UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI

FAKULTETA ZA DRUŽBENE VEDE

Simon Rajbar

Teoretični pristopi k študiji kritike ideologije

Theoretical approaches to the study of ideological critique

Ljubljana, 2013

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Simon Rajbar

Mentor: izr. prof. dr. Branwell Dubose Kapeluck

Somentor: red. prof. dr. Bogomil Ferfila

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Every extension of knowledge arises from making the conscious the unconscious.

Friedrich W. Nietzsche

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Pričujoča magistrska teza se ukvarja z različnimi teoretskimi pristopi k študiji kritike ideologije. Pri tem sledi razvoju različnim filozofskim konceptom skozi čas ter obenem zrcali vprašanje posameznikov v ideologiji. Besedilo analizira različne pristope različnih avtorjev k ideologiji, njenim posledicam in načinom njenega dešifriranja. Pri vsakem avtorju so razložene njegove misli in koncepti, kot tudi njihove prednosti in slabosti, ki jih s pridom uporabimo pri grajenju moderne kritike ideologije. Osnovni koncept ideološke kritike prihaja od Karla Marksa, ki ga je nadgradil Antonio Gramsci z idejo hegemonije. Kljub temu pa nihče od njiju ni ponudil zgoščene razlage ideologije kot sistema, kar je v veliki večini naredil Theodor Adorno in Frankfurtska šola. Za analizo napačne zavesti kapitalističnega sistema so uporabili Marksov koncept blagovnega fetišizma ter nakazali, da je ideologija več kot le zunanja dimna zavesa, ki nam izkrivlja realnost. Skupina je v svoje delo začela vpeljevati različne teorije družbenih ved, še posebej pa so bili naklonjeni psihoanalizi. Iz takšnega kombiniranega pristopa je izšel tudi Louis Althusser, ki je kritiki ideologije dodal še ideje strukturalizma. Vsi omenjeni koncepti pa so najverjetneje najbolje artikulirani v sodobni kritiki ideologije izpod peresa Slavoja Žižka, ki se v svojem delu naslanja na filozofijo Georga W. H. Hegla ter psihoanalizo Jacquesa Lacana.

Ključne besede: Ideologija, napačna zavest, Althusser, psihoanaliza, Žižek.

Theoretical approaches to the study of ideological critique

The following thesis deals with different theoretical approaches to the study of ideological critique. It follows its development through different philosophical concepts in time, while its reflected question is the position of individual in ideology. The text is concerned with theoretical approaches of different authors to the concept of ideology, its influence and the ways of deciphering them. Each author is individually studied, pointing out their weaknesses and advantages, in order to explain and build up a modern concept of ideological critique. The basic conception of ideology comes from Karl Marx and was elaborated by Antonio Gramsci through the concept of hegemony. However, they did not offer a concise explanation of ideology as a system, which was taken over by Theodor Adorno and the Frankfurt School of thought. They applied Marx's mechanism of commodity fetishism to explain the distortions in the capitalist system and suggested that ideology is more than an external smoke screen, distorting our reality, as Marx has suggested. The group began to merge other fields of study in their work, especially that of psychoanalysis. From this expanded approach, Louis Althusser mixed it with the ideas of structuralism and derived a powerful account of ideology, which ideas are still relevant today. All these concepts are perhaps best articulated in the present work of Slavoj Žižek, who leans on the traditions of before mentioned authors and applies to them the philosophy of Georg W. H. Hegel and psychoanalytic insight of Jacques Lacan.

Key words: Ideology, false consciousness, Althusser, psychoanalysis, Žižek.

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1. Introduction

Throughout the history, human beings are connecting into ever bigger societies, creating a set of interwoven and interacting, written and unwritten rules by which societies live, function and develop. Different types of their organisation demand different measures and mechanisms to sustain it. Thinkers have also been puzzled by the workings of the states, regarding their relationship to its citizens and each other. Without a clear idea people often talk of *systems*, *governments*, *institutions* or even *them* in regard to political and economic spheres of society. The basic idea of a central government comes from Thomas Hobbes (1588−1679), who published *The Leviathan* in 1651, though liberal democracy was not exactly what he had in mind at the time (Cohen 2001, 52, 61). The idea of a social contract was later elaborated by other Enlightenment philosophers, who sparked an array of state systems, which have culminated into today's versions of democracies. The concept of ideology has many precursors, most notable in writings of Francis Bacon and his book *Novum Organon* (1620). There he argues for a rigorous scientific approach to the world, clear of connotations such as "idols", "phantoms" or "myths". The term *ideology* itself was coined by Destutt de Tracy in the aftermath of the French revolution (MacKenzie in Eccleshall 1994, 2,3). For de Tracy, ideology referred to the science of *ideas*, where one could objectively uncover and understand its origins (Heywood 2007, 5).

Such a conception of the term has little to do with today's meaning, which was launched by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in *German Ideology* (1864). Contrary to Enlightenment thinkers, Marx and Engels did not see ideology as an application of timeless truths, generated by abstract reasoning (MacKenzie in Eccleshall 1994, 5). For them ideology represented an inverted mirror image, a *camera obscura* of the material world, embodied in the famous class struggle. Ideology played a role of a smoke screen, smoothing over those contradictions by making them appear necessary, normal and adequate, thus strengthening social unity. Ideology was a sublimation of material life, advocated in religion, morality and metaphysics (Freeden 2003, 5). While Marx and Engels have set forth the basic coordinates to approach the study of ideology, they did not offer a systematic analysis of the system. Their theory was perhaps developed furthest by Antonio Gramsci, who argued that the capitalist class system establishes domination not only by unequal economic and political power, but also by the strength of ideas and theories, which he termed *hegemony*. With those ideas the

ruling class can displace rival views and become the common sense of the age. He adopted the view of class struggle from Marx and challenged the bourgeois hegemony on political and intellectual levels with the establishment of the rival hegemony (Heywood 2007, 7).

Other important authors, such as Karl Mannheim, added the sociological and psychological dimensions to ideology. Mannheim also contested that a feature of any social environment is to influence the thought process, deciphering ideology as a product of historical and social circumstances. That also meant there are competing ideologies and the outcome of his approach was the establishment of a more scientific approach to politics (Freeden 2003, 12, 13, 17, 19). However, Gramsci's idea to achieve stability through the manufacture of legitimacy, proved to be in particular concern of the Frankfurt School, which saw the working of ideology as creating false needs to paralyse criticism (Heywood 2007, 8). They developed a so-called *critical theory*, which is a blend of Marxist political economy, Hegelian philosophy and Freudian psychology (Heywood 2007, 127).

The milestone in the field of study was probably made by Louis Althusser in his essay *Ideological Apparatuses of the State*. Emerging from the tradition of structuralism, he added another crucial feature in the development of ideological criticism, by positioning the individuals as the bearers of functions that arise from their structural location (Heywood 2007, 127). He was heavily influenced by Lacan and his concepts of psychoanalysis, elaborated from Freud's work. In later times, particularly with the fall of communism, but before as well, the idea of end of ideology emerged in the West from authors such as Daniel Bell and Francis Fukuyama. According to the latter, subjects are devoid of any ideological concerns realised in the structures of liberal democracy (MacKenzie in Eccleshall 1994, 8), where people do not live in spheres of antagonisms. This is the view that is challenged today by Slavoj Žižek and his contemporaries, which is the area of our interest together with Althusser. As to the latter, Žižek is influenced by psychoanalysis and though not a self-declared Marxist, he frequently uses their theoretical models.

There are of course many more authors who have contributed to the development of ideological critique. However, these above represent a certain line of thought, through which we will approach the study, although not all of them will be discussed in detail and new views will be added. Due to the sheer size of the topic, it would be impossible to gather all the debates and thoughts contributing to the development of such critique.

1.1. Relevancy, aims and meaning

Although ideology appears as a very narrow field of study, it can be analysed with a variety of authors and theoretical traditions. While much research has been done on the issue of political emancipation, ideology on the other hand has seen far less attention. The connotation of the word itself carries an emotional charge, connected with associations of derogative "ism" terms, like communism or fascism. We can rarely find a word in political language that has created such misunderstanding and renunciation. In everyday life ideology serves as a sort of political and social map of the world, through which we produce competing interpretations of the facts around us. Each of those interpretations imposes a certain pattern on how we read and misread political facts, events, actions and even images or voices. Those patterns form information with rhyme and reason into a comprehensive explanation of the world around us and play a central feature of political life (Freeden 2003, 2, 3).

The following analysis deals with the workings of political ideology from early capitalism to liberal democracies, studied through political theories and supported by psychoanalysis. Since we use psychoanalysis as a tool for analysing individuals, it is necessary to demonstrate how these mechanisms are applied to the political spectrum. For that reason we will follow the evolution of the concept of ideology through a certain line of thought from its conception to present thinkers and their critics. The essential understandings of Marxist ideology theory, later elaborated by western Marxist scholars, will be separated and analysed by showing how they were developed and applied further in different theoretical schools and traditions. By presenting their concrete theories we will gain insights into the particularities of each tradition and author, whose ideas culminated into the theories of ideological critique today. The line of thought will run therefore from one author to another, explaining their view of ideology, as well as what would be its opposite, how they influence individuals in political and social spheres and how to combat or overcome them, while merging those views with the concepts of previous authors.

It is the aim of this thesis to gather the theories of ideology in context and subject them to critical examination. By building and dismantling these theoretical approaches, we can contribute the next step to the theories of today. With that knowledge we can demonstrate on what ground, how, and to what avail, ideological mechanisms work. We will use this

theoretical model to analyse the coordinates of modern societies, to have an approximate idea where our present society stands, and more importantly, where it is heading.

1.2. Conceptual framework description and hypothesises

Ideological critique in its Marxist origin has claimed to reveal hidden truths about the nature of ideas, but today the difference between truth and illusion is itself shaded, since separation from any connotative articulation did not expose and reconstruct reality as a whole (Eagleton 2007, 10,11; Laclau 2011, 9; Simons and Billig 1994, 2). The predominant position today stipulates that we live in a post-ideological world, where things are pragmatically clear with the access of objective knowledge. Although the end of ideologies has been declared with the fall of the Berlin Wall (Žižek 2010, 161; Jameson 2006, 82), we will show that ideology today is very much alive and present. By following the idea of end of history, we like to imagine ourselves as completely free individuals and automatically place ourselves outside of ideological coordinates, which is unwittingly an ideological gesture in itself (Eagleton 2007, 5). The paradox of stepping out of ideology is the very form of our enslavement to it, as it poses as non-ideology, but possesses all the standard features of it (Žižek 2012, 6). Althusser in his *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* has already warned that a subject in ideology always functions for someone else and is as such a proof of ideology, especially for those that claim to be outside of it (Althusser 1971, 176). He asserts that one of the basic characteristics of ideology is that something is *self-evident* where the subject does not need an additional explanation since everything is clear (Klepec 2008, 27). With that in mind, we need to understand what mechanisms work on an individual level and how.

Consequently, the critic cannot unreflectively use the traditional language of philosophical argumentation and sciences, for these have become ideological (Simons and Billing 1994, 5). That said, the inevitable question of the relevancy of ideological critique comes to mind, since ideology resides in the very use of the term. With the aim of analysing ideological critique in Marxist tradition, we encounter an epistemological moment in the research. At this point, a careful resistance to epistemological certitude is in order, to avoid falling into the dogmatic circle of ideology, for there are possibilities of self-reflexive emancipatory critique (Simons and Billig 1994, 10). It is possible to assume a place that enables a distance from it, under the condition, that this place remains empty of any positively

determined reality. This is the temptation that pulls us back into ideology (Žižek 2012, 17). Hence, we do follow a certain philosophical line of thought and its origin, where criticism is not only welcomed, but also necessary. The knowledge of political and sociological sense of ideology is added as the medium in which people fight their social and political battles at the level of signs, meanings and representations (Eagleton 2007, 11). If we accept a scientific approach of study and with it the elimination of pre-established connotations, three essential consequences follow from this change of view: firstly, not every concept has a necessary relation with the other; secondly, relations between different conceptual structures cannot always be passed from one to another by purely deductive process; and therefore thirdly, any approximation to the concrete carries an increasingly complex conceptual articulation (Laclau 2011, 10). In other words, the more concrete the analysis, the more theoretical determinations it includes in a progressive process of purification. Therefore it is better to approach the critique of ideology from a theoretical point of view, whereas it is also important to understand the consequences and relations between theory and practice, as we shall see.

The research problem of the thesis is focused on the disparities between theories, perceptions of ideologies, our action and reaction to it and the consequences of such conduct. Ideology today works through subtle mechanisms, but the question of how we are engaged in ideological practices and manifestations remains. Since the matrix of ideology "regulates the relationship between visible and non-visible, between imaginable and non-imaginable, as the changes in this relationship," (Žižek 2012, 1), it is not enough to see discourse as something limited to speech, as speech is more or less occasional. Certain relations are established through language where something additional can be inscribed, which goes beyond speech (Lacan 2008, 9). In this regard we will focus on explaining the interconnections between ideology, institutions and subjects.

The constitution of a subject in a certain environment, or as Lacan calls it *"subjectivisation"*, is a process in which the big Other, a symbolic structure such as language, culture or institutions, moulds the individual. In the process of becoming a social being, there is a moment of *irrational choice* (Lacan in Salecl, 2011, 103), that we are forced to make. To say it with Freud, the individual is not only a product of external forces (like family or society), but also a creator of his or her reaction to those forces. Those reactions are not completely rational choices, but more decisions made on the level of the unconscious (Salecl

2011, 103), in order for the subject to function in the environment. By being a part of a certain society, we have to identify the Sense of the big Other – language, culture, institutions and basically everything that determines the world as we know it. That means the Sense is guessed on the reasoning of the environment (Salecl 2011, 105), producing antagonisms between the Real of our desire and the necessity of functioning. Here lies the task of postmodern critique of ideology: to show the elements within an existing social order which point towards the system's antagonistic character, and thus estrange us to the self-evidence of its established identity (Žižek 2012, 7). At this point we have reached the first thesis of this research.

Thesis 1: Ideology works and reproduces itself through mechanism of identification and subjectivisation in such a way that individuals do not only subordinate to its coordinates, but perceive that as natural and free conduct.

We have already learned from Althusser's innovation in the theoretical field that the term ideology names an object that simultaneously has objective and subjective dimensions. He holds that ideologies function first and foremost to create subjects, who experience their relation to the world in certain, politically salient ways (Sharpe 2006, 96). This was elaborated by Slavoj Žižek, claiming ideology can "designate anything from a contemplative attitude that misrecognises its dependence on social reality to an action-oriented set of beliefs, from the indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations to a social structure to false ideas, which legitimize a dominant political power," (Žižek 2012, 3). By taking the end of ideology into consideration, it then functions here by exiling the point of social incompletion, antagonism or rupture to a safely exterior site, leaving the phantasmatic appearance of totality (Brockelman 2008, 72). What inevitably follows from previous considerations and the first thesis is the question of origin and manifestation of ideology.

