and anti-poverty movements as well as to build independent and sustainable institutions, they could perhaps become the starting point for a new leftist formation (and/or for the recomposition of the existing Left) that rebuilds the connections between social movements, trade-unions and leftist parties in a new way. A coherent strategy towards 'economic democracy', both long-term and short-term, could perhaps become a core element of re-defining a socialism for the twenty-first century and of opening up a radical social-ecological transformation.[152]

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149. A survey by the Pew Research Centre conducted in December 2011 found that perception of class-conflict surged significantly, which, according to the *New York Times* is a 'sign that the message of income inequality brandished by the Occupy Wall Street movement . . . may be seeping into the national consciousness' (*NYT*, 12 January 2012, p. 15).

150. Cf. Wolff and Rehmann 2011 and, for a Gramscian analysis of Occupy Wall Street's strengths and weaknesses, Rehmann 2013b.

151. In: Hudis and Anderson 2004, p. 186.

152. Cf. our proposal of a *Manifesto for Economic Democracy and Ecological Sanity* (Economic Democracy Manifesto Group 2012).

Chapter Eleven

The Unfulfilled Promises of the Late Foucault and Foucauldian 'Governmentality-Studies'

In this concluding chapter I will try to show that the late Foucault made interesting and promising announcements that neither he nor the Foucauldian 'governmentality-studies' ever realised. What Foucault promised was basically to distinguish between domination and power, between techniques of domination and of the self, and to investigate their interaction. Paradoxically, despite his hostility to the concept of ideology, Foucault thereby took up a similar position to the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (*PIT*), which almost at the same time as Foucault's lectures on governmentality and biopolitics (1977–9), and in opposition to Althusser's concept of ideology in general, developed analytical distinctions between 'vertical' socialisation from above, 'horizontal' self-socialisation, and 'proto-ideological materials' (see above, Section 9.3).

I will evaluate both the potentials of the late Foucault's approach and its theoretical weaknesses. Focusing mainly on Foucault's 1977–8 lectures at the *Collège de France*, entitled *Security, Territory, Population*, as well as his 1978–9 lectures, *The Birth of Biopolitics*,[1] I will firstly demonstrate that Foucault did not stick to his own analytical distinctions; secondly that his concept of 'governmentality' covered a multitude of very different meanings; and finally, that he was unable to relate the 'governmental' conceptions of leadership, in particular those of liberalism, to the structures of

1. Foucault 2007 and 2008.

social domination, in the framework of which they are continuously being developed and realised. This also applies to Foucauldian 'governmentality-studies' which explicitly distanced itself from any ideology-critique, with the consequence that their interpretation of management-literature tended to become a merely immanent retelling of neoliberal ideology without any critical distance. My main objection is that they failed to grasp the relationship between domination and subjection in neoliberalism. I propose to reinterpret their insights in a different framework, that is, the framework of a critical ideology-theory.

11.1. Foucault's mediation of the techniques of domination and of the self

Foucault discovered the techniques of the self during the long and obviously crisis-ridden period between the first and the second volume of the *History of Sexuality*, namely between 1976 and 1984. Whereas at the time of the publication of *Discipline and Punish* in 1975, he had used the concept of power in the sense of a subtle and omnipresent formation of subjects that did not leave any room for subversion and resistance, he afterwards included the subjects' relation to themselves. The way in which people organise their lives and the 'techniques' they apply to themselves, to their attitudes, their bodies and their psyche became an important component of Foucault's late concept of power. The exercise of power acknowledges the others in principle as acting subjects of their own, 'having in front of them a field of possibility in which several conducts, several reactions, and various modes of behavior can take place',[2] which includes the aspect of mutual influence and of the reversibility of power-relations.[3] However, domination designates a 'strategic' fixation, by which power-relations are no longer reversible, but rather blocked and ossified [*bloquées et figées*].[4]

Unfortunately, Foucault did not carry through this distinction in a consistent fashion. In an interview in 1984, he was confronted with Hannah Arendt's distinction between a collective power, by which individuals gain a greater capacity to act than if they relied merely on themselves, and a power of domination, which might emerge from it or insert itself into it. Foucault responded that this is just a 'verbal' distinction.[5] Furthermore, he usually did not distinguish between the two concepts analytically, according to qualitative dimensions, but rather quantitatively according to the criterion of size and scale so that 'domination' described the macrostructure and 'power' described the microstructure.

2. Foucault 2001b, Nr. 306, p. 1056.
3. Foucault 2001b, Nr. 306, p. 2061.
4. Foucault 2001b, Nr. 306, p. 1062; Nr. 356, p. 1529.
5. Foucault 2001b, Nr. 341, p. 1408.

Whenever power became 'global', he used the term 'domination', and whatever invaded and permeated immediate relationships was defined as 'power'.[6]

However, this is not a sustainable distinction. Domination is also capable of permeating immediate human relations, including the most intimate ones. A case in point is patriarchal domination, whose ideological forms and patterns are permanently internalised by both genders. On the other hand, the altermondialist movements of the World Social Forum aim to build a democratic and anti-imperial power from below on a 'global' level, and maintain that it must not flip over into a new form of uncontrolled domination again. Foucault again misses the opportunity to re-conceptualise his concept of power from its etymological meanings of ability/capacity (see above, Section 9.1.). His fascination with Nietzsche's *will to power* prevents him from taking up Spinoza's concept of capacity to act (*potentia agendi*).[7]

But rather than focus on the inconsistencies of Foucault's approach, I would like to concentrate first on its possible strengths. Between the microstructure of potentially reciprocal power-relations and the fixated blocks of domination, Foucault assumed an intermediary level which he called 'governmentality'.[8] He defined the term as a 'conduct of conducts'. The expression is based on an ambiguity of the French verb *conduire*, which on the one hand signifies 'directing' someone [*conduire quelqu'un*], on the other hand the way in which one conducts oneself [*se conduit*], comports oneself or behaves, so that governmentality means '*conduire des conduites*', conducting people's conduct.[9]

The distinction between techniques of domination and of the self enabled Foucault to develop a better sense of subtle forms of resistance, which did not yet play a role in *Discipline and Punish* and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, namely revolts of conduct articulated in the will 'to be conducted differently' or 'to escape direction by others and to define the way for each to conduct himself'.[10] An example of such 'insubordination' [*insoumission*] or 'counter-conduct' was medieval asceticism, which Foucault described as an 'exercise of self on self . . . in which the authority, presence and gaze of someone else is, if

6. Foucault 2001b, Nr. 306, p. 1062; Nr. 356, p. 1529.

7. For a comparison of Spinoza's *potentia agendi* as a cooperative power from below and Nietzsche's verticalist and ultimately exterminist *will to power*, cf. Rehmann 2004a, pp. 52–60.

8. 'There are three levels of my analysis of power: the strategic relations, the techniques of government, and the techniques of domination that are applied to the others and to the techniques of the self.' (Foucault 2001b, Nr. 356, p. 1547). 'What I call "governmentality" is the encounter between the techniques of domination applied to the others and the techniques of the self'. (Foucault 2001b, Nr. 363, p. 1604). Cf. Lemke 1997, pp. 264, 308–9.

9. Cf. Foucault 2001b, Nr. 306, p. 1056; Nr. 340, p. 1401; Foucault 2007, p. 193.

10. Foucault 2007, pp. 194–5.

not impossible, at least unnecessary'. It is a 'reversed obedience' or 'excess', by which certain themes of religious experience are utilised against the structures of power;[11] the religious communities are in part based on the 'refusal of the pastor's authority and its theological or ecclesiological justifications', replacing the clergy-laity dimorphism by 'relationships of reciprocal obedience' or the priesthood of all believers;[12] in mysticism, the soul is not offered to the other for examination by a system of confessions, but 'sees itself in God and . . . God in itself' and thereby short-circuits the pastoral hierarchy by replacing it by an immediate communication;[13] another movement of counter-conduct is the return to Scripture;[14] eschatological beliefs disqualify the pastor's role by claiming that the times are by themselves in the process of being fulfilled.[15] Another case in point is the truth-speech (*parrēsia*) of ancient Cynicism, which manifests itself as an 'interpellation of the powerful in the form of the diatribe'.[16]

The concept of 'conducting conduct' indeed opens up promising research-questions. As one can learn from *Critical Psychology* and also observe in one's own daily experiences, the conduct of life under contradictory conditions is a complex and complicated affair. One has to balance different demands, prioritise them, bring them into a linear temporal sequence – a procedure which cannot be achieved without a certain degree of critical evaluation of the necessities of life and of self-discipline.[17] To the extent that an instance of domination or a superordinated ideological power successfully connects with these strategies of self-conduct, speaks in their name, and mobilises them for certain purposes, it gains access to the structures of common sense and thus finds a sounding board so strong that intellectual criticism is unable to counter it. Conversely, communities and individuals can only resist ideological socialisation in a sustainable manner, if they develop and practice capacities of collective and individual self-conduct.

It seems as if the late Foucault had adopted a Gramscian concept of leadership or hegemony which, in contrast to violence, contains an aspect of consensus. His claim to mediate techniques of domination and of the self touches upon a central issue of bourgeois hegemony, namely the active and voluntary subordination to domination. To explain the efficacy and appeal of such a subordination, which is experienced as free and responsible subjectivity, was the

11. Foucault 2007, pp. 200–1, 204 et sqq., 207–8.
12. Foucault 2007, pp. 208, 210–11.
13. Foucault 2007, p. 212.
14. Foucault 2007, p. 213.
15. Foucault 2007, p. 214.
16. Foucault 2010, p. 344.
17. Cf. Klaus Holzkamp's essay on *'Lebensführung'* (Holzkamp 1985).

founding impulse of the ideology-theories that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. Foucault's problematic of how the techniques of domination and of the self are interconnected would then be located in what ideology-theories usually discuss in terms of an encounter of the ideological and common-sense practices. His specific contribution could be the analysis of ideological patterns and self-conducts as particular technologies of power and their assemblage to a hegemonic bloc, which is effectuated as a 'conduct of conducts'.

But, of course, Foucault and the 'governmentality-studies' claim to have left the concepts of hegemony and ideology far behind. Both Stuart Hall and Pierre Bourdieu are criticised for being stuck in the 'old paradigm' of ideology-critique and for ignoring the fact that neoliberalism's leadership-techniques must be investigated in a 'positive' way.[18] In the course of this abandonment of ideology-critique, the promises of investigating the interactions of techniques of domination and of the self drop out of sight as well.