Thesis 2: Ideology does not work as something external, as a smokescreen, that we internalize, but on the contrary it comes as an externalized form of inner necessities to be able to predict, reproduce, explain and control the flow of events of political and social life.

1.3. Theoretical approaches and methodology

The fundamental presumptions of this thesis lay in the constructivist approach, with its basic idea of constructing a meaning in language with representative systems, such as signs and concepts. It is important that we do not confuse the *material* world, consisting of physical matter such as things and people, and the *symbolic* world. The latter involves symbolic practices and processes through which meanings and languages operate. While constructivists do not deny the existence of the material world, it is the symbolic sphere that conveys meaning, where we are using a language system or other systems to represent our concepts (Hall 2003, 25).

For the purpose of research and analysis of the theory we will use critical discursive analysis method (CDA), which allows a certain freedom of interpretation and at the same time a wider insight in the context and comparison of certain texts to the conditions in the society. With it we will analyse theoretical texts on the subject and apply them to examples of social activity involved in the reproduction of ideology. Postmodern discourse theory defines social phenomena as structured semiotically by codes and rules and can therefore be subjected to linguistic analysis by the usage of semiotic concepts such as signs, content, expressions, codes, interpretants and so forth (Schwandt 2007, 73). Therefore meanings are socially constructed. CDA is also a qualitative sociological method, dealing with critical analyses of texts and theories, the purpose of which is to reveal the actual conditions as a part of a wider context (Erjavec and Kovačič 2007, 41−43). It is an essential analysis undertaken in post-structuralism (Schwandt 2007, 72), a tradition from which many of the following authors in the research borrow ideas and concepts. CDA is a discourse analysis method, which systematically engages in research of the unclear relations between causality and discursive practices, events and texts as well as wider social and cultural practices. Its purpose is to investigate how those practices, events and texts are ideologically formed by the power relations in the fight for power. CDA also examines how unclear relations between discourse and society are itself a factor, providing hegemony and power (Fairclough 1995, 132).

1.4. Structure

This work consists of fragmented texts, articulated in interdependent relations into a discursive whole. The research is a discourse, establishing meaningful and consistent relations between each chapter, forming a variety of particular comprehensions. Introduction to the thesis consists of a theoretical introduction with the description of methodology and research approaches.

We will begin with the historical overview of ideological critique theory in Marxist tradition, to grasp its conception and meaning in later authors. We will continue more analytically through the theorists that evolved the Marxist thought into a theoretical model for critique of ideology. The focus will be on those authors that introduced the concepts of psychoanalysis in the theory and critically analyse their contributions to the subject. We will describe those particularities that will be emphasized as important building blocks of the later theories and work our way up to modern thinkers such as Terry Eagleton and Slavoj Žižek. Their notions will be also subjected to criticism with which we will try to show their relevancy in modern critique of liberal democracy and its mode of production.

2. The genesis: Karl Marx and the Marxists

2.1. They do not know it, but they are doing it − Karl Marx

We will present the basic stipulations and notions of early ideological studies that are significant for later development of ideological critique. We must bear in mind that the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels must be read in the historical context of the industrial revolution. Redefined organisation of production processes in factories at the time caused masses of available labour force to start gathering in the cities for the prospect of work. This class of labourers was labelled as "proletariat" in Marxists terms and faced a new type of exploitation by the "bourgeoisie" in a capitalist production system. Marx and Engels stressed the importance of economic production and product exchange, since that represented the fundamental basis from which the social organisation of the whole society necessarily followed in each historical epoch. That also shapes the organisation of political structures of society, along with intellectual beliefs and ideas, culture and religion. In this view, economy determines social life and sets political positions (Cohen 2001, 116; Marx 1976, 24), meaning that the class that is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time the ruling its *intellectual* force (Marx and Engels in Augoustinus 1999, 298).

This view contradicts the German philosophical idealism of Immanuel Kant and Georg W. F. Hegel, who explained that the true essence of being is outside of materiality, since we are living in the world of ideals (Sparks 2004, 219). Marx argued that idealism as philosophy merely fought against phrases, but left the "real" world unchanged (Freeden 2003, 5; Vincent 1995, 4). Though heavily influenced, Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* reject Hegel's development of his "world-spirit", claiming that material circumstances are fundamental to all form of social and historical development (Heywood 2007, 119). However, Marx embraced Hegel's idea of *dialectics* as the driving force of historical change, seeing progress as the consequence of internal conflict. Hegel described dialectics as the progress of the "world-spirit" towards self-realization through conflict between thesis and its opposing force, the anti-thesis, producing a new synthesis on a higher level. Marx's contribution in this manner was to blend Hegelian dialectics with historical materialism, thus turning Hegel on his head. He was able to explain historical change by reference to internal contradiction within

each different mode of production, seeing the proletariat as the antithesis and consequently as the destroyer of capitalism (Heywood 2007, 120).

Marx argued that since materiality is the basis of human life it is humans that are developing this material production. As new production sparks new material circumstances, this reality can also change the products of their thinking in due process. On this account morality, religion, metaphysics and ideology do not have a history, since we are producing and reshaping those meanings through material conditions of life (Marx 1976, 25; Vincent 1995, 4). If we consider that we are shaping our own beliefs from the material conditions of our world, and that the class ruling the material force is also an intellectual force, we arrive at the grim conclusion that our thoughts may have been manipulated by those powers who established the current set of beliefs and ideas. According to Marx, idealistic philosophy conceals reality and creates an ideology in an upside-down appearance of *camera obscura*. That analogy meant that ideology was an inverted mirror-image of the material world, further distorted by the fact that the material world was itself subject to dehumanizing, alienating social relations under capitalism. For Marx and Engels, ideology played a role of a smoke screen, creating a *false consciousness* that is smoothing over those contradictions by making them appear necessary, normal and adequate, thus strengthening social unity (Freeden 2007, 5; Marx 1976, 25). Ideology in *The German Ideology* is thus conceived as a pure illusion, a dream, nothingness. All its reality is external to it, making ideology an imaginary construction, whose status is like the theoretical status of dreams among writers before Freud. For them the dream is purely imaginary, merely a distorted result of the day's residues, which represents the full and positive reality. Ideology is then for Marx a pure dream, empty and vain (Althusser 1971, 160, 161).

In traditional Marxist theory, the relation between false consciousness and ideology is conceived in terms of the relation between social existence and social consciousness. It marks the relation between who one is and what one thinks. The concept is applied primarily to the bourgeoisie (Eyerman 1981, 44) and was used to describe the effects of ideological domination. It was suggested that through institutional control over education, religion, media, culture and economic systems, dominant groups in society were capable of spreading ideas which serve to justify inequalities of status and power. A consequence of this hypothesis is that those ideas which favour dominant groups tend to prevail in society (Jost 1995, 398).

Marx and Engels thus directed their assault on false consciousness and ideology against those intellectual ideologists who produced in their work a picture of reality that was distorted. Such distortion, conscious or not, served the interests of the dominant classes (Eyerman 1981, 44) in such a way, that disadvantaged groups reflected the interests of dominant classes, instead of their own. Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* argued that in history, people "have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be," and the call was sounded to "liberate them from the chimeras, the ideas, the dogmas, the imaginary beings under the yoke of which they are pining away" (Marx in Jost 1995, 398, 399). Ideology was therefore a sublimation of material life, advocated in religion, morality and metaphysics (Freeden 2007, 5; Gunder 2010, 300).

For example, an exploited worker at the time was convinced that underpaid, long-hour, dehumanizing work was an essential part of the industrial era. Since markets gave everyone an equal chance, it was a subject's responsibility to sell its labour for whatever price in order to sustain its material conditions that were central to one's sense of dignity. They saw it as freedom to get rich or die trying. Therefore crucial to Marxist theory is the division of labour (Vincent 1995, 4) by which human activity is broken up into separate compartments to alienate thought and action from each other. These external appearances became normal through ideological sleight of hand and through fetishizing commodities and the markets in which they circulated. Understandably, a later mission of Marxism was to unmask and demystify the nature of ideology and expose the false aspirations of its promoters (Freeden 2007, 7, 8). Taking the whole theory into account, a pervasive picture of ideological coordinates emerges. The need of simplified a world around us is almost immediately met by some individuals and social groups, struggling for control over this image and others. This concept will be developed next by Antonio Gramsci and part of it will be used in critical theory of the Frankfurt School.

2.1.1. Legacy

Marxist concept of ideology has some crucial features that moulded the further development of the term. One of those is Engels' concept of *false consciousness*, where ideology perpetrates a false or mistaken view of the world. Ideology is positioned in the

domain of class system, which is presented as an upside down *camera obscura*. There it serves as a manifestation of power, constituting the ruling ideas of the age (Heywood 2007, 6, 7). This is one of the most well-known as well as criticised concept within Marxist social theory for being economically too determinist and reductionist. For that reason later Marxist theory emphasised the need to explain economic as well as the non-economic interrelations that are shaping the society's ideological form. Marx's early writings emphasized the illusory role of ideology, where it was equated with false, mystifying or distorting knowledge, which conceals social conflicts by embodying ideas, values and language which justify the existing social order in a capitalist state. This is how the ideology of freedom and equality in capitalist system is reinforced by the individual's experience of free exchange in the market (Augoustinus 1999, 298). This is why ideology was a temporary phenomenon for Marx, which will continue as long as the class system that generates it survives (Heywood 2007, 7).

But Marx was not at all concerned with the examination of such mistaken ideology, since it represented an unfortunate smokescreen. Getting rid of such distortions meant the truth will emerge and the society will be able to form a democratic sense of social community and equality (Freeden 2007, 8). But that could only be possible if we have access to undistorted forms of the world. Many critics oppose Marx by saying that he himself occupies a stance inside ideology, since according to him ideology is dispensable and is merely a pathological product of historical circumstances, which need to be improved. Another disputable feature of Marxist ideological critique is its unitary character, where ideologies are a part of a single, total account of the political world, presiding over its internal contradictions (Freeden 2007, 9). The role of ideologists may as well be too great in Marx's writings, since the promoters of ideologies are not considered to be a class of plotting elite (Freeden 2007, 10).

We understand ideologies today as the product of groups, as a part of the cultural milieu that shapes and is shaped by our activities. This is possible because we have accepted the Marxist position of social and historical circumstances as moulders of political and other ideas (Freeden 2007, 10). He also showed that ideas are not merely rhetorical, but can have significant implications and need to be taken seriously. If they represent a certain ideology, they have the power to order the social world, direct it towards certain activities and legitimize or delegitimize its practices. Ideologies exercise power by creating a framework in

which decisions can be taken with much sense. Last but not least, his writing helped even the non-Marxists to simply understand, that what we see is not always what we get. If we wish to understand ideologies, we need to accept that they contain certain levels of hidden meanings, structures, motives and contexts for their consumers and many times also their producers (Freeden 2007, 11). A variety of other theoretical approaches and models originate from the ideas of Marxism. We will be returning to them throughout the text and explain them as we proceed.

2.2. How ideology came to stay – Antonio Gramsci

After Marx, theoreticians such as Vladimir Lenin and György Lukács added their own views and developments of his theory. At the same time, Karl Mannheim introduced sociological and psychological features to ideology, with his "sociology of knowledge". Hoping for a more holistic, scientific study of ideology, he was dealing with the sociological character of ideology, arguing ideas as directed to social practice. A connection between this view and the epistemological issue of its falsity will later be made, as no thought or idea is not socially determined (Eagleton 2007, 50, 51). But it was Antonio Gramsci who made the greatest contributions to classical Marxist thought, adding crucial theoretical features to the concept of ideology. While there is much to discuss over Gramsci's theories, we will focus more on his contributions to the ideological critique, like his notion of *hegemony* and utilization of *false consciousness* through ideology.

Gramsci, like Lukács, followed the teachings of Hegel, but in doing so, both remained faithful to Marx's interpretation and reformulation of his philosophy. Gramsci was also fighting against economic determinism as the exclusive influence on ideology and continued to take the view on the falsity of idealistic philosophy regarding the individual. He insisted that ideology must be read as organized forces with psychological validity, since it is creating a terrain on which men and women act, struggle, acquire consciousness and social positions. On this point he distinguished between necessary, historically organic ideologies, and arbitrary ideologies of individuals. These psychological features made Gramsci unique in some ways to the Marxist tradition (Barrett 2012, 236; Eagleton 2007, 117; Eyerman 1981, 46; Vincent 1995, 7).

Gramsci sought to explain how the ruling class reproduces and imposes its ideas to the subordinate classes. He termed this process *hegemony*, where bourgeois ideas subtly displace rival ideas. Domination is thus based on the consent, not force, from those it subjugates and becomes the common sense of the age, thus dominating language, morality, intellect and culture (Eagleton 2007, 112; Gunder 2010, 300; Heywood 2007, 7, 127; Vincent 1995, 7). Hegemony establishes domination by diffusing one's own view of the world through fabric of society as a whole, thus seeing one's own interests as the wider interests of the society (Eagleton 2007, 116). Here Gramsci shares the same position with Marx on the subordinated classes. The ruling bloc does not operate strictly in the political sphere, but also in the less systematic levels of consciousness and apprehension of the world. Through "popular" knowledge and culture, ideology developed a way to secure the participation of the masses in the project of the ruling class (Barrett 2012, 238; Gunder 2010, 300).

This bourgeois hegemony, according to Gramsci, could only be challenged at the political and intellectual level with the establishment of a rival, proletariat hegemony (Heywood 2007, 7), clearly aiming at the aspects of ideology as a form of political doctrine (Vincent 1995, 7). However, later critics of Gramsci emphasize, he was mistaken to locate hegemony only in "civil society" rather than in the state. The political form of the capitalist state is itself a vital organ of ideological power, as Althusser has later elaborated in state apparatuses. Terry Eagleton argues that a wide notion of hegemony can be thus separated into various ideological, political, cultural and economic aspects, where the power struggle is fought on the level of signification in all hegemonic processes (Eagleton 2007, 113).

For Gramsci, hegemony in the arena of "civil society", by which he means the institutions between the state and economy, binds the individuals by consent, rather than by coercion (Eagleton 2007, 114). The state for him was not merely a set of legal and political institutions, but also reflected social conditions among its society members (Eyerman 1981, 46). Although any kind of political organization needs at least a basic form of consent, it is particularly important for a capitalist state, since the people must consent to its "legitimate violence" (Eagleton 2007, 114). The state here acts as a symbol of a thoroughly ingrained and legitimate form of domination (Eyerman 1981, 47). This is how domination remains in place and the state can use violence to preserve it, but with it, it risks a drastic loss of ideological credibility. It is more convenient for a power to remain rather invisible and spread itself

through the texture of social life. This way we "naturalize" certain dominating social patterns as a custom, habit or spontaneous practice, since their power exposure can lead to political contestation (Eagleton 2007, 116).

Since the existing social order enjoys the support of the population, different tactics to sustain the unquestioned hegemonic order are needed. This relation between civil society and the state leads to Gramsci's concept of ideology as the "social cement", manufacturing consent on a non-violent level, drawing culture and society into increasing conformity with the needs of capital. Through different institutions and mechanisms, such as education, family, morality or law, capitalism is creating new types of patterns in those very same aspects of life (Barrett 2012, 239, 240). A direct attack on such a state would only bring failure as well as the anger of the masses, which is why Gramsci opposed bourgeois hegemony with the proletariat hegemony. The power of such state is so strong it could only be replaced by a power of similar constitution. The role of *false consciousness* here is vital for preserving the old order or establishing a new one. Any progressive social change should in Gramsci's view re-educate and transform the false consciousness that makes hegemonic rule possible. Such consciousness was not false because it identified its own particular interests with those of the ruling classes, but rather because it blended an understanding of the origins of its oppression with myth and folklore. The false consciousness was then not so much in the domain of the bourgeoisie, as Marx puts it, but with the working class (Eyerman 1981, 47), since it was this consciousness that needed to be re-educated. With the hegemonic base eroded from within, such a state would collapse under its own weight rather than through a direct attack.

Gramsci also separated false consciousness from the bigger notion of ideology. He defined the view of the oppressed groups as a mixture of true insight into their oppression and forms of rebellion against it, and a false consciousness about both the origins and the proper means to alter that oppression. Ideology, on the other hand, referred both to those socially constituted systems of explanations that would legitimate that oppression, as well as those that would transform it into revolutionary consciousness and activity (Eyerman 1981, 48). "The difference between thought and action /.../ signifies [that] the relevant social group (working class) has its own conception which manifests itself in action /.../ when the group is acting as an organic totality. But this same group has, for reasons of submission and intellectual

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subordination, adopted a conception which is not its own, but is borrowed from another group," (Gramsci in Eyerman 1981, 48). In short, he applies false consciousness to forms of experience and action and ideology to "offered" explanations for experience and action. False consciousness is therefore not merely an "internalization" of ideologies such as religion, but also a life practise and culture of social groups.

Gramsci makes the crucial transition from ideology as "systems of ideas", to ideology as lived, social practices, which must then presumably incorporate the unconscious, vague social practices and workings of formal institutions (Eagleton 2007, 115). For him the consciousness of the subordinate groups in society are divided and uneven, usually around two conflicting conceptions from the official notions of the rulers and the practical experience of social reality. We can observe this in a "performative contradiction" between what dominating power says as an "organic totality" and on the other hand, what it reveals through its behaviour in practical ideas of ruling. One of the ideological practices should therefore be to point out the implicit practical understandings of the oppressed (Eagleton 2007, 118). To do so, Gramsci suggests a mechanism of "common sense", where we combat the negative empirical consciousness of the people (Eagleton 2007, 119). Common sense is not a single conception, identical in time and place, since it questions the given order. Its character is matching the character of philosophy when it is examining homogenous social groups in what is then a common sense. Common sense is a disorderly aggregate of philosophical conceptions, where one can find whatever one likes (Gramsci 2011, 333, 334). It is half-way between properly speaking folklore, philosophy and science. It is creating the folklore of the future, which is on the whole politically backward, but is different from philosophy at the same time (Eagleton 2007, 119).

Louis Althusser, for whom ideology is largely unconscious and always institutional, will incorporate both these views as well as pick up the concept of hegemony as lived process of political domination. Gramsci also had a significant influence on Ernesto Laclau (Gunder 2010, 300: Eagleton 2007, 115).

3. Theodor Adorno and the Frankfurt School

In the next step to ideological critique, we will briefly examine the contributions of the Frankfurt School of thought, especially that of Theodor Adorno and some of his followers. We will not analyse the entire academic tradition, but merely the concepts that show a clear connection with the previous concepts of ideological critique, their contribution and relevancy today. The Frankfurt School of thought provides a rich material for the sociology of knowledge, crossing the boundaries as a Marxist think-tank between a variety of different disciplines. The thinkers of that school produced a blend of innovative radical philosophy and social science called the *Critical theory*, which is a blend of Marxist political economy, Hegelian philosophy and Freudian psychology. They argued for a concept of ideology based on the material or, in Adorno's case, an ideology of identity, rather than the idealist or metaphysical consciousness, or Manheim's intellectual spirit. It influenced contemporary sociology, literature, film, and cultural studies, as well as some intellectuals connected with the New Left (McLaughlin 1999, 110, 111; Heywood 2007, 127; Gunder 2010, 301).

Theorists of the school were concerned with the failure of class consciousness and revolution in the face of Fascism. With critical theory they attempted to link the economic with cultural and ideological analysis to explain why the revolution did not occur as Marx had expected it. The Frankfurt theorists believed that Marx underestimated the extent to which false consciousness could be exploited to keep social and economic system in hegemonic position. According to them, the existing capitalist system depends on false consciousness, suggesting to people that the current social order is not only rational but also inevitable. False consciousness is explained in this tradition with the help of the famous Marx's mechanism of *commodity fetishism*, meaning the mystification of labour process (Agger 1991, 107, 108; Eyerman 1981, 52, 53). Marx has explored this notion in the Volume One of the *Capital*, where he argues that in capitalist society, the actual social relations between human beings are governed by the apparently autonomous interactions of the commodities they produce. This notion has been well developed by later Marxists and we shall describe it here for the future reference and development. To start with Marx:

> The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these

things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labour as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. /…/ It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy we must take flight into 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 labour as soon as they are produced as commodities, and is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities (Marx 1982, 164, 165).

Commodity fetishism means that the *value* of commodity in the network of social relations assumes a quasi "natural" property of another commodity – money. The value of one commodity itself can then only be defined with the reference to another, second commodity, which thus becomes its equivalent. The second commodity then becomes the mirror value of the first. Following this logic, we see that the feature of commodity fetishism does not mean the replacement of men with things (Žižek 1989, 19), but mystifies real human relations as relations between things (Eagleton 2007, 85). The fetish character of commodities is not inscribed in the subjective false consciousness as we may think, but objectively deduced out of the social conditions, from the process of exchange. Already in Marx there is a difference between the prevalence of the object as something to be critically established and its remnants in the existent, its distortion by the commodity form. Exchange, as something which happens in reality and is nevertheless objectively untrue, violates its own principle of equality. That is the reason why it necessarily creates false consciousness, the idol of the market. Reification itself is the reflection form of false objectivity. The natural rootedness of exchange society mockingly became a law of nature in the primacy of the economic (Adorno 1979, 165). Such appearances mislead the subjects into ascribing the social relationship of their production to things in themselves (Adorno 1979, 164).

In this sense commodity fetishism is the central mechanism for constituting the actual world around us and is not the product of a subject. Quite on the contrary, this mechanism is the origin of the subjective form (the fetish character of the subject) that succumbs to materiality (money, commodities). The mechanism of commodity fetishism is a way of social

constitution of the world, imposed by the logic of capitalistic order. That means a "voluntary" submission of subjects and objects through the form of exchange and the organisation of society as a commodity market. This is how formal submission of individuals, the labour force, the status of pure commodity, turns into a *real* submission (Holloway 2004, 49, 53). As we shall see later, Louis Althusser included this last thought in his concept of interpellation.

There are several ideological consequences following this explanation. The reality of social character of labour is concealed behind the articulation of commodities, which are no longer recognized as social products. Society is also fragmented by this commodity logic, so it is not easy to grasp it as a totality, making capitalist order less vulnerable to political critique. Finally, since the logic of society is dominated by dull material entities, it gives the social order a feeling of naturalness and inevitability, in which the society is no longer considered as a human construct and therefore cannot be changed by human measures (Eagleton 2007, 85). In other words, the naturalization of capitalist system as a social order is fetishised and mystified by collapsing social facts into natural ones.

The last point is a good example of how ideology and false consciousness are interwoven. The relevance of false consciousness explored by the Frankfurt School lies in the study of the beliefs of the working class as the object of their investigation and it blends Marxism with Freudian theory from the point of view of ideology. What the approach in general attempted to do was to explain how a worker's experience of capitalist society not only produced a false perception of interests defined economically, but also how this experience produced a "false" sense of self. False consciousness in their view is formed through something experienced, through cognition as well as emotion. On the other hand, ideology serves as an explanation and justification of such experience and is produced by other sources rather than the experiences of the individual, as it seeks shelter in distorted and false offered explanations. They are distorted because their role was to keep the individual caught in the false consciousness, while pretending to free him and further distort real understandings (Eyerman 1981, 53, 54, 55). The particular character of false consciousness in a society founded on commodity fetishism, is the inability to experience and recognize social relations as a historical accomplishment that can be transformed. Instead, people "falsely" experience their lives as products of a certain unchangeable social nature (Agger 1991, 107, 108).

Here we can also observe the difference between false consciousness and ideology, since the latter cannot be wholly reduced into the first. The idea of falsity lies in the notion of deceptive appearances, but these are less fictions of the mind than structural effects of capitalism. If capitalist reality folds its own falsehood within itself, then this falsehood must be real in some aspects. Ideological effects of commodity fetishism for example, have real consequences, no matter that it relies on mystification. Moreover, as Adorno has remarked, if capitalism has its own built-in devices of deception, making commodity is its own ideology, what is the need for specific ideological institutions at the level of the "superstructure"? (Eagleton 2007, 87, 88). To develop this logic further, the theorists of the school introduced a term labelled *domination,* which was explained with the mechanism of commodity fetishism. The term consists of a combination of external exploitation, embodied in Marx's extraction of worker's surplus value, thoroughly described in the *Capital,* and internal self disciplining, that allows external exploitation to go unchecked. The answer here is provided by the classical non-Marxist theory (Durkheim, Weber, Parsons). They explained that individuals are prepared to follow certain rituals, because they share common values and beliefs, which explain the world around them in a rational way. People internalize certain values and norms to effectively participate in the division of labour. According to the Frankfurt School, these values function ideologically to obstruct people's imagination of what is really possible in a technological society. This *domination* must be redoubled in capitalism to divert people from the increasingly realistic prospect of an end to scarcity and long heavy labour. People are convinced to exchange their socio-political and economic liberties for "freedoms" of consumer choice (Agger 1991, 108, 109).

For Adorno the logic of this mechanism of abstract exchange is the very secret of ideology itself. According to him, commodity exchange is effective among things which are incomparable and so is ideological thought. Such thought consist of a binary opposition between the self or familiar and the sight of "otherness" that threatens to escape its own closed system and is then violently reduced to a reflective image and likeness. Adorno considers ideology as a form of "identity thinking", a hidden mechanism of rationality which transforms the uniqueness and plurality of things into a mere phantom of itself or excludes them beyond its borders for any cost. The opposite of ideology is then not truth or theory, but difference or heterogeneity. Ideology *homogenizes* the world, falsely equating different phenomena. To break it, Adorno suggest a concept of "negative dialectics" which tries to

include within the thought that which is heterogeneous to it, where the highest paradigm of such negative reason is art. Identity for him is then the primal form of all ideology, where our reified consciousness reflects a world of objects in their determined meanings (Eagleton 2007, 126), binding us to the "given" meaning and thus blinding us from the truth "what is more than it is". This "more" is not imposed on it, but remains, as what is squeezed out of it, immanent to it. Following the Hegelian logic, we can say that what individually exists, it is not simply for itself, but an other in itself and tied to others. To this extent, the non-identical would be the thing's own identity against its identifications (Adorno 1979, 143). Identity mechanism thus strives to suppress all contradictions and present a common truth in a sort of system of truth. Adorno sees the perfection of this process reaching its peak in the bureaucratic, administrative world of late capitalism. Much of the same can be said for Adorno's contemporary Herbert Marcuse, for whom ideology presents a "totalitarian" system which has processed all social conflicts out of existence (Eagleton 2007, 127). He fused Marx and Freud to stress the importance of Freud's pleasure principle for a utopian prescription for societal transformation. This prescription for enjoyment was asserted on the abolition of alienated labour and exploitation, replaced by non-instrumental technology and a re-eroticization, or sensuous revival of human beings, so as to turn the alienation of instrumental labour into sensuous and artistic play (Gunder 2010, 301).

The later philosopher of the Frankfurt School Jürgen Habermas follows Adorno in dismissing the concept of Marxist science and thus refusing to give any particular privilege to the consciousness of the revolutionary proletariat (Eagleton 2007, 128). But Habermas did not see much need for ideological critique and argued ideology is at its end in modernity, since modern culture has supposedly become incapable of tolerating ideological distortions. According to him, the socio-economic subsystems of validity are replacing ideology in late capitalism via colonization of commodification and bureaucratization (Gunder 2010, 301). Where Adorno suggests little more than art and negative dialectics against the ideological spectrum, Habermas turns to the system of language, with which such colonization should be dealt with. This represents an important contribution to ideological critique. Ideology for him is a form of communication, systematically distorted by power, a discourse which has become a medium of domination, legitimizing relations of organized force. For him ideology marks the point where the entire discursive system is deformed, as language is bent by the power interests. We must read this dominating inscription not as something external, but what comes

from our speech, so that ideology becomes a set of effects, internal to particular discourses themselves. A "successful" ideology is not one that is perceived as more powerful, persuasive, or legitimate than others, but rather by its capability of removing the rational ground of choosing between them, so it becomes impossible to think or desire outside the terms of the system itself (Eagleton 2007, 128, 129). If ideology is a distorted system of communication, then we must have some idea of what an authentic communication discourse is like. Habermas describes that with the concept of rational communication, of some "ideal speech situation", which is free of domination, rhetoric, authority or coercive sanctions. Since the temporary social and ideological domination prohibits such communication, we must find a way to transform this situation, which is for him a sort of participatory socialist democracy. To know the truth, we must change our political form of life, as the truth is deeply bound with social justice. Here we can observe the difference with the more senior members of the Frankfurt School, for whom society exists as reified and degraded, administrating contradictions out of existence (Eagleton 2007, 129, 130). The opposite of ideology for Habermas is also not exactly truth or knowledge, but a particular form of rationality known as *emancipatory critique*. It is in our interest to eliminate the unnecessary tensions in communication, otherwise the truth we need to construct the society, will be beyond our reach. Through emancipatory critique and self-reflection, we can bring these institutional constraints to our attention in order to be free (Eagleton 2007, 133). His analysis of distorted communication and its consequences are valuable insights into semiotic analysis of textual communication on the economic, social and political levels. On the level of ideology critique, it helps us to understand the importance of political texts, advertising, propaganda or cultural communication and its power relations.