11.2. The enigmatic content of the concept of governmentality

The problem starts with the term 'governmentality' itself, which sparkles in all directions and whose floating meanings can hardly be determined. The French neologism seems to carry an enigmatic content which dissipates as soon as one translates it into plain language. If one tries to explain it by its two components 'government' and 'mentality', one gets something like the 'mentality of (the) government' or perhaps a way to reflect on government.[19] However, this explanation was contradicted by Michel Sennelart, the editor of Foucault's lectures at the *Collège de France*, who proclaimed that the term is not derived from the noun 'mentality', but that it emerged from the adjective '*gouvernemental*' being transformed into a noun, in the same way as '*musicalité*' can be derived from 'musical'.[20] If this is accurate (Sennelart does not provide any philological proof), one could ask all the more whether the new terminological coinage is really worth the effort: taking the adjective '*gouvernemental*', which is itself derived from the noun '*gouvernement*', and then retransforming it into another noun by adding

18. Cf. Barry, Osborne and Rose 1996, p. 11; Bröckling 2000, p. 19. To assume that Bourdieu's critique of neoliberalism amounts to a 'defense of the state' (Ibid.) is, of course, a misleading simplification: Bourdieu was aiming at a democratically controlled finance-sector and also at an alliance with fractions of the social state – not only on a national level, but in a European framework.

19. 'The way we think about government' (Dean 1999, pp. 16 et sqq.); cf. Bröckling 2000, p. 8; Opitz 2004, p. 60; Opitz 2007, pp. 96–7.

20. In Foucault 2007, pp. 399–40, n. 126.

the new ending '*-ité*', does not yield anything more than 'government-like' or 'of the kind of government', which again does not have any explanatory power.

More importantly, Foucault uses the term in very different ways: on the most general level, 'governmentality' designates 'the way in which one conducts the conducts' of people,[21] that is to say, the 'conducting of conducts', which by its consensual components is 'different from "reigning or ruling", and not the same as "commanding" or "laying down the law", or being a sovereign, suzerain, lord', but instead is enacted as 'government of souls'.[22]

On a second level, it describes a 'line of force' that traverses the history of the West and leads to the preeminence of 'government' over all other types of power.[23] It is the 'pastorate' of the Jewish-Christian tradition, a particular conception of leadership that understands itself in terms of the relationship of a shepherd to his flock, and has its origin 'in the East and in the Hebrews'.[24] According to Foucault, this concept of leadership was foreign to Greek thought. However, this is an assumption, which was already challenged by his own counter-examples, according to which the King is referred to 44 times as 'shepherd' by the *Iliad* and 12 times by the *Odyssey*;[25] the *Pythagoreans* derived from *nomeus*, the shepherd, the *nomos*, the law, and the title of Zeus as *Nomios*, the god-shepherd.[26] In Plato's *Critias*, *The Republic*, and *The Laws*, the good magistrate is seen as a good shepherd.[27] Plato's *Statesman* applies the shepherd-metaphor to the political leader as well. However, this is subsequently revealed as insufficient, because the specifics of the politician's activity must be grasped according to the model of 'weaving': just like the weaver joins the warp and the weft, the statesman binds together the 'virtues in their different forms', 'different contrasting temperaments'.[28] Foucault's account is accurate, but the example does not demonstrate what he claims it does. Instead of proving that the shepherd-flock relationship is foreign to 'Greek thought', it shows, as Foucault himself admits, that Plato was critically scrutinising 'if not a commonplace, then at least a familiar opinion'.[29] But, of course, this common sense coincides with what Foucault portrays as 'Greek thought'. Whereas Foucault contrasted the 'oriental' figure of the shepherd with the Greek concept of the King as the 'good pilot' who governs not primarily individuals, but the 'ship' of the city-state,[30] a philological evaluation

21. Foucault 2008, p. 186.
22. Cf. Foucault 2007, pp. 115–16, 121, 192.
23. Foucault 2007, p. 108.
24. Foucault 2007, pp. 123, 147, 364.
25. Foucault 2007, pp. 136 et sqq.
26. Foucault 2007, p. 137.
27. Foucault 2007, p. 138.
28. Foucault 2007, pp. 145–6.
29. Foucault 2007, pp. 141–2.
30. Foucault 2007, p. 123.

published in the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* came to the conclusion that Hesiode, Aischylos, Sophocles, and Euripides also applied the title of shepherd 'to military leaders, e.g. to captains of ships'.[31] Foucault's assumption of an originally 'Oriental' concept of the pastorate is itself what one could describe, using Edward Said, as an 'orientalist' conception. A study in social history could have shown him that stockbreeding (and thereby the figure of the shepherd) was widespread throughout the entire Mediterranean area (and beyond), not only in its 'Eastern' parts.