3.1. Stepping out or stepping in the spiral of ideology?

According to Frederic Jameson, The Frankfurt School of thought created its lasting achievement through its vivid demonstration of the reification process of the subject under late capitalism. This process must be read in the time of their world, when the subject was still whole and autonomous, which is why their thought was labelled as regressive and nostalgic. As the name suggests, the Frankfurt School of thought originates from Germany, with many of its members continuing their work in the USA as refugees from Nazism (Heywood 2007,

127; Jameson 2003, 36, 37). Due to such experience, they simply projected the extreme ideological universe of fascism onto quite different structures of liberal capitalist regimes. Is it plausible to claim that all ideologies work on the identity principle, which is ruthlessly eliminating everything heterogeneous to it? If we look at the example of liberal humanism, it is of course to some extent deceitful and plays on the strings of its own hidden gain, but on the other hand it also creates space for plurality, variety, cultural relativity and concrete particularity. The ideological conditions of Western capitalist societies are more varied and self-contradictory by blending abstract and pluralistic discourses into various measures, than those the early theorists of the Frankfurt School have escaped from. Naturally, Adorno and his colleagues do not wish simply to replace identity with difference, but their insinuating critique of the tyranny of equivalence, leads them to demonize modern capitalism simply as a seamless, pacified, self-regulating system (Eagleton 2007, 128).

That said, the critique of Adorno by Wolfang Fritz Haug helps us to clarify lot of the above. He writes that Adorno simply refuses to take Fascism as an ideology in the proper sense of the word, as a "rational legitimization of the existing order" (Haug in Žižek 2012, 13). For Adorno, fascist ideology is no longer coherent as a rational construct that calls for conceptual analysis and ideological disproval. It no longer functions as a lie, necessarily experienced as the truth, which is a sign of a true ideology. As Adorno remarks, fascist ideology is not taken seriously even by its promoters, since its status is just made from manipulation, which is purely external and instrumental, while its rule ultimately relies not on truth but on extra-ideological violence and promise of gain (Žižek 1989, 27). Haug in his response demonstrates how this gesture is ideological as such. Such a liberal reading of Fascism does not imply an end of ideology, but misperceives its strength. In fascism, the rational argument that should provide ground for our acceptance of its authority is denounced in advance as liberal degeneration, which is the very resort of strength in its ideology. Such a call for submission from the other side is as well ideological (Žižek 2012, 14).

The Frankfurt School also made an overestimation of the dominant ideology theory in the later work. They see the capitalist society falling into materialistic decay from commodity fetishism, speech habits, political bureaucracy and technological thought. If reification can be seen everywhere, then it must include the criteria by which we judge it. In that case we would not be able to identify it at all, since the final alienation would be not to know that we were

alienated, with which the late Frankfurt School becomes impossible. To characterize a situation as alienated, is to point out the practices and possibilities which suggest an alternative to it and which can consequently become the criteria for our alienated position (Eagleton 2007, 46, 47). Similar point today is the argument against the "end of history" thesis, where we have great difficulty imagining an alternative to today's liberal capitalist democracy, but can nevertheless observe and produce different practices. Anyhow, as long as the kept political economy at the base of their critique, they were in the coordinates of ideological critique, where ideological distortion derives from "commodity form". The later developed notion of *Instrumental Reason* is no longer grounded on the concrete social reality, but conceived as a kind of anthropological constant, that would enable us to explain the social reality of domination and exploitation. *Instrumental Reason* no longer serves the critique of ideology, as it indicates an attitude that is no longer functional with regard to social domination, but serves as the foundation of the relationship of domination (Žižek 2012, 8, 9).

4. Ideological critique meets psychoanalysis

We have arrived at the intersection where two separate fields of study began to merge. Psychology has entered the field of political science and together they seek to explain and

explore new concepts, both praised and criticized by experts from both fields. As we learned, the Frankfurt School of thought merged Marxism with Hegel and Freud. On the other hand, a form of structural Marxism emerged from the writings of Louis Althusser (Heywood 2007, 127), who used Lacanian concepts of psychoanalysis in his theory. To understand their contributions to ideological critique, certain correlations and notions from psychoanalysis should be introduced and explained. In order to show how the two independently formulated fields of study could be interconnected, we must draw certain comparisons. The origins of this field may be characterized as "post-Marxist," since they still regard ideology as a means of sustaining collective power, but no longer on the basis of class alone, as we shall see later on. On the other hand, Louis Althusser uses the ideas of structuralism, but is at the same time critical of many approaches. Poststructuralists have emerged out of this approach, which challenges the fixity and universality of linguistic and political terms and structures. By the method of deconstructing the language, they endeavor to expose the misconceived distinctions and oppositions language establishes (Freeden 2003, 110). Such new insights are the result of a multitude of theoretical and political interventions going beyond classical concepts and deceptive evidence by deconstructing and redefining them (Laclau and Reiter-McIntosh 1987, 330). The writings of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan represent the central thoughts that were merged and expanded in the field of political science.

4.1. Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan and the political

Something of a Gramscian "common sense" would allow us a systematic analysis of ambiguities in Marxism that lead us to post-Marxist field of political reflection, though this is not yet the place to talk about their contributions and errors. Gramsci has already pointed out that ideologies are practically lived experiences, thus containing elements of the unconscious, as well as those of formal institutions. The ideas of the bourgeois in the superstructure aim at practical social goals, which the subjects carry out under the influence of false consciousness. Following his explanations, that means the sociological character of practical ideologies meets the epistemological issue of these ideas' falsity, since ideas are socially determined. In other words, an unbroken continuum between the theoretical and behavioral is being formed. Ideology should therefore not be seen as simply advocating social interests, but as *rationalizing* them (Eagleton 2007, 50, 51). Rationalization lies at the root of psychoanalysis,

as a "procedure whereby the subject attempts to present an explanation that is either logically consistent or ethically acceptable for attitudes, ideas, feelings etc., whose true motives are not perceived," (Laplanche and Pontalis in Eagleton 2007, 51). But to suggest ideologies are "rationalizing," is at the same time to imply there is something discreditable about them, something in the way they present the unimaginable, defend the indefensible, while cloaking some ill motives through ethical goals. Of course, in the same breath we have to add, that not all ideological discourse is necessarily of this kind, since there is no "true" or "false" ideology. Through this mechanism, ideology offers explanations and justifications for social behavior that would otherwise be inappropriate. It involves a conflict between conscious belief and unconscious motivation, though it should not be read as a general repression in the Freudian sense (Eagleton 2007, 52, 54).

Close to the notion of rationalization is also *legitimation* in a simple meaning of establishing one's interests as broadly as possible, rather than giving them a facade of legality (Eagleton 2007, 54). Marx and Engels have argued in *The German Ideology* that each class, assuming power from the previous class, must represent its interests as the common interests of the entire society, to win broad support. Those interests are always represented and framed in an ideal form as rational, universal and thus valid. It is not only important how one group or class sells itself to others, but also how they describe themselves to themselves. An important device of legitimating an ideology is therefore by *universalizing* and *internalizing* it. That is the reason values and interests are specific to a certain time and space and projected as basic ingredients of the entire humanity (Eagleton 2007, 56). This is the way an ideology becomes *naturalized* and successful, by pushing its concepts to be self-evident, natural and identified with the "common sense" of an age. Pierre Bourdieu calls this mechanism *doxa*, when an ideology is creating as tight a fit as possible between itself and social reality, closing the gap for critique (Eagleton 2007, 58). This is how *eternalization* became a generally acknowledged ideological procedure. In it, some historically limited condition is elevated in a contingent occurrence in the name of some higher Necessity, where we continue to deal with it to avoid the real issue. This is how senseless contingency is internalized, symbolized and provided with Meaning (Žižek 2012, 4).

A similar elaborated argument of "naturalization" of social reality is inspired by the linguistic theory of Ronald Barthes, where his notion of "myth" is closely linked to ideology.

He argues that semiology clearly shows that "myth has the task of giving an historical intention a natural justification and making contingency appear eternal," (Barthes 1972, 142), which is exactly the process of bourgeois ideology. Myth takes from the world a historical reality, defined as men have produced and used it and gives in return a *natural* image of this reality. Myth is thus according to Barthes the most appropriate instrument for the ideological inversions, which define our society. It turns the reality inside out, while its function is to empty this reality. It organizes a world without contradictions because it is without depth, where things appear to mean something by themselves. Barthes describes myth as "depoliticized speech," in the broad term of the *political* (Barthes 1972, 142, 143). "Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of a fact," (Barthes 1972, 143). What Barthes proposes here is the notion of ideology as the "naturalization" of the symbolic order. This thesis probably reached its pinnacle with Oswald Ducrot's theory of argumentation. Although he did not speak of ideology, his thesis has consequences for ideological criticism. He asserts that no clear line can be drawn between descriptive and argumentative level of language, since there is no neutral descriptive content. Every description or designation is already a moment of some argumentative scheme. These argumentative gestures are materialized and naturalized only if we apply them in an automatic "unconscious" way, since a successful argumentation cloaks the mechanisms of its efficiency (Žižek 2012, 11).

Jürgen Habermas also draw correlations between psychoanalysis and ideological critique through a system of language. He considers psychoanalysis as a discourse which frees us from systematically distorted communication and as such sharing common ground with the critique of ideology. Pathological behavior is thus roughly equivalent to ideology's "performative contradiction". In order to interpret these distorted discourses it is not enough to translate them, but to reconstruct them in regard to their conditions of origin and effect. To analyze distorted communication, whether in form of dreams or ideology, means to reveal the significance of its repetitions, omissions, voids and ambiguities (Eagleton 2007, 133). Therefore it is not enough to merely unscramble the distorted text. As Lacan has pointed out, "the distortion and/or dissimulation is in itself revealing," (Lacan in Žižek 2012, 26). According to him, what emerges from these distortions of actual representation of reality is

the Real, meaning the trauma around which social reality is built (Žižek 2012, 26), as we shall explain later in the chapter on Žižek's ideology.

If we can look at the social conditions which force a certain discourse into disguise and deception, we should be able to equally examine the repressed desires which introduce distortions into behavior or text of a dream. Both psychoanalysis and ideology critique focus upon the point where *meaning* and *force* intersect. Diverting the attention only to meaning would fail to show the concealed power interests by which these meanings are constructed. If we concentrate merely on what Freud calls the "manifest content" of the dream, it will blind us from the "dream work" itself, where the unconscious forces are most stealthily operative (Eagleton 2007, 134). Freud goes on to show that within those dreams we encounter the core of the Real, laying in the guise of a "dream within the dream", where it seems the distance to reality is redoubled. In the incomprehensible dimension of the Real we encounter the limit of social reality that has to be foreclosed, if the consistent field of reality is to emerge. Such reality emerges in the guise of the problematic ideology, a mirror reflection of "true" social life (Žižek 2012, 29, 30). Both dreams and ideology are in this sense "doubled" texts, interconnected through signs and power. In both cases it is important to consider the content in terms of its production, which places Freud's argument in line with Marx's material conditions in *The German Ideology.* If dreams cloak unconscious motivations in symbolic guise, then so do ideological texts (Eagleton 2007, 134). Although there is no clear line between ideology and reality, we must not fall into the trap of renouncing reality and considering it as symbolic fiction. Such a quick postmodern solution is ideology par excellence. What we are dealing with here is a paradox, where the surface of ideology is directly linked to, occupies the place of and stands for what is more real than reality itself (Žižek 2011, 17, 30).

There is another analogy between psychoanalysis and the study of ideology, which Habermas did not explore. Freud described the neurotic symptom as a "compromise formation", since within its structure two antagonistic forces uneasily coexist, reminding us of the antagonism offered by Hegelian dialectics. On the one hand we have the unconscious wish which seeks its expression and on the other the power of the ego, which is pushing this wish back into the unconscious. Like the dream text, the neurotic symptom thus reveals and conceals at the same time. On this point we can make a correlation to dominant ideologies,

which cannot be reduced to mere "disguises". If we consider the liberal ideology of the middle class on liberty and autonomy for example, it would be false to mark them as fiction, since they signify a real political victory over feudalism. On the other hand it also serves to mask the genuine oppressiveness of the bourgeois society. The "truth" of such ideology, as with the neurotic symptom, does not lay in concealment or revelation alone, but rather in contradictory unity they compose. What is revealed takes place in terms of what is concealed and vice versa (Eagleton 2007, 134). To say it with Hegel, each pole of this antagonism is inherent to its opposite and we encounter it at the very moment when we try to grasp the opposite pole for itself, when we want to see it "as such" (Žižek 2011, 3). To naturalize and utilize this ideological text, true or not, it must "pass through" the experience of the individual subject, if it is to be ideologically persuasive and effective (Eagleton 2007, 199). Gratificatory instincts that institutions produce are then either driven underground by the phenomena Freud calls "repression," or they are sublimed into metaphysical world views of different ideal value systems. These value systems help to compensate some real-life restrictions and thus serve to legitimate the social order, while channeling potential dissidence into illusory forms. This is how ideology functions in Freud's eyes. Like Jürgen Habermas, who was looking at neurotic patterns of behavior of social institutions, Freud admits these idealized world-views are not just mere illusions, but derive from genuine human desire, concealing a utopian core (Eagleton 2007, 133).

In this manner, Marxist often talk of "ideological contradictions" and "contradictions in reality", insinuating that ideological contradictions in some way reflect or correspond to contradictions in society itself. Nevertheless, it is true that an ideological discourse might be contradictory, but this is not because it reproduces the "real" contradictions in question. Quite the opposite, ideology tends to present what is positive about such reality, while repressing and masking the negative effects. As with the neurotic symptom of the subject, this repression is most likely to interfere from the inside of what is being articulated. This self-contradictory nature of ideology derives from its inability to authentically reproduce the real contradictions, since in this case such discourse would hardly be ideological (Eagleton 2007, 134, 135). What really matters here is not the asserted content, but the way this content is related to the subjective position from which it gains expression. We are in ideological space in a very non-transparent way, since the very logic of legitimizing the relation of domination must remain concealed to be effective. What ideology does in a way is to lie in the guise of the truth.

"Reality" itself is regulated by symbolic fiction that conceals the real of an antagonism, returning this Real in the guise of some horrible dimensions, as it is foreclosed from the symbolic fiction (Žižek 2011, 8, 26). In the search for meaning, we can be sure to find non-meaning at its roots, as cognition contains miscognition and illumination is overshadowed by certain blindness.

Considering all of the above, we can say that Freud's writings play a central role in the tradition we are examining, although the word ideology was seldom used in his work. According to him the mind itself consists of chronic distortion or alienation, where ideology finds is natural habitat. Our mind functions on basic structures, which we have built in the early stages of life. For example, an infant expels certain objects from itself under the so called pleasure principle, constituting an external world and "introjects" certain others to form the basis of an ego (Eagleton 2007, 176). This early decisive stage of identification, formation and molding of the self was elaborated by Jacques Lacan in what he calls *The mirror-phase* (Laclau, 2011, 100), where the subject perceives his own image as essentially split, foreign, other (Kristeva and Waller 1982, 87). This mechanism works similarly as the mechanism of *choice*, which we were describing at the beginning.

If we look at Freud's conception from a broader scale, we can say that culture in Freud's eyes is a matter of sublimation, compensation, and imaginary resolution, and it is quite close to an influential concept of ideology. But as Lacan has pointed out, Freud's own view of civilization is also ideological, especially in the context of the individual, where the ego emphasis on instinctual satisfaction was obviously biological in its orientation. Lacan nevertheless supports the view of Freud that in man there already is a division, a crack in regulation of life. We can observe this discontinuity between the world, including ourselves, and our representations of it (Zaretksy 1996, 163, 164). In his *Roman Discourse* (1953), Lacan defined his subject as "the trans-psychological character of the psychoanalytical domain" (Lacan in Zaretksy 1996, 164), whereby with "trans-psychological" Lacan meant language and culture as dimensions of the subject. We construct our reality through language, which is a distinct character of our attempt to symbolize the world around us. Through language we recognize others with specificity, but on the other hand it also dissolves the truth into language games, making it impossible to capture objective reality. Language according to Lacan is thus the key component to understand analysis as it also moulds our actions. The

complex manifestations driven by desire and the multiplicity of levels through which we act to achieve them, is placed in the categories of Imaginary, Symbolic and Real, to avoid one-sided, determined assumptions of the individual (Zaretsky 1996, 164). We shall briefly elaborate and explain this triadic dimension in the next chapter to point to its use.

Lacan regards the subject as a split between an empirical individual of experience who takes himself for granted without any self-reflection and an internal non-related void, of being "in itself" (Zaretsky 1996, 166). The first subject would then be a fool, someone that is not capable of a critical distance towards himself and does not see himself as product of symbolic and social determinants he is a part of. But on the other hand, just a deterministic view would be an exaggeration, since the subject could then be reduced to a void, an empty place, whose content is produced by others in the symbolic network of intersubjective relations (Žižek 1989, 46). A subject becomes a subject through intersubjectivity with the world, whereby the individual enters a chain of signification that applies a meaning clear to him and others. Outside of this signifying chain, no meaning is ascribed to the subject and the subject is "nothing", where this "nothing" is simply the void of non-relating. We constitute our subjectivity out of this void, as Freud has already suggested above. That means there is always a moment that resists symbolization or this signifying process through intersubjectivity. The Lacanian "Real" is meant to signal this moment (Zaretsky 1996, 166).

Consequently, all of our knowledge is carried out within this primary frame, formulated in the early stages of life, moving our ideas in the context of desire, as there is no thought or perception without the addition of the unconscious fantasy. False consciousness is therefore not affecting the intellect accidentally as a result of some mystification or false social interests. Quite on the contrary, false consciousness was there from very beginning, settled deep in the structure of our perceptions. Desire infiltrates our social conduct, causing it to falter and miss its goal (Eagleton 2007, 176). The ground of all our insight then is through some primary impermeable matrix, where the unconscious produces the ego, but must be necessary absent from it, for the ego to function effectively (Eagleton 2007, 177). This awareness of everyday life miscognitions was later vigorously pursued by Althusser, who applied Freud's theory detour via Lacan, to explain the ideological mechanisms of the state.

4.2. Legacy and critique of psychoanalysis in political sciences

The question of defining the relationship between psychoanalysis and ideological critique, as well as its effectiveness, still provokes many researchers. In political discourse the efficiency of an interpretative theory lies in the transformation of its truth. We can consider, for example, a political discourse that claims to reflect the desires of a social group or large masses. Throughout history we can observe how certain interpretations were reflected in political discourse, which gained a general consensus not because they interpreted the situation correctly, but merely because they reflected the essentially utopian desires of that majority. Such interpretation deals with desires, and even if it lacks reality, it does reflect the truth of those desires and is for that very reason utopian and ideological (Kristeva and Waller 1982, 86). If all of our knowledge comes from some self-obscurity, how can we hope to achieve insights that would set us free? The critique of ideology will always be marked by this paradox, where it must elude the slippery signifiers it examines, in order to understand them (Eagleton 2007, 177). To understand them through psychoanalysis brings up the drama of transference between the subject and the analyst, where the desires of the latter can have significant consequences on the result (Eagleton 2007, 136, 177; Kristeva and Waller 1982, 85).

Those constant factors of the human psyche and the discourse revolving around the void, which, as we have seen, is integral to meaning, needs a different variant of discourse to assume the function of interpretation. This is especially important when it comes to political discourse as the subject of analysis. No political discourse can pass into non-meaning, since its goal is interpretation, which Marx already explicitly stated before. Such an interpretation aims to transform the world according to our needs and desires (Kristeva and Waller 1982, 87), by which an action driven Marxist thought can also be labeled as ideological. Freud is at once with Marx here by saying pure analytical theory will not cure the patient, so the point is not to interpret his world, but to change it. For Marx the opposite of repressive ideology is not a revealing theory or alternative ideology, but political practice. For him theory is pointless unless it intervenes within actual experience. The truth that matters is the one that is constructed between the analyst and the patient, between the ruling political class and its masses. Like political practice, the analysis deals with some real-life experiences in which the practical relations of human subjects to those problems are transfigured (Eagleton 2007, 182,

183). The end result of psychoanalysis, as political discourse, could therefore be ideological. According to Kristeva, at this point we have arrived to the discourse of discourse, an interpretation of interpretation which still protects the psychoanalysts from the tempting fall back into nature state, by gaining some distance with the help of an interpretative device. However, the second step of such post-phenomenological analytic rationality perceives the incompleteness of interpretation itself, which is characteristic of all language, sign and discourse. This view prevents the closure of interpretation as a self-sufficient totality and at the same time, such perception constitutes the true life of interpretations (Kristeva and Waller 1982, 87).

We should also note that the subject of analysis in ideology is not a primary subject of drives, but a modern Cartesian subject of science, as Lacan has repeatedly pointed out (Žižek 2011, 29). Although the definition of the subject was greatly explored, there are still noteworthy concerns with the theory of the above authors. Freud saw the individual in the fight between his ruthless desire and the demands of the society. He has almost no conception of human society as a place of self-fulfillment as well as constraint, making his view of both the individual and the society typically bourgeois. The individual is rigorously pursuing his appetites, while the society and culture are merely fragile mechanisms, regulating and constraining these lusts. His theory universalizes a particular view of the human to a global status and much of the same on this topic can be said for Lacan. While his work undoubtedly offers some striking insights, the human subject is regarded as a mere effect of the mysterious, powerful Other, that defines even the concept of political emancipation. Another point is dismissing the importance of human history, which led to the disenchanting post-war ethos of "the end of history" (Eagleton 2007, 181, 182).

Another thing, noticed by Russell Keat and summarized by Terry Eagleton is the revealing mechanism of psychoanalysis, which is working through repressed or *forgotten* material, whereas ideology is more a question of something we never knew, rather than something we have forgotten. We must also note that in Habermas's view, the discourse of the neurotic is split off from public communication, while the "pathology" of ideological language belongs completely to the public domain (Eagleton 2007, 136). Can psychoanalysis still play a relevant role if we expand it from particular subject on the whole social phenomena? Furthermore, could psychoanalysis be the answer to support the Marxist theory

of ideology, accounting for the lack in Marxist thought? The main criticism of psychoanalytic intervention in social or political sphere is that it usually results in some theory of the "horde", whose subjects are dominated by a fear-loved leader on the basis of crime and shared guilt in the community. The answer to those critics arises again from psychology. Is not the relationship between the mass and its leader exactly the blind spot in the history of Marxism? It was this lack of failing to conceptualize and symbolize this foreclosed relationship that returned in the Real in the "cult of personality", personified by Stalin. This in no way means that psychoanalysis is limited in its scope to deal only with negative aspects of communities. In the reverse gesture, psychoanalysis also shows how we can break the circle of totalitarian closure (Žižek 2011, 29).

5. Ideology and the State – Louis Althusser

We are reaching a milestone in the study of ideology, as it is both a continuation as well as a break from the traditions we were examining. So far Marx's theory of ideology is theoretically insufficient and spreads out through different volumes of his work. Something

similar can be said for Antonio Gramsci, who was preoccupied with other concepts such as hegemony and intellect. Finally by the end of 1960's, the French Marxists philosopher Louis Althusser achieved a coherent study of ideology and its mechanisms. This study represents an important development of ideological critique and advancement of Marxism as such. Althusser fused the ideas of previous authors with different concepts from structuralism and Lacanian psychoanalysis, in order to explore different problems and paradoxes that are still relevant today. His essay *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* is a powerful and persuasive description of ideology and its mechanisms, which will later be blended with the knowledge we have attained so far into the present ideological critique.

We can quickly spot the continuity from previous ideological critiques, as Althusser takes the Gramsci's view of ideology as an actual lived process of political domination (Eagleton 2007, 115), as well as his less obvious features of historicism. Like Adorno and Habermas before him, Althusser too was wary of the reification doctrine, though he is an anti-humanist for other reasons and rejects the idea of alienated "essential humanity", which for him is ideological as well. Adding his anti-historicists stance, he also could not base his theory of ideology on a "world view", since he is sceptical of the conception of class subject (Eagleton 2007, 136). Althusser went on to identify symbolic meaning systems and practices as the central means by which relations of power and dominance are maintained and reproduced. Like Gramsci, he is interested in the consequences of these symbolic meanings and practices and not in their status as truth or falsity. Ideology for him represents patterns of behavioural practices and social rituals of the people living in certain contemporary institutions and not just their beliefs and representations (Auguostinus 1999, 300). We shall proceed with the examination of the text, as it describes the working of ideology in more concrete, transparent way, before we devote our time to critique. It is important to understand his philosophical views and his ideas on how ideology functions if we wish to make the leap forward to the ideological critique of today.

5.1. Ideological State apparatuses

We could roughly divide Althusser's essay into two main sections, with the first part being a Marxist view of the State and production and the second complementing the Lacanian part, explaining ideology through psychology. Althusser begins by a description of production, explaining the reproduction of the conditions of production, which is the ultimate

condition of production itself. He asserts that every social formation must reproduce the conditions of its production while producing, in order to be able to produce. That means simply the reproduction of productive forces and existing relations of production (Althusser 1971, 128, 129), which we should have in mind also on the level of the thought process. The important insight of Althusser is the need not only for the reproduction of material conditions, but productive forces as well. The reproduction of the labour force itself means it must not only be suitable for work, but also needs to reproduce its ways of submission to the rules of the established order, accounting for the reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology. This submission is guaranteed through institutions of socialisation such as school, church or the army, where we encounter a new reality: *ideology* (Althusser 1971, 133, 134).

To see how ideology is projected through the functioning of the State, we should briefly describe the State itself. According to Marxist theory, the State has no meaning, except as a function of *State power*. That is the reason for the class struggle to revolve around the State, which should be eliminated once the class struggle is completed. We need to make a clear difference between the State power, as the objective goal of the political class struggle on the one hand and the State apparatus on the other. As we have seen through history, the State apparatus can survive political events and even revolutions, without being affected or modified, regardless that those events do affect the possession of State power. From this point, Althusser expands the theory of the State to derive his theory of ideology. He claims it is not enough to make a distinction between the State power and the State apparatus, but one must also be aware of another reality that is clearly on the side of the (repressive) State apparatus, but must not be confused with it. He calls this concept Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), which are a certain number of realities, representing themselves in a form of distinct and specialized institutions. ISA are present in the realm of religion, education, family, law, politics, trade-unions, communication and culture. Such a quantity of ideological apparatuses does not leave any space outside of ideological influence of the State, by which the non-ideological on the level of the society, not the individual, does not exist. Althusser also makes no difference between such private and public institutions, since both can effectively function as ISA. What is important, however, is the difference between the (Repressive) State Apparatus, which functions predominantly by repression (even physical) and less with ideology (for example the army or the police) and Ideological State Apparatuses which function predominantly by ideology and less by repression (which can be concealed or

symbolic) (Althusser 1971, 141−145). The possession of State power and utilization of ISA as well as their double functioning (primary or secondary by ideology or by repression) is crucial, since "no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses," (Althusser 1971, 146).

To further this logic, we see that ISA are multiple, distinct and relatively autonomous, since they can reflect the values of previous ruling classes, whose ideas may still exist in them. They can also provide a field of current contradictions, which signal the clashes between the capitalist and proletarian class struggle, as well as their subordinate forms. ISA largely secures the reproduction of power relations behind the shield of Repressive State Apparatus, as it also marks the place where the ruling ideology is heavily concentrated. The ruling ideology ensures the harmony among the Repressive State Apparatus and ISA, although the unity of the latter is secured in usually contradictory forms (Althusser 1971, 150, 151), making it the place of the struggle itself.

For the moment we should make a few things clear, in order to explore them later on. For Althusser, all Ideological State Apparatuses, regardless of their form, contribute to the same final result, which is the reproduction of the relations of production and with it, the capitalist relation of exploitation. Furthermore, each of the before mentioned ISA contribute towards this single result in the way proper to its function. The political apparatus for example by subjecting individuals to the political State ideology, the communications apparatus by instilling in every citizen's head the ideas of nationalism, liberalism, moralism and so forth. The same goes for cultural, religious and other apparatuses in the duty of ideology. Together they form a network of influence which is dominated by a single purpose of the ideology of the current ruling class, occasionally disrupted by its contradictions. Nevertheless Althusser identifies a *dominant* ideological apparatus of the modern society (Althusser 1971, 155, 156). In mature capitalist system, the dominant ideological apparatus today is the heavily concentrated educational ideological apparatus (Althusser 1971, 153), which presents itself as neutral and has merely replaced the previous dominant apparatus of religion. Under such disguise, the individuals "freely" spend eight hours a day, almost every day, being moulded to fit their social roles. The "knowledge" adapted there and through other ISA are vital for the

reproduction of the system in existing coordinates, as they naturally conceal the relation of dominance of the capitalist rule (Althusser 1971, 154−158; Žižek 2012, 8).

Althusser now introduces a division between ideology in *general,* comparing it to Freud's unconscious that also has no history, and different ideolog*ies* that in whatever form (religious, legal, political etc.) always expresses a class position. That simply means a class in possession of the State Power, projecting its dominant ideology through the ISA for its own reproduction. A theory of ideolog*ies* depends on the history of social formations in question and thus on the modes of production combined in the social formation, and the class struggles which developed in them (Althusser 1971, 160). Such division of ideology on two separate parts enables the study of ideology as a general structure that has no history of its own, since it is an inverted reflection of reality. It is an imaginary construction and the real history is unfolding outside of it, on the examples of concrete events and individuals. That also means the class struggle is impossible in the general ideology, but leaves this space opened for different concrete ideologies that are always working in the context of class struggle. But as Slavoj Žižek has observed, instead of directly evaluating the adequacy or the truth of different notions of ideology, one should read such quantity of determinations of ideology as the index of different concrete historical situations (Žižek 2012, 8).