On a third level, the term 'political "governmentality"' covers a period that starts with the Reformation and Counter-Reformation in the sixteenth century, which also sees the transition to large territory states, and, in the first half of the seventeenth century, coincides with the emergence of '*raison d'Etat*'.[32] Foucault is mainly interested in the way the ancient understanding of governing the polis merged with the Christian concept of the shepherd, and how the Christian pastorate became increasingly secularised and reached into everyday life. However, the conceptions of leadership belonging to this type of governmentality – like mercantilism, cameralistics, '*raison d'Etat*', 'Polizeywissenschaft', and Physiocrats – were still blocked by the predominance of the power of sovereignty, so that 'the art of government could not find its own dimension'.[33] This concentration on the state was only overcome in the middle of the eighteenth century by the 'liberal' art of government, which, in Foucault's account, opens up the period of 'modern governmental reason'.[34]

It is only in the framework of this fourth meaning that it became 'possible to think, reflect, and calculate the problem of government outside the juridical framework of sovereignty'.[35] What we learned so far were obviously merely precursors of governmentality, and, indeed, Foucault proclaims: 'We live in the era of a governmentality discovered in the eighteenth century'.[36] But even this relatively narrow usage of the term still covers an enormously complex array, containing multiple formations as varied as liberalism, conservatism, fascism, social democracy, and administrative state-socialism, and it remains unclear on what grounds the 'governmentality-studies' can claim to have found an analytical key for the specific understanding of neoliberalism.

One thus arrives at four different meanings of 'governmentality', which in Foucault's usage continuously flow into each other: leadership in general as 'a

31. Engemann 1991, p. 580.
32. Foucault 2007, p. 364.
33. Foucault 2007, pp. 102–3.
34. Foucault 2008, pp. 11, 13, 20.
35. Foucault 2007, p. 104.
36. Foucault 2007, p. 109.

kind of basic condition of human societies',[37] an 'oriental' and then 'Jewish-Christian' pastorate permeating the culture of the West, political governmentality from the sixteenth century onwards and liberal governmentality from the eighteenth century onwards. It seems as if Foucault tried in ever new attempts to approach an abstract concept of governmentality to history, without ever arriving at a concrete historical or sociological constellation.

However, it is not only the concept's scope that oscillates, but also the level of reality to which it is referring. Whereas the power of sovereignty until (and including) Machiavelli had the 'territory' and its inhabitants as a target and, in a 'circular relationship', had its aim in itself, the 'government' from La Perrière's *Le Miroir politique* (1555) onwards was related 'to a sort of complex of men and things', 'the intrication of men and things', people involved with wealth, resources, the means of subsistence, and so on.[38] But this cannot be the definition of a modern, economical type of governmentality, because people were always bound up with 'things', and all domination had to relate to this connection, for example, to the disposal of natural resources, the labour-force, the economic infrastructure and so on. Did Foucault believe in earnest that such a disposal was a modern invention, whereas the rulers of pre-modern times were only interested in 'territory' and increasing their power as such? This would indeed be an ideological fairytale, in which the entire complex of the relations of production, reproduction, and distribution, of the imperial control of raw materials, of the exploitation and over-taxation of the subjugated peoples were dissimulated. How long could the Roman emperors have entertained the Roman *plebs* with 'bread and circuses' if the provinces had successfully stopped their grain-deliveries for an extended time?

Foucault tried to evade such critical questions by changing the level of argumentation: by the 'art of government', he does not mean 'the way in which governors really governed', but rather 'the reasoned way of governing best and . . . reflection on the best possible way of governing'.[39] According to this statement, 'governmentality' is not about real practices of leadership and hegemony, but about certain patterns of reflection laid down in guide-books. Such a limitation could, indeed, be a useful methodological decision. The phenomenological reconstruction of leadership-concepts could become an important component of an 'immanent critique' which confronts ideologies with their own 'truth', or in Adorno's words: 'what a society presents itself as being with what it actually is'.[40]

37. Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke 2000, p. 18.
38. Foucault 2007, pp. 96–7.
39. Foucault 2008, p. 2.
40. Adorno 1973–86, Vol. 8, p. 347.

But such a self-limitation, in turn, is in contradiction with Foucault's definition of governmentality as 'the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument'.[41] The ensemble of institutions, practices, and interpretative patterns in a certain historical period would actually constitute the classical object of an ideology-theoretical research-programme. But the promised research is never realised. Foucault again delivers glossy menus announcing delicious dishes, but the readers never get anything to eat.

The theoretical flimsiness can be studied with the example of liberalism. Foucault claims to analyse liberalism neither as a theory, nor as an ideology, but rather 'as a practice, that is to say, a "way of doing things" directed towards objectives and regulating itself by continuous reflection'.[42] But this is exactly not what he is actually doing. Instead of dealing with the practices and accompanying reflections of liberalism, he confines himself to the aspect that liberalism 'constitutes . . . a tool for the criticism of reality', 'a form of critical reflection' on previous or present varieties of governmentality, in particular a critique of excessive government and a concept of governmental self-limitation.[43] Foucault's definitions coincide entirely with the ideological self-image of liberalism, which likes to imagine itself as a philosophy and politics that stand in opposition to state-regulation, and thereby represses the fact that in real history it manifested itself until the late nineteenth century primarily as a 'possessive individualism' (Macpherson) aiming at the maintenance of bourgeois property-relations, and frequently did so with the violent and disciplinary measures of the repressive state-apparatuses.