5.2. Ideology and the individual

We are reaching an important breaking point in Althusser's theory, that was indicated in the previous chapters of the essay. With the support of psychoanalysis, he introduced structuralism to the classical Marxist critique. He continues with two theses, one negative and one positive in order to get to the central thesis on the structure and functioning of ideology. The first concerns the object which is "represented" in the imaginary form of ideology, while the second concerns the materiality of ideology.

It must also be added, that this formulation is based on the Lacanian conceptual apparatus, where we must distinguish between the "Symbolic" and the "Imaginary", so we must briefly describe those notions. Imaginary in Lacanian terms must be read as the dual relation between the ego and the specular image, and should not be mistaken with illusion.

Illusion is regarded as something unnecessary, while the Imaginary is important as it has powerful effects in the real. Imaginary does not signify the imagination or fiction as such, but something that pertains to an image. It is the realm of image and imagination, deception and lure. The principal illusions of the Imaginary are those of wholeness, synthesis, autonomy, duality and above all, similarity. The Imaginary is thus the order of deceptive surface appearances, observable phenomena which hide the underlying structure. However, the opposition between the imaginary and the symbolic does not mean that the imaginary is lacking in structure. On the contrary, the imaginary is always already structured by the symbolic order (Evans 1996, 84, 85; Eagleton 2007, 142).

The category of the Symbolic dimension is defined with the help of Levi Strauss's idea that the social world is constructed by certain laws, regulating the exchange among people. The most basic form of exchange is communication itself, for example the exchange of words or simply the gift of speech. Since the concepts of law and of structure are unthinkable without language, the Symbolic is essentially a linguistic dimension. However, language is not simply equated with the symbolic dimension, since language involves also the Real and Imaginary dimensions. The Symbolic dimension of language is that of the signifier, that is a dimension in which elements have no positive existence, but are defined by their mutual differences. Symbolic is characterised precisely by the absence of any fixed relations between signifier and signified. We shall return to the notion signifier later on. The Symbolic is also the realm of the Other, which we have mentioned before. The unconscious is the discourse of this Other, and thus belongs wholly to the Symbolic order. It is the realm of culture as opposed to the imaginary order of nature. Whereas the imaginary is characterised by dual relations, the symbolic is characterised by triadic structures, because the intersubjective relationship is always mediated by a third term, the big Other. Lacan stressed the importance in dealing with the Symbolic order as the dimension which produces changes in the patient, which we can expand on the level of the political. These changes will also produce imaginary effects, since the imaginary is structured by the symbolic. It is the Symbolic order that determines subjectivity, where the imaginary realm of images and appearances are merely effects of the symbolic (Evans 1996, 203, 204), so this is where we must seek change.

Here we will to return to previously described Althusser's insights. By establishing a difference between ideology in *general* and concrete ideolog*ies*, Althusser is slowly moving from describing the mechanisms of ideology on the State level, to explain the working of ideology on the level of individuals.

He continues by presenting the first thesis: *Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence* (Althusser 1971, 162).

While we can agree that different ideologies do not directly correspond to reality, we must also admit they make allusion to it and give us the feeling that they only need to be "interpreted" in order to discover the reality behind them. If we interpret the imaginary transfer and its inversion of ideology, we arrive at the conclusion that in ideology men represent their real conditions of existence in an imaginary form. However, that leaves the question of necessity of such imagining unanswered. Marx is on the side of Feuerbach's idea here, that men make themselves an alienated or imaginary representation of their conditions of existence, because these conditions themselves are alienating. What is reflected in the imaginary representation of the world, is then the conditions of their existence, their real world. Althusser elaborates this idea by saying that men do not represent to themselves their real conditions of existence, their real world, but above all it is their relation to those conditions of existence which is represented to them in ideology. For him this relation is in the centre of every ideology. Here lies the cause that needs to be examined in order to explain the imaginary distortion of the real world. It contains the cause for the imaginary deformation of the real world in the ideological representation. Therefore what is represented in ideology is not the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live. The question from the cause of the imaginary relation is shifted to the question of why it is the representation given to individuals of their own relation to the social relations, which govern their conditions of existence as well as their social and individual life, necessary an imaginary relation? (Althusser 1971, 163, 165, 166).

With the last thought we have already neared the possible answer to our second thesis as Althusser has only reaffirmed Adorno's point that ideology does not pose as something external, as Marx's smoke screen, but derives from individuals, in Althusser's case how they perceive and interpret relations to their conditions of existence. He proceeds to the answer of

the question with the proposition of the second thesis: *Ideology has a material existence* (Althusser 1971, 166).

This proposition comes from the argument that ideas or representations, which seem to make up ideology, have a material existence. We have learned that Ideological State Apparatuses function as the realization of a certain ideology, meaning an ideology always exists in the practice of an apparatus. Different ideologies of different ideological apparatuses might be regionally different, but their unity is secured by the domination of the ruling ideology. Althusser provides a congested circular explanation of the materiality of ideology on a level of each individual, which we will examine through practices of ISA. He writes: "I shall say that where only a single subject (such and such individual) is concerned, the existence of the ideas of his belief is material in that his ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject," (Althusser 1971, 170).

Here we can observe the multitude of relations an individual holds privately and collectively and how those are interwoven with different apparatuses of the state. So far we can see that Althusser considers ideology to be an imaginary relation to the real relations. We can observe such phenomena on the level of beliefs a certain individual holds. If someone for example believes in God, Justice or Duty, he acts accordingly. He lives in an ideological representation of ideology, which reduces ideology to ideas of spiritual existence. His beliefs come from himself, from him as a subject with a consciousness in which he freely forms or recognizes the ideas in which he believes. This is how an ideological "conceptual" device sets up an attitude, which is materialized in practice (Althusser 1971, 168), meaning this imaginary relation has a material existence. Althusser utilizes Pascal's *defensive dialectics* formula to invert the order of the schema of ideology. Pascal writes: "Kneel down, move your lips in prayer and you will believe," (Pascal in Althusser 1971, 169). In this way he inverts the assumed logical order of things and suggests we can acquire a belief from innocent practices.

To make the theoretical assumption above clear, we can look at examples of everyday practices that could serve the purposes of ideology. If we assume that individuals live in ideology in the conditions described above, then their imaginary distortion of the world depends on their imaginary relation to their conditions of existence. Individuals signal their

belief through their behaviour, since they adopt certain practical attitudes and participate in regular practices of a certain ideological apparatus. For example if someone believes in God, he goes to church, where he participates in a practice of a mass, kneels, prays and so forth. Someone who believes in Duty will undertake practices prescribed with certain principles, just as someone who believes in Justice will submit to the rules of Law and respond strongly when they are broken. Althusser observes that every subject in ideology with a consciousness and believing in the ideas that his consciousness inspires, follows material practices in acting accordingly. If that is not so, the subject gets other ideas corresponding to actions he performs. If he does not act according to his belief, he does something else, which nevertheless is still a function of the same ideology. He has other ideas in his head than the ones he proclaims, or is simply cynical or perverse (Althusser 1971, 168, 169). It is worthwhile to remember this point, as it is one of the examples which later inspired Slavoj Žižek to describe his understanding of ideology.

We now understand that the existence of ideas is inscribed in the actions of practices that are governed by rituals which are in the last instance defined by an ideological apparatus. The acts of a subject are defined in a system where an ideology in an ideological apparatus prescribes material practices, governed by material rituals. Those practices exist in the material actions of a subject acting in all consciousness according to his belief. Looking closely at this process, we can observe notions as *subject, consciousness, belief* and *actions* to be the carriers of such processes. Althusser proceeds to explore the notion of the *subject* and the way they are inscribed in the field of ideology, which he calls *interpellation.* In order to explain that, he suggests that there is no practise except by and in an ideology and that there is no ideology except by the subject and for the subject (Althusser 1971, 171). These are the basic characteristics of a subject in ideological circumstances described by the author, which has many imperfections as we shall see, though this is not yet the place to talk about them.

5.3. Interpellation of individuals into subjects

Althusser expands his previous claim that ideology exists by and for the subject by saying there is no ideology except for concrete subjects and that its function is possible only by the subject. He writes: "The category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology in so far

as all ideology has the function of "constituting" concrete individuals as subjects," (Althusser 1971, 172). In the interaction of this double constitution we can locate the function of ideology that realizes itself in material forms. It may not be as self evident, since the peculiarity of ideology is to impose something obvious as obvious or natural, but without appearing to do so. This obviousness makes sure we do not fail to recognize the ideological call, before we naturally and inevitably carry it out. Such a reaction is conditioned by the ideological *recognition* function, the opposite of the other basic function of *misrecognition*. For example, when we recognize someone on the street, we shake their hand, which is a material ritual practice of everyday life. As such we are *always-already* subjects and are constantly practising an ideological recognition, which in turn identifies us as concrete, individual, and irreplaceable subjects. If individuals are always-already constituted by ideology as subjects, Althusser claims that individuals are always-already subjects. In this case individuals are "abstract" comparing to the subjects, which they always-already are. This seeming paradox of becoming a subject even before birth was explained by Freud, who reminded us of all the ideological rituals surrounding a birth of a child, from determining the gender, to moulding of identity in the circle of the family. We reached the point of recognition of ourselves as subjects functioning in elementary practical rituals, which gives us the knowledge of our permanent relation to this practice of recognition. Still the question of how such mechanism functions remains opened (Althusser 1971, 173, 174, 177).

In search for the answer, Althusser suggests that all ideology *hails* or *interpellates* concrete individuals as concrete subjects. Interpellation is a process where ideology functions by recruiting subjects among the individuals, meaning by transforming individuals into subjects. Althusser refers to his famous example of a police officer shouting on the street: "Hey, you there!" Such hail will in almost every case reach the hailed individual, because the individual recognizes that it was really him, who was hailed, a phenomena which cannot be explained on the ground of some guilty feelings alone. This example is represented in a certain time sequence, but in reality interpellation does not happen in chronological order. If interpellation is the core function of ideology, then the very existence of ideology and the interpellation of individuals into subjects are the same thing (Althusser 1971, 175, 176).

The Althusserian reading of this account allows us to make certain remarks on the working of ideology. Therefore, what seem to happen outside of ideology (on the street) in

reality takes place in ideology. To reverse the point of view, what really happens in ideology, seems to take place outside of it. That is also the reason why subjects who are in ideology by definition believe they are outside of it. This practical *denegetaion* of ideological character is one of the effects of ideology, for ideology never claims for itself to be ideological. The known accusation of being in ideology always applies for others, not to us. We can draw a conclusion that ideology has no outside for itself, but at the same time in reality is nothing but outside from the point of science or reality (Althusser 1971, 176).

To explain the before mentioned theoretical assumption, Althusser proceeds with an elaborated example of religious ideology, which we will briefly examine for its important conclusions. Although the example comes from religious ideology, the author claims such analysis would be possible for other ideologies as well, since they have the same structure.

The whole procedure of transforming individuals into religious subjects is dominated by a strange phenomenon. A huge mass of possible believers or religious subjects is based on the absolute condition that there is a Unique, Absolute, *Other Subject*, that is God. We can quickly spot the Lacanian Symbolic dimension containing triadic structures, due to the presence of the big Other, mediating the intersubjective relations. God as the Subject interpellates innumerable subjects that are his *reflection*, or his *mirrors*, since the Bible itself says we are all made in the image of God. Even though God can perfectly live without his subjects, the Subject needs his subjects, just as men need God. God needs to make himself a man, he needs to become a subject among subjects, which are already subjected to the Subject. He does that through Christ, who is a man but also God and was at the end raised to Heaven by God. And so will the subjects subjected to the Subject, provided they follow his path (Althusser 1971, 179−181).

The duplication of the Subject into subjects and of the Subject itself into a subject-Subject can be explained also in a theoretical framework. Every ideology that interpellates individuals and subjects them in the name of the Absolute Subject is specular, a mirror structure and *double* specular. Such mirror duplication is constitutive of ideology and ensures its functioning. That means that all ideology is centred, where the Subject occupies a stance in this Centre, interpellating individuals into subjects in a double mirror connection. This

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ideology then subjects the subjects to the Subject, a reflection image of the subjects themselves, while providing them in the Subject the guarantee for God to recognize them. This means simply that God will recognize his subjects and the subjects who have recognized themselves in Him, will be saved (Althusser 1971, 181).

This is where the importance of this duplicate mirror structure in ideology lies. At the same time it ensures: the interpellation of individuals into subject; their subjection to the Subject; the mutual recognition of subjects and Subject, as well as the subject's recognition of each other and subject's recognition of himself; and finally the guarantee that everything really is so, the recognition of subject's identity and proper behaviour. Thus we are caught in this quadruple system of interpellation as subjects, of subjection to the Subject, of universal recognition and of absolute guarantee. This process results in subjects "working all by themselves", or to say by material forms of ideology, realized in the Ideological State Apparatuses. Their concrete material life is the inscription of ideology. The whole mystery of this effect lies in the first two assumption of the mirror structure above or in other words, the ambiguity of the term subject (Althusser 1971, 182, 183).

The term subject itself has an ambivalent meaning. On the one side the subject is defined as free subjectivity in thought and action, while on the other a subjected being, subjected to a higher authority and by being stripped of his freedom, he freely accepts his submission. The grim picture of Althusser's subject then results in individuals being interpellated as (free) subjects, but then only to freely submit to the Subject. When a subject (freely) accepts his subjection, he also carries out the gestures and actions of his subjection all by himself. This leads him to conclude that such a process is necessary, if the reproduction of the relation of production is to be assured, even in the consciousness and attitudes of the subjects in that process. This mechanism produces a reality which must necessarily be *ignored*, as that of the "freely" subjected individual. This reality is ignored in the very forms of recognition (ideology as misrecognition, ignorance) and is in the last resort the reproduction of the relations of production and of the relations deriving from them (Althusser 1971, 183, 184). Althusser paints us a pretty grim picture of the subject and a strict one way interpellation process, both with their difficulties as we shall see.

5.4. Evaluation and critique of Louis Althusser

A new understanding of ideology has emerged with philosophers such as Louis Althusser, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe which is best articulated in the contemporary work of Slavoj Žižek. Like the others, Althusser's ideology is inspired by Lacanian psychoanalytical understanding of lack, desire and identification, positioning psychoanalysis in the centre of ideological critique (Jameson 2003, 37, 38). Lacan approached subjectivity in terms of a lack, where "subjectivity becomes the space where the whole "politics" of *identification* takes place," meaning the "[l]ack stimulates *desire* and thus necessitates the constitution of every identity through processes of identification with socially available objects of identification such as political ideologies, patterns of consumption, and social roles," (Lacan in Gunder 2010, 305). It is the relation of the subjects to those roles that are of our interest. Similarly for Althusser, we also become conscious only by certain lack, repression or omission, which cannot be repaired with any self-reflection. All actions of the subjects are carried out within the sphere of ideology and ideology itself lends the human subject enough illusion to become a practical social agent. In this sense, Althusser agrees with Freud that a subject is a structure that must be suppressed in the moment of subjectivisation. The imaginary relations in ideology are then clearly false, as it hides from us the actual conditions of subjects and societies. On the other hand, it also cannot be false in the sense of arbitrary deception, since it is an indispensable dimension, much like politics or economy (Eagleton 2007, 141, 143). Althusser has already pointed out that ideology operates with a mechanism which causes the subject to suppress or *ignore* their real conditions of submission, marking it as an element of ideological misrecognition. In ideology people do not misrecognize the world but themselves, since ideology for Althusser does not mean knowing the truth or not. He uses the previously mentioned mechanism of the *Mirror-phase* from Lacan to explain his claim, where the misrecognition is an effect of the Imaginary dimension. There a small child has a brief moment of misrecognition when he sees his image reflection, seeing himself being both the reflection as well as himself, since no real distinction between subject and object has yet been made. He is one and the other at the same time, split but unified. It is similar in ideological sphere where a subject transcends its true state and finds a coherent image of itself reflected back in the mirror of hegemonic ideological discourse (Eagleton 2007, 142).

Here lies the problem of Althusser's misreading of Lacan. For the latter the Imaginary dimension is full of insatiable desire, where the subject's ego is constituted as a unified entity. In contrast, the subject as a whole is already a split, lacking, desiring, an effect of the unconscious, as we have mentioned in previous chapter. Althusser's subject is in this way much more stable and coherent than Lacan's. Such a small theoretical difference has vast political consequences. To expel the desire from the subject means to erase his potential rebellious tendencies, ignoring the ways in which it positions itself in the social order. Althusser's creates more an ideology of the ego, rather that of the human subject. This ideological misperception of the individual subject leads him to make a bias interpretation of the big Subject, who is governing the ideological signifiers with which the individual identifies. This Subject corresponds more to the Freudian superego, where he has a role of a censorious power, keeping us obediently in our places. In Lacan's work, this role is played by the elusive big Other, meaning the whole field of language and the unconscious. The relation between it and the subject are more fragile than in Althusser's theory. The political implications are once more pessimistic. If the power of subjection is authoritative and singular like Freud's superego instead of Lacan's self-divided Other, the chances of opposing it seem remote. This makes Althusser's model to operate in one way only, controlled by a single entity, addressing the subjects without unified discourses. To be subjected means to become a "free" and "autonomous" subject by submitting ourselves to the Subject or the Law. Once we internalized this Law, made it our own, we begin to act it out spontaneously, by ourselves (Eagleton 2007, 144−146). Ideology in Althusserian terms is a subject-centred view of reality. Although ideology is seen as false from external position, it is not false in itself, as the subjective world is a matter of lived experiences (Eagleton 2007, 152). For Althusser, ideology always has and always will exist since its structure is eternal. Human imagination requires ideology to engage with the world, because it is materialized in social practices, or the institutions he labels social apparatuses (Freeden, 2003, 27; Gunder 2010, 305). Therefore the subject is construed as an ideological effect rather than as a self-established identity. Theoretically the subject is merely a product of a social structure without any autonomy (Eagleton 2007, 141).

For Althusser, ideology exists only if it is performed, as a lived experience of the world. We practice it when we use concepts that ideology provided us with to make our way in the world (Gunder 2010, 305). On this point we can draw correlations to Hegel's myth in

the way that ideology adapts individuals to their social functions by providing them with an imaginary model of a schematized whole. The imaginary map function of ideology fills both the political and sociological roles, as things subjects want in a society. Once certain exploitations are obliterated, ideology lives as a social function and a mystification, presenting a clear separation from Marx. Ideology will stay and will still be false in a sense, but its falsity will no longer be in the service of the dominant interests. Therefore it is not simply a question of self-misrecognition, as this falsity plays a vital social role (Eagleton 2007, 151). Still there are problems with Althusser's insistence on the materiality of ideology, as it stems from a structuralist hostility to consciousness. The author forgets that ideology is a matter of meaning which is not material. This also influences his concept of ideology as well, since ideology becomes identical with lived experience, but surely not all experience can be usefully described as ideological. His idea of eternal ideology then naturally springs from this stretched sense of the word (Eagleton 2007, 149). Althusser's definition of ideology as a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence (Althusser 1971, 163) is furthered by Frederick Jameson. According to him, such individual constructs are an "indispensible mapping fantasy or narrative by which the individual subject invents a "lived" relationship with collective systems," to be seen as ideological representation (Jameson 2003, 37, 38).

With the last point on eternal ideology and its theoretical consequences, Althusser indicates new possibilities in Marxism, while he points out its essential incompleteness. Those undermine other Marxist notions, like the effect of ideological misrecognition or the illusion of consciousness. The latter is discussed differently in Althusser's work. As Étienne Balibar has pointed out, consciousness is not practice, consciousness is not even thought in its real form. Althusser's conception of the nature and function of ideology created quite a resistance among Marxist critics. He broke away from the traditional reflection theory of knowledge, where ideology is usually described as false consciousness, functioning as a deceptive veil of appearances, masking the fundamental conflicts of social life. Althusser defined ideology in more functional than epistemological terms. He did not stress the illusory basis of an ideology, but its positive material existence as a condition for the reproduction of social relations (Parker 1985, 62, 63). Ideology for him is not only some false beliefs of the ruling class. Ideology for Althusser is the imaginary relation of individuals to their real conditions of existence, who are then interpellated through largely unconscious structures.

The role of the state in this example is to normalize and internalize the dominant hegemonic logic of the ruling class for its citizens through ideological state apparatuses, which partially construct the subjects in the society. But such a construction of the subject is never complete as there is always something that escapes social totality, as political structures are ultimately unable to fully determine a subject's identity (Gunder 2010, 305). Here we should also bear in mind the process of social domination, which works in a non-transparent way, as the very logic of legitimizing the relation of domination must remain concealed if it is to be effective (Žižek 2012, 8). This results in what Lacan described not only as the lack of the subject, but the incompleteness of the socio-symbolic framework of reality itself. The relationship between social reality, society and the subject is then theorized as a function of political identification (Gunder 2010, 305).

With the function of political identification we have found our way to the core of Althusser's theory of ideology, its main mechanism of interpellation, which has its difficulties. Althusser regards ideology in action as a social process of interpellations. Here is the difference between him and other authors, since for the majority of them, ideology is a sort of structure or a body of ideas, while for Althusser ideology holds a position for acceptance or rejection of those ideas. We can see that he did not centre the concept of ideology on the content of ideas or a system of beliefs, but on the unconscious categories by which the material circumstances were represented and interpreted (Gunder 2010, 305). There are a number of logical problems with this theory. How can a subject respond to an interpellation if it is not a subject already? Recognition of the ideological call or hailing, response to it and understanding, are already subjective categories, so the subject would have to predate his own existence. Conscious of this paradox, Althusser offers us a Freudian conception of pre-constructed individuals that are "always-already" subjects, even before they are born. If this is true, then the whole moment of interpellation loses its meaning (Eagleton 2007, 143).

But there are deeper inconsistencies with Althusser's theory of interpellation. As we have mentioned, Althusser borrows from Pascal's formula the explanation of symbolic automaton of the working of ideological apparatuses and interpellation of the individual. It is exactly this link between the two that points to the weakness of his theory. Althusser and his followers never managed to explain exactly how subjects internalize the signifying automaton

embodied in ideological apparatuses of the state. The question is how do they produce the effect of ideological belief in the Cause and the interconnecting effect of subjectivation, of recognition of one's ideological position? We have already seen that the external machines of the state apparatuses impose its force, if it is experienced in the unconscious of the subject, as a traumatic, senseless order. Althusser speaks of the process of interpellation through which the symbolic system of ideology is internalized into the ideological experience of Meaning and Truth, making subjects believe and work inside the ideological coordinates. But as we mentioned before, there is always a part of the individual that does not succumb to this identification. We can learn from Pascal that this leftover of traumatic irrationality is structurally necessary and is not preventing the full submission of the subject, but is on the contrary the very condition of submission. This irrational traumatism provides the Law its unconditional authority, by escaping the ideological sense and sustaining the ideological *jouis-sense*. This Lacanian term could be explained as enjoyment-in-sense, deriving pleasure from the knowledge that we are nothing but subjects, in the circular movement which finds satisfaction in failing again and again to attain the object, for *jouissance*, pleasure in pain. To explain this gap between interpellation and internalization, Žižek uses the example of Kafka's subject in his book *The Metamorphosis*. In the beginning, Kafka's subjects are interpellated by a mysterious bureaucratic entity posing as Law or Castle. Either way, this interpellation is strange because it happens without any identification or subjectivisation. It does not offer us a Cause with which to identify, as the subject does not understand the meaning of the call embodied in the Other (Žižek 1989, 42, 43).

This is the dimension overlooked by Althusser in his process of interpellation. Before the subject is caught in the identification, meaning the symbolic recognition or misrecognition, the subject is trapped by the Other, in the Other's own trap of a paradoxical object-cause of desire. The subject is thus the prisoner of a secret, supposedly hidden in the Other. This is the description of Lacanian formula of fantasy. Lacan once said that fantasy is the support that gives consistency to our reality. In the opposition between dreams and reality, fantasy is thus on the side of reality, meaning fantasy structures social reality itself (Žižek 1989, 44). The function of ideology is not to offer an escape from our reality, but it offers the social reality itself as the escape from some traumatic kernel (Žižek 1989, 45). The function of fantasy being at work at the level of social reality itself can be explained with the help of theory of dreams, which we will explain in the next chapter.

With this line of thought we are nearing the concepts presented by Slavoj Žižek, which are elaborated from the previous authors. For most contemporary Marxists, ideology is no longer associated with false consciousness, with mystifying, distorting or false ideas. Ideology for them refers to any belief, representation, discourse and practice which serve to legitimate and sustain existing social and power relations within a society, regardless of their status. Ideology is therefore no longer about epistemology, but about functional consequences of certain representations, discourses and practices (Augoustinos 1999, 300) and that is where the attractiveness of Žižek's thought lies.

Despite the many flaws in Althusser's concept of ideology, it represents one of the major breakthroughs on the subject. Ideology is no longer just a distortion, false reflection, or Adorno's effect of commodity production, but an indispensable medium for subject production, for production of forms of subjectivity themselves. Ideology is not primarily a matter of ideas, but a structure which imposes itself on us without necessarily passing through consciousness at all. Psychologically it is more a set of images, symbols and occasional concepts which we live unconsciously, than a system of articulated doctrines. Sociologically it consists of material practices, embedded in material institutions (Eagleton 2007, 148, 149). But the essentialist account of ideology, where ideology is seen to be an irrational distortion of the subject's essential interests, and the structuralist account, where the subject is seen to be actually determined by ideological mechanisms, have both led to the premature demise of ideology as a concept (Newman 2001, 309).

6. The illusiveness of reality – Slavoj Žižek

The attractiveness of Žižek's thought lies in the interconnections of the theory we have been dealing with, which is then elaborated through lenses of cultural theory and psychoanalysis. Like Althusser, he is also keen to point out the practicalities of ideology today. In the nineties a theory of *End of history* began to advocate an end of conflicts in a unified one polar world and with it the end of ideology. Žižek has vigorously argued against such view, claiming ideology is very present despite the lack of obvious ideological fights. If we have learned anything from Althusser, it is exactly this lack of obvious struggles that should mark the point of our inquiry. Where no questions are needed and no critical distance

is attained, we can be almost sure that ideology is at work. The predominant position today stipulates that we live in a post-ideological world, where things are pragmatically clear with the access of objective knowledge. One of the things that must have caught our attention is the alienated position individuals take in their relation to the state. At least in the West, most perceive the workings of the state from a cynical position, where people occupy a stance of all-knowing individuals, who do not really believe or care. We are free and to an extent even encouraged to talk and think about the errors of the current society we live in. But when we are to talk about a different kind of organization that should take place, we have difficulties not only to imagine how it would function, but have a problem to come up with a variety of different solutions. This in itself is a sort of message, that ideology today is present in its own way.

Žižek broadly belongs to a community of thinkers widely labelled under the term postmodernists, a term which he nevertheless disputes. Its members, post-Marxists and poststructuralist, still see ideology as a means of sustaining collective power, but no longer on the basis of class alone. They challenge the fixity and universality of existing linguistic and political terms and structures with the method of deconstruction, using Lacan to break down the assumption that language fully represents reality. There are some important authors filling the gap between the modern ideological critique and Althusser. Most important writings are represented by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. Going beyond Althusser, they argue that all practices are discursive since they are human, optional and continuous articulation of how we should understand the world. This is quite different than claiming what the world is as Althusser does. What they try to say is that the social order is not given, it is to be articulated and constructed, which produces a semblance of fixity. We should bear that in mind when discussing our second thesis. Ideology according to them represents a whole articulation out of an indeterminate number of potential combinations of ideas. Post-Marxists devote a lot of time in their ideological critique to questions of society and the question of identity of the individual subject. The mentioned authors argued that society requires signifiers, representative words, to cover over the cracks and to invent stability and system where no such things exist. They described a special category of "empty signifiers" that do not represent an external reality, but the absence of it. That happens for example when demonstrators march for freedom, but it is quite far from knowing what exactly would that mean. Freedom here signifies something that societies cannot ever achieve in full, but it

produces the illusion that it exists and that a social order based on freedom is attainable. The awful truth that all societies are un-free has to be disguised. The strength of poststructuralism lies in its refusal to take any fact, any opinion, any framework, for granted. At the same time, this is a source of weakness, as it can make it an unproductive partner (Freeden 2003, 109−112).

This is the point where our aggressive mediocrity turns to the state as the mechanism we see regulating our coordinates of political and social life. According to Žižek, the perception of the state, thrown amid the storm of global interests, points to the basic political antagonism today. Eroding of the state's authority comes from two sides. On the one hand we are dealing with universal political structures and institutions of liberal democracy, corroding the state from above and the new "organic" populism, undermining the state from bellow. This antagonism should not be read as an external opposition or as a complementary union between states and peoples, but genuinely Hegelian, where each pole is inherited to the other, so we stumble upon on it when we try to see one pole as it is. In order to understand the ideological process, we should turn the critical gaze upon ourselves in liberal-democratic universalism and open up the weak point, the "falsity" of this very universalism (Žižek 2012, 1−3). However, due to the extensiveness of the notion of ideology, it can "designate anything from a contemplative attitude that misrecognises its dependence on social reality to an action-oriented set of beliefs, from the indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations to a social structure to false ideas, which legitimize a dominant political power," (Vighi and Feldner 2007, 29; Žižek 2012, 3). Such a definition carries a psychoanalytic conceptualization of ideology as a radically split domain. This split from the above definition is visible as an elusive kind of knowledge, divided between its explicit manifestation (rationally and linguistically transparent set of ideas) and its mysterious "appearance beyond appearance", meaning an unthinkable, unrepresentable core of disavowed enjoyment. We can read this theoretical dialectical relationship in the previously mentioned Lacanian triadic orders, now moving in the spectre of the Symbolic and the Real, as Žižek points to enjoyment as a realm of critical analysis. The move towards the "ideological enjoyment" is Žižek's most original contribution to the critique of ideology and points to a category of political theory (Dean 2006, 2, 8; Vighi and Feldner 2007, 29). Enjoyment can be located in many common shapes or forms and is a somewhat underlying element in Žižek's analysis. As enjoyment fixes the subject, it provides it with its place, it also displaces the subject. But even when this

displacement enables the subject to act, it still relies on an underlying fantasy, an organisation of *jouissance*, in which an other is an object enjoying instead of us (Dean 2007, 36), for *desire* is in its foundation interactive, a desire of an other, desiring and functioning through the other. That means we can stay passive, as our place is external, in the other, desiring instead of us (Žižek 2010, 95, 96).