Foucault's paradigm, which is often hailed in secondary literature because of its superannuation of 'ideology-critique', does not allow us to grasp the ideological function of liberalism in the framework of bourgeois relations of domination. His account uncritically identifies with the object and remains on the level of an intuitive and empathetic retelling.[44] This also applies to his interpretation of neoliberalism. Since the economic and social developments and the political relations of force drop out of his interpretative framework, he is unable, as Tilman Reitz observes, 'to establish a sustainable position towards his object': the neoliberal theories seem to emerge out of nothing and to find

41. Foucault 2007, p. 108.
42. Foucault 2008, p. 318.
43. Foucault 2008, pp. 320–3.
44. Gordon explains Foucault's distance to Marxism and anarchism by his fascination for liberalism: 'Foucault does seem to have been (at least) intrigued by the properties of liberalism as a form of knowledge calculated to limit power' (Gordon 1991, p. 47).

acceptance without any motivation – the reasons for their importance and success remain obscure.[45]

If it seemed at first that the late Foucault approached the Gramscian problematic of hegemony, it becomes clear now that this was merely a rhetoric gesture. Whereas Gramsci tried to grasp the connections between leadership and domination, hegemony and force, *società civile* and *società politica*, Foucault's account made the overall framework of bourgeois domination and the repressive armour of ideological practices disappear into thin air. The promised investigation of the connection between the techniques of domination and of the self got lost in the immanent reproduction of liberalism's ideological self-understanding.

Those who, for whatever reason, decide to adopt and work with the artificial neologism of 'governmentality' should at least bring themselves to address and to overcome its ambiguity: either one uses the term as a synonym for a materialist concept of the ideological, which would however mean that one actually investigates the ensemble of ideological powers, practices, and thought-forms of a specific period, or one employs it in a more modest sense, which also corresponds to the operational usage of Foucault, that is in the sense of leadership-strategies, *inasmuch* and *how* they are reflected in certain types of guide-books: as the 'reflexive prism'[46] of a hegemonic project. However, this would mean that one must not confuse such a textual representation with the entire ensemble of the ideological. Intellectual honesty would require that one resists the temptation to blow it up into an alternative to ideology-critique and ideology-theory.

11.3. Eliminating the inner contradictions of neoliberal ideology

This leads me to Foucauldian 'governmentality-studies' and its interpretation of neoliberalism, which I will mainly discuss using the example of the works of Ulrich Bröckling and Sven Opitz.[47] For large parts, the readers learn what they can know anyway from the statements of entrepreneurs, from management-literature, government-proclamations and the mainstream press: that we are all called upon to take initiative in our jobs, that the service to the customer is all that counts, that each of us needs to be our own entrepreneur – self-responsible, creative and flexible. In between, the authors insert some Foucauldian terms like the 'pastoral' model of leadership, the 'hermeneutics of desire', the indefatigable will to knowledge, and so on, which serve as gestures to signify some sort of theoretical 'distance'. But this is a simulation. The evaluation basically amounts to the assumption that neoliberal 'governmentality' should be characterised by

45. Reitz 2005, p. 373.
46. Foucault 2007, p. 276.
47. Bröckling 2000 and 2002; Opitz 2004 and 2007.

the mobilisation of capacities of self-conduct. This does not do much more than translate the overall rhetoric of activation in the management-literature into a theoretical discourse. There is hardly any indication of the real place, relevance and function of these highly ideological texts within the actual culture of enterprises, or in the general framework of neoliberal domination and its leadership-methods. The approach thus shares the 'destiny of a shadow-boxer who never gets hold of his opponent'.[48]

Some examples might illustrate how 'governmentality-studies' fail to keep a critical distance from the advertising-language of the neoliberal management-literature and guide-books they try to get a hold on. So-called 'total quality-management', which endeavours to apply quality-control to all activities of the enterprise and to put the orientation towards the costumer above everything else, is characterised by Bröckling as follows: quality is now determined by the 'principle of prophylaxis', it obtains a 'pro-active' character and a 'preventive orientation'. The idea behind these glittering words is basically that mistakes of production or service are to be prevented beforehand instead of being corrected afterwards.[49] However, such a concern is, at least on this level of generality, not in the least a new achievement – it would apply to the assembly-line as well. Quality is 'no goal', but rather a 'process that never ends', not a result, but an 'action-parameter', reports Bröckling.[50] But this is obviously a nonsensical assumption: quality is of course still a 'goal' and a 'result' as well, or else the clients would immediately return the product or complain about the unsatisfactory service. Since Bröckling believes he has left ideology-critique far behind, he is not interested in (or capable of) revealing the abuse of language by an advertisement-discourse, which tries to sell its 'products' in the brightest colours as the newest and most revolutionary development. The more social theory gives in to such advertisement-language, the more unprepared it becomes in identifying what is really new.[51]

Bröckling goes on to assume that the requirement of focusing entirely on the client has replaced the 'factory rules of the disciplinary era', which still insisted on punctuality, diligence and order.[52] This coincides with Opitz's assumption that neoliberal leadership-technologies are 'post-disciplinary'.[53] But can such a juxtaposition really be maintained? What happens when a worker or employee

48. Reitz and Draheim 2007, p. 119.
49. Bröckling 2000, pp. 136–7.
50. Bröckling 2000, p. 137.
51. Frigga Haug's analysis of Peter Hartz's *Job Revolution* (discussed above, Section 10.9), which reveals the discursive strategy of a 'ruthless transformation of all words into commodities' (F. Haug 2003, pp. 606–7), is a good case in point that discourse-analysis and ideology-critique are not at all mutually exclusive.
52. Bröckling 2000, p. 137.
53. Opitz 2003, pp. 606–7.

does not arrive on time, for example when meeting a client? More 'flexibility', or more flexible working hours, do not at all imply that the products of labour do not need to be delivered at a pre-given (or negotiated) time. This can even be gathered from neoliberal discourse itself: since *'lean production'* is (among other things) about the reduction of the storeroom and storage-time, its *'just in time* principle' proclaims punctual delivery as an absolute requirement – otherwise the subcontractor might immediately lose its contract. Instead of declaring the era of discipline to be over and to have been replaced by the era of client-orientation and self-conduct, it would be more productive to look for specific forms of disciplinary demands under the conditions of computerised labour in high-tech capitalism. It is symptomatic that some of the substantial investigations of neoliberal management go back again to Foucault's former concept of disciplinary power.[54]

When Bröckling reports that subjectivity was for the Taylorist era nothing but a 'factor of disturbance' that needs to be controlled,[55] this is again a misleading juxtaposition.[56] It underestimates how Fordism, through its puritan campaigns, its education of hygiene and morality as well as through its compensating family-ideologies, engendered a highly intense formation of subjectivities. According to Gramsci, it was even 'the biggest collective effort to date to create, with unprecedented speed, and with a consciousness of purpose unmatched in history, a new type of worker and of man'[57] – a finding that could well be combined with Foucault's thesis of a 'productive' constitution of the modern *dispositif* of sexuality. What should be investigated is how, in the transition to a high-tech mode of production and at the crossroads of labour-conditions, education, mass-culture and ideological socialisation, subjectivities are generated in a new way.

Bröckling informs us of *kaizen*, a Japanese term for 'improvement', or 'change for the better', signifying a critical search for amelioration, in which the employees engage in a common diagnosis of mistakes and shortcomings – without moralising or looking for 'culprits'. 'In order to investigate and to overcome mistakes, these need to be laid open without any fear of sanctions'.[58] It is, indeed, an interesting phenomenon that, in its efforts to enhance labour-productivity, neoliberal management-literature is compelled to take up elements that could be part of a 'horizontal' communication. We encounter a similar phenomenon in the internet, which is, as a network, 'horizontally' designed and at the same time exposed to verticalisation by corporations; it is 'anarchic and nevertheless reproduces

54. Cf. Petersen 2004.
55. Bröckling 2004, p. 142.
56. Cf. the critique of Moldaschl's similar argument by Ines Langemeyer (Langemeyer 2004, pp. 66 et sqq.).
57. Gramsci 1971, p. 302; Gramsci 1975, Q4, §52, p. 489.
58. Bröckling 2004, p. 144.

relations of domination'.[59] Unfortunately, Bröckling does not investigate the contradictions that emerge whenever such seemingly 'horizontal' interpellations collide with the hierarchical realities of capitalist enterprises: how could an anxiety-free discussion of mistakes be possible in the context of mass-unemployment and job-insecurity, by which every revelation of errors can become a personal survival-risk? Engaging in a 'communication free of domination'[60] would in principle require new relations of economic democracy. Under capitalist conditions, it can only be realised in a restricted and partial manner, and is only realistic amongst privileged sections of the labour-process, where the demand for qualified workers is high and jobs are secure.

Bröckling describes the so-called '360-degree-evaluation', by which every employee is exposed to the anonymous judgment of all the others, as a 'democratic panopticism', a 'non-hierarchical model of reciprocal visibility, in which everyone is both the observer of all the others and the observed by all the others'.[61] This description is however naïve and misleading, because it severs the form of evaluation from the surrounding asymmetrical power-relations of the enterprise. An ideology-theoretical analysis would instead be interested, firstly, in the way the results of such an evaluation can be utilised for promotions, transfers, or dismissals, and secondly, how the mere possibility of such a utilisation reacts back on relationships among the workforce and enhances attitudes that mobilise the employees against each other and against their own cooperative interests. According to Peterson, in his experience the 360-degree-evaluation had the effect that 'the interactions with the colleagues were superimposed by . . . tactical considerations and prevented the development of relations of friendship'.[62] The assumption of a 'flattening of the panoptic asymmetry'[63] dissimulates the development of a vertical panopticism which, based on electronic-surveillance and network-technologies, by far exceeds what Foucault analysed in *Discipline and Punish*. According to the *American Management Association*, about seventy-five per cent of employees in the private sector are subjected to electronic-surveillance monitoring, which is for Stephen Gill, who reports this, one of the characteristics that justify to speak of a 'disciplinary neoliberalism'.[64]

In their eagerness to renounce ideology-critique and to focus instead on the 'positive' leadership-techniques, the 'governmentality-studies' authors establish an intuitive and empathetic relationship to the management-programmes they claim to analyse. Since they do not investigate their ideological functions and

59. W.F. Haug 2003, p. 67.
60. Habermas 1970, p. 93.
61. Bröckling 2004, p. 152.
62. Peterson 2004, p. 141.
63. Opitz 2007, p. 141.
64. Cf. Bakker and Gill 2003, p. 192.

functioning in the framework of neoliberal high-tech capitalism, they have no methodical instrument to distinguish between real new patterns of hegemonic leadership on the one hand and made-up fantasies and empty rhetoric on the other. Above all, they reproduce the view of the management which looks at the employees from the perspective of managerial leaders and dissimulates the domination and alienation of neoliberal capitalism behind the smokescreen of motivational incentives and appeals to teamwork.

Opitz comes to the conclusion that neoliberal leadership-techniques aim at enhancing the capacities of self-governance and favour an 'extremely loose coupling' of power-relations, which 'under no circumstances may turn into a relation of domination'.[65] He even indulges in the stylistic howler that neoliberal leaders are supposed to withdraw in a 'post-heroic' way, in order to open up a space where the employees 'can constitute a subjective desire'.[66] Such evaluations are deeply stuck in neoliberal ideology. A critical ideology-theory would instead look at the outer arrangement of the social order: the neoliberal interpellations aiming at the mobilisation of the capacities of 'self-conduct' operate within specific relations of domination, are limited by them, and can only be grasped in their functioning within this comprehensive framework.

11.4. A problematic equation of subjectivation and subjection

It was not just the techniques of domination that dropped out of the view of 'governmentality-studies' though. It does not look any better on the side of self-conduct: since the interpretation is restricted to the programmatic interpellations of management-literature without investigating their encounter with real subjects, the distinction between techniques of self-conduct and of domination becomes obsolete.[67]

The fact that governmentality-studies dropped Foucault's initial claim to distinguish between domination and self-conduct is primarily due to the fact that they adopted a subject-theory, which, often via Judith Butler, equates the emergence of a subject and its subjection, of *subjectivation* and *subjection/assujetissment*.[68] What Judith Butler describes as a 'postliberatory insight'[69] can be traced back (among others) to Lacanian psychoanalysis, according to which the constitution of a subject coincides with its subordination under the 'law of language'. As we have seen, Althusser adopted and integrated this equation in

65. Opitz 2004, 141.
66. Opitz 2007, 103.
67. Cf. Müller 2003, pp. 101–2.
68. Cf. Bröckling 2002; Opitz 2004, p. 103.
69. Butler 1997, p. 17.

his concept of ideology in general (see above, Section 6.4. and 6.6.). In a way, Judith Butler deepened the anthropological level of explanation by introducing a 'founding submission' which readies the subject 'to be compelled by the authoritative interpellation'.[70] Referring to the subject-theory of the *Critical Psychology* of Klaus Holzkamp (and others), the *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (PIT) argued that an ahistorical dichotomy between the necessarily 'repressive society' and the needy individual establishes an 'un-societal foundational structure' of the individual and makes it impossible to conceptualise the formation of self-determined capacities to act.[71]

Such an 'anthropological' foundation has far-reaching consequences for the analyses of 'governmentality-studies': if it is determined beforehand that subjectivity and subjection/submission are, by definition, one and the same, it comes as no surprise that Foucault's differentiation between technologies of the self and of domination cannot be maintained, and that the self-conduct of individuals and their ideological integration into the *dispositif* of neoliberalism cannot be analytically distinguished. This is the systematic reason why the analysis of neoliberal leadership-techniques loses its critical edge: by removing the contradictions of socialisation under the antagonistic conditions of neoliberal capitalism, governmentality-studies can no longer identify where and how neoliberalism takes up and hijacks emancipatory elements of self-socialisation and self-conduct and integrates them in a modernised system of bourgeois hegemony.

The renunciation of analytical distinctions not only overlooks the contradictory dialectics of neoliberal socialisation, it also impedes the development of a sustainable concept of resistance. For Opitz, resistance is only conceivable as a 'border attitude' [*Grenzhaltung*], an 'operation at the margins' [*Randgang*], or an 'line of escape' [*Fluchtlinie*], which does no more than complement the *techne* of government.[72] 'Resistance' is thus necessarily restricted to small tactical displacements within the framework of domination and its hegemonic ideologies. Any attempt to formulate a 'global alternative to the existing conditions' is denounced as an illusory fallacy, because it would mean becoming entrapped in the utopian concept of subject-liberation so convincingly criticised by Foucault.[73] This corresponds to a notion of critique that needs to become as flexible as its objects and therefore has to renounce to any 'standpoint'.[74]

It very much looks as if 'governmentality-studies' tries to provide the existing dispersion and helplessness of social movements and the Left *vis-à-vis* neoliberal hegemony with a theoretical justification. Instead of looking for strategies to

70. Butler 1997, pp. 111–12.
71. Cf. *PIT* 1979, pp. 121 et sqq.
72. Opitz 2004, pp. 84, 164–5.
73. Opitz 2004, p. 84.
74. Bröckling, Krasman and Lemke 2000, p. 13.

overcome its weaknesses, it confirms and naturalises them. What this theoretical framework makes systematically inconceivable is the possibility of finding new coalescing points (like the *Occupy Wall Street movement*) and of building a counter-hegemony from below which is able to reclaim and reappropriate the elements of self-conduct that were hijacked and alienated by neoliberalism.

11.5. Towards an ideology-theoretical re-interpretation of 'governmentality-studies'

My theoretical criticism does not imply that governmentality-studies is without interest. By scrutinising management-literature for new leadership-concepts, they are dealing with a relevant, if partial, section of neoliberal ideologies. Their main methodological mistake is, similarly to Foucault, that they elevate the presentation of neoliberal self-description to an overall 'theory' and declare it to be an alternative to ideology-critique and ideology-theory. It is precisely by this overblown claim that a potentially useful phenographic reconstruction turns into a theoretical impasse, which plunges both the dimensions of domination and of self-socialisation into a grey, 'postliberatory' fog. The interesting question is therefore, whether and how such a *cul-de-sac* could be overcome by a critical ideology-theory.

With regards to such a critical reinterpretation, I would like to confine myself to three tentative theses:

1) Although there is much talk in 'governmentality-studies' about 'techniques' and 'technologies' (of power or of government), the authors are usually not interested in the technological development of computerised labour. I think the new leadership-techniques proposed in management-literature should be related to the mode of production in high-tech capitalism. When Gramsci described the 'forced elaboration of a new type of man' in Fordism, he conceptualised it as a 'psycho-physical adaptation to the new industrial structure'.[75] Accordingly, the neoliberal leadership-technologies are not just new 'constructions', but should be investigated as an integral part of the rapid transformations in the mode of production. What is new, for example, is that competition now invades the relations between singular departments of an enterprise so that the limits of corporations are perforated by multiple commodity-money relations.[76] What 'governmentality-studies' portrays as a shift towards 'self-conduct' is, then,

75. Cf. Gramsci 1971, p. 286; Gramsci 1975, Q1, §61, p. 72; Gramsci 1975, Q22, §2, p. 2146.
76. Cf. W.F. Haug 2003, pp. 75–6.

revealed as part of a contradictory subject-form in which the individuals are interpellated as autonomous subjects and at the same time kept in subalternity: self-responsibility, but for alien property, autonomy as self-subjection under one's own marketability.[77]

2) Whereas governmentality-studies establishes an extremely homogeneous model by which the discourse of self-activation seems to spread throughout the entire society without hindrance and inflection, an ideology-theoretical approach would analyse new leadership-techniques in relation to the social divisions of neoliberal capitalism. Whoever watched Ken Loach's film *Bread and Roses* about the Mexican working poor in San Francisco, or read Barbara Ehrenreich's classic book *Nickel and Dimed*[78] about the low-wage sector in the US, might have experienced some difficulties in identifying the subtle techniques of self-conduct, but would have encountered overwhelming characteristics of an outspoken 'despotism of capital'.[79] However, for Bröckling such a despotism is no more than a phenomenon of the past overcome for long.[80]

The alleged homogeneous efficacy of the neoliberal discourse of self-conduct results from a twofold methodical abstraction. Firstly, 'governmentality-studies' overlooks the fact that neoliberal class-divides also translate into different strategies of subjection: on the one hand 'positive' motivation, the social integration of different milieus, manifold offers on the therapy-market, on the other hand the build up of a huge prison-system, surveillance and police-control. The former is mainly directed towards the middle classes and some 'qualified' sections of the working class, the latter mainly towards the 'dangerous classes' (the concrete delimitations might vary considerably). According to Robert Castel, today's power is defined by a management that carefully anticipates social splits and cleavages: 'The emerging tendency is to assign different social destinies to individuals in line with their varying capacity to live up to the requirements of competitiveness and profitability'.[81]

Secondly, 'governmentality-studies' does not take into account the fact that even similar neoliberal interpellations may have different and even opposite effects in different 'milieus': the appeals to creativity and initiative might play a mobilising and constructive role in the formation of identities if they correlate to labour-conditions that actually require and bolster a certain (relative) autonomy and freedom; they tend to destroy agency and subjectivities if there are no, or very restricted possibilities to act. Neoliberal interpellations of 'empowerment' then

77. Cf. *Projekt Automation und Qualifikation* (*PAQ*) 1987, pp. 152 et sqq. and F. Haug 2003, pp. 610–11.
78. Ehrenreich 2002.
79. Marx 1976, p. 793.
80. Bröckling 2000, p. 139.
81. Castel 1991, p. 294.

have the effect of confirming the individual's lack of capabilities and 'worthlessness'. What Bourdieu analysed as the 'destiny-effect' among contingent labourers and marginalised youngsters[82] can be seen as the dark flip-side of the neoliberal interpellations of self-mobilisation and creativity. A complementary ideological effect could be described as the illusory 'opiate' of the excluded and marginalised: as Loic Wacquant shows in his study of a Chicago ghetto, the interviewees gave the same completely unrealistic but honestly believed statement that they would enrol in a college in the near future.[83]

3) Finally, 'governmentality-studies' needs to be reinterpreted on the basis of a subject-theory that takes seriously the agency of the individuals and their attempts at self-socialisation and self-conduct. The emergence of capacities to act is not to be equated beforehand with subjection.[84] Of course, this does not mean falling back on an 'essentialist' approach, which invokes the ahistorical notion of a benign and joyful 'essence' slumbering within humans, just waiting to emerge in a society without classes and state-domination (see above, Section 7.4.1.). Over and again, alternative and emancipatory movements are confronted with the task of distinguishing between aspects of alienated socialisation and cooperative self-determination – not once and for all, but ever anew in a given concrete conjuncture. A critical ideology-theory needs to grasp the contradictions between neoliberal discourses of self-activation and the submission to alienated relations of domination. It also needs the support of a subject-theory that is able to distinguish between neoliberalism's attractive promises of individualisation and its practical reductionism, which degrades freedom and individuality to private-egoistical forms of 'possessive individualism'.

Only with the help of such recurring and ever-new distinctions will it be possible to confront the hegemonic crisis of neoliberal capitalism, to break the appeal of neoliberal ideologies and to build a democratic-socialist counter-hegemony from below.

82. Bourdieu et al. (eds.) 1999, p. 63.
83. Wacquant 1999, p. 148 and n. 9.
84. Cf. Langemeyer 2004, p. 73.

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