6.1. Dreams: analyzing the form of ideology

We have already talked about the differences and similarities in analysing a distorted text in the form of dreams or ideology in the chapter on psychoanalysis. The form of dreams and its interpretation can serve as a good introduction to Žižek's thought. Some features of ideology can be best explained and understood by describing the famous Freudian dreams of the burning child and follow the Lacanian explanation of it, which consequences can be directly correlated to ideological critique.

> A father had been watching beside his child's sick-bed for days and nights on end. After the child had died, he went into the next room to lie down, but he left the doors open so that he could see from his bedroom into the room in which his child's body was laid out, with tall candles standing around it. An old man had been engaged to keep watch over it, and sat beside the body murmuring prayers. After a few hours sleep, the father had a dream that *his child was standing beside his bed, caught him by the arm and whispered to him reproachfully: "Father, don't you see I'm burning?"* He woke up, noticed a bright glare of light from the next room, hurried into it and found the old watchman had dropped off to sleep and that the wrappings and one of the arms of his beloved child's dead body had been burned by a lighted candle that had fallen on them (Freud 2001, 465).

The usual interpretation of this dream is explained around the external factors of reality that irritate the subject (in this case fire, smoke, heat), which are then transformed and reconstructed in the dream text to fit in it. The function of the dream in this case is to transform the irritating factors, so that the dreamer can prolong his sleep. When this irritation becomes too strong, the subject awakes and reconstructs a new reality around these irritations (Lacan 1996, 55, 56; Žižek 1989, 44, 45). On this point Lacan suggests a different logic of such awakening. He claims that it is not the external factors of reality that wakes the father up, but the reality in the child's message, with the help of which the father realizes, that the events

in the next room are real after all (Lacan 1996, 56). The key to these dreams is to find the place of the Real that is spreading from trauma to phantasm, where phantasm serves as a screen, curtaining something that is in the function of repeating something more primary and determined. The Real can be presented with the help of an accident, a small external irritation that makes us aware we are not dreaming. We are awaken by this reality that is hiding behind the lack of what substitutes this image in the dream text. That also explains the ambiguity of awakening and the function of the Real in this process, where the Real is positioned beyond the dream, behind the lack of the dream image, from which only the substitute is left in the dream. There we can encounter the Real that is driving our activity and is reachable by psychoanalysis (Lacan 1996, 58).

The reality that defines awakening is the origin of anxiety of the dream. In this case it is the most intimate relationship of the father to his son, positioned in the schism, the split of the dreamer. This split remains after the awakening, even when the consciousness interprets the dream as a nightmare, but is at the same time captured by it. This split is nevertheless representative of a deeper split, which has to be positioned between what the subject presents in the dreams (the image of the reproaching, burning child) and what this subject causes (the child's voice, request for attention – *Father, don't you see…)* (Lacan 1996, 68, 70). In other words, first the dreamer is irritated by some external factors and constructs a dream, a story which allows him to prolong his sleep, to avoid awakening into reality. But the thing he encounters in his dreams is worse than the external reality that surrounds him. This traumatic moment is the Lacanian Real − the reality of the child's reproach to the father, implying his fundamental guilt. This reality formulated in his dream is more terrifying than the external reality and that is why he awakens. He escapes in the so-called "reality" to be able to continue to sleep, to maintain his blindness and elude awakening into the Real. In this case "reality" is a fantasy construction which enables us to mask the Real of our desire (Žižek 1989, 45). With the notion of the "Real", Lacan therefore suggests an aspect of reality that resists symbolization, as well as a remainder that is left over when we symbolize. He regards the Real as the inevitable simultaneous part of the necessary, but ultimately impossible attempt to integrate reality into the symbolic (Zaretsky 1996, 165, 166).

It's the same with ideology, where ideology is not a dream or illusion we build to escape reality, but is the basic dimension of a fantasy construction, which serves as a support

for our "reality" itself. It is an "illusion" which structures our real social relations, masking some real impossible kernel, as Freud and Habermass have already indicated. This concept was conceptualized by Laclau and Mouffe as an antagonism that represent a traumatic social division which cannot be symbolized. The function of ideology then is not to offer us a point of escape from our reality, but to offer us social reality as a point of escape from our traumatic, real kernel (Žižek 1989, 45). Only in the dream we can come close to real awakening, to the Real of our desire.

6.2. Market and commodity fetishism

When reading Žižek, one cannot miss his patient anti-capitalist stance, arguing simply that capitalism is not the only game in town. As Fredric Jameson has remarked, nobody seriously considers changes to capitalism anymore. It is easier for people to imagine a natural global catastrophe or the end of the world, than a far modest change in the mode of production, as if capitalism is the Real that will survive even the world's ending (Žižek 2012, 1). This market discourse has become a fundamental and central component of ideological struggle according to Jameson, where everyone surrenders to the various forms of market ideology. The proposition that the market is a part of human nature has become the most crucial terrain of ideological struggle of our time. Therefore real markets must be included in the analysis, as well as their metaphysical part of psychology, culture, advertising, representation and libidinal features. This also compromises political philosophy as an ideological market of values, options, solutions and the way they are structured, working on the condition that we think we are free to choose among them (Jameson 2012, 281, 282).

People are inscribed in such market logic by their everyday deeds which can be ideological. This does not mean an ideology as an explicit doctrine on the nature of men and society, nor ideology in its material existence. Žižek describes an elusive network of implicit, quasi-spontaneous presuppositions and attitudes that form a moment of reproduction of what we consider non-ideological practices (economic, legal, sexual, political ...). Like Adorno and the Frankfurt School of thought, he applies Marx's notion of commodity fetishism in ideology and uses it to analyse concrete forms of practices. Commodity fetishism here does not

designate political economy, but a series of practices that determine the structure of "real" economic practices of market exchange (Žižek 2012, 15).

We have already learned from the Frankfurt School that the value of one commodity is determined by the other and that in social relations they assume a property of a commodity called money. Following this logic, we see that the feature of commodity fetishism does not mean the replacement of men with things (Žižek 1989, 19), but mystifies real human relations as relations between things (Eagleton 2007, 85). The mechanism of commodity fetishism has been developed further in modern critique. As Marx has argued, identifying one thing with the other is similar to constituting an identity of men. This reminds us of the Lacanian theory of the mirror-phase, where only by being reflected in another man, can the ego arrive at its self-identity. Identity and alienation are thus correlated and here lies the effect of inversion proper to fetishism, as it appears exactly opposite. The first commodity therefore correlates to the second, as if the second commodity would already in itself be the equivalent of the first; the property of equivalence appears to belong to it even outside of the relation with the first commodity, on the same level as its other "natural" property (money) constituting its value (Žižek 1989, 19, 20). This curious inversion between human subjects and their conditions of existence is now inherent in social reality itself. However, this should not be read as a simple distorted perception of human beings. We are not simply inverting the real world in our consciousness and *imagine* that commodities control our lives and social relations. As Marx argued, they actually do so. Ideology is now less a matter of reality becoming inverted in the mind, than of the mind reflecting a real inversion. It stops being a question of consciousness, but more a question of daily economic operations in capitalism. The economy itself produces its own misperceptions, rather than beliefs and institutions. As Etienne Balibar puts it, we need to think in both the real and the imaginary within ideology, instead of conceiving them as external to each other (Eagleton 2007, 85).

Žižek also points out to certain economic, political and social practices or theoretical notions and provides them with a different reading. We have already dealt with the process of internalization as an ideological mechanism providing senseless contingency in the chapter on psychoanalysis. Bearing that process in mind, Žižek claims that the opposite procedure of failing to notice the necessity is as well the work of ideology and this failure is coming directly from us as social agents. The task of ideological critique then is to become aware of

these hidden necessities in what appears to be a mere contingency (Žižek 2012, 4) and point out the system's antagonistic elements in the social order that estrange us to the self-evidence of its established identity (Žižek 2012, 7). This is what we want to analyse, the elusive work, the practicalities of ideology through theory. We must note though, that ideology is not necessarily false, as Gramsci and Althusser have already showed. What matters is how ideology's content is related to its subjective position in the process of enunciation, since it is easy to lie in the guise of truth. The content remains ideological in so far as it fails to mention its true motives (Žižek 2012, 8). Žižek recognizes that the predominant mode of lying in the guise of truth today is cynicism.

6.3. Cynicism as a form of ideology

The political events following the fall of bipolar world in the beginning of 90's, inspired Francis Fukuyama to come up with the idea of *End of history*. He was suggesting an end to ideological fights, embodied between the Soviet Union and the United States. With the victory of liberal-democracy, this model was seen as one that works better than the other alternatives. Although this notion may not stand its ground today, Slavoj Žižek came to the idea, that most of the people are *fukuyamists*, since they act this way. Societies always inspire for a better life and in that framework we somehow think we are working against the system, but it seems everything we do is inside the coordinates of the same system. On the opposite pole of the same story to Fukuyama's, we can read Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* as what remains as the last pieces at the end of history (Žižek 2010, 161; Žižek 2007, 03:20; Žižek 2008, 7:50). All this sounds like Churchill's famous statement of democracy being the worst system we have, although all the rest we tried are even worse. The system we live in today is treated exactly this way and here we can get the possibility to observe and analyse the workings of ideology.

Firstly we must quickly turn to the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who is concerned to examine the mechanisms by which ideology takes hold of everyday life. He developed a concept of *habitus* which includes the dispositions for generating particular practices of men and woman and can be applied to ideology. We can analyse it because individuals and society act in accordance with such internalized systems or "cultural

unconscious" to use the term of Bourdieu. Through it we can explain how their actions are regulated and harmonized without being the result of conscious obedience to rules. Through the matching of objective and subjective, we do what our social conditions demand of us and power can thus secure itself. In a system of social relations with its own internal logic, individuals and institutions are competing to attain the maximum dominance within them, to impose legitimacy on other participants, or to take it away from them. Bourdieu terms this as "symbolic violence" which is legitimate, so it usually escapes our perception as violence unnoticed. It is a way of rethinking Gramsci's hegemony, while analysing ideological microstructures of everyday life (Eagleton 2007, 156−158).

As we have seen though the research, the concept of ideology is inherited by the notion of some naive or false consciousness, such as false understanding of its premises and its actual conditions, the relations of distance between so-called social reality and our distorted representation of it. For this reason, it is possible to critically analyze this naive consciousness and bring it to the point where we can recognize the social reality and through that act abolish the distorted consciousness. The most elementary concept of ideology can be found in the well known sentence from Marx's *Capital*: "They do not know it, but they are doing it." Ideology here is represented as a mask, preventing people to see things the way they really are (Žižek 2010, 19; Žižek 2009, 20:00). In a more sophisticated critique of the Frankfurt School, Theodor Adorno suggested that ideology is explicitly a system which owns the truth. Therefore it is not a system of a simple lie, but a lie experienced as truth, posing to be serious. Ideology here is a matter of manipulation, instrumentalized and externalized, where its reproduction is not based on a necessarily true basis, but on the externalized ideological violence and the possibility of future benefit. On the contrary, totalitarian ideology does not need this pretence (Žižek 2010, 21). According to this concept it is not enough to see the social reality as it is, but to see, that reality cannot reproduce itself without the so-called *ideological mystification*. The mask is not simply covering the real state of things; the ideological distortion is inherent in its core (Žižek 2010, 19). Ideological mystification can be described with the notion of minimal "alienation" which is constitutive for the symbolic order and social sphere as such. It works as minimal "objectification" with which we abstract ourselves from our active role and we see the historical processes as "objective" processes which follow their own path, passing our plans and desires. We know that our future and the future of society depend on an active individual, but we still believe that the future is lead by

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anonymous forces, independent on the will of individuals (Žižek 2010, 129). On this point we arrived to the paradox of a being, which is reproduced only as misunderstood and overlooked. When we see through it, it is annihilated or transcended into another reality. The simple form of unmasking the reality covering up the truth is therefore not enough (Žižek 2010, 19).

The question remains, if this concept of naive consciousness can still be applied to the modern world. Peter Sloterdijk in his book *The critique of the cynical reason* suggests that this formula does not suffice. According to him, a cynical mind is not naive, but is a paradox of falsely enlightened consciousness. Here the subject is well aware of the distance between the ideological mask and social reality, but somehow finds the reasons to insist on following the mask. While doing so, it is still aware of particular interests behind the ideological universality. Sloterdijk is in effect turning Marx's formula around: *They know exactly what they are doing, but they are still doing it* (Žižek 2010, 20, 21) and Žižek develops this idea further. He introduces a difference between *symptom* and *phantasm* to show hastiness of post-ideological notion. Phantasm is not something people want and then they simply imagine it. Phantasm means people do not know what they want and through fantasy they learn what to desire (Žižek 2007, 20:00). Fantasy is therefore not so much the realization of our desire, but the desires of others (Žižek 2010, 95, 96), so we construct a fantasy to get the answer what other people want from us. Fantasy is therefore not opposed to reality, it is what structures our reality, it is things we know, but we do not know we know them (Žižek 2007, 22:10). Phantasm therefore fills the gap between the abstract intention of an act and its actual realization, producing hesitation and fear (Žižek 2010, 105).

A cynical mind, despite its ironical distance, leaves the basic level of ideological phantasm intact. This is the level on which ideology structures social reality. The simple Marxist formula misses the falsity, distortion, or illusion that is at work at the level of social reality itself in the way of what people are actually functioning. There is a discrepancy between what people think they are doing and what they are actually doing (Žižek 2010, 21, 22). To put it differently, ideology today according to Žižek no longer functions on what he calls a symptomatic mode, where people are living a lie and in some moments they see the repressed truth. Today it functions more as a fetishist one. On the contrary, fetish is not a moment of truth that disturbs the general lie, but it is a small lie that enables you to control the truth (Žižek 2007, 62:50). What people tend to overlook is that in their social reality itself, in

their functioning, they are led by a fetishist illusion and what they do recognize is not reality but the illusion itself, structuring their social reality (Žižek 2010, 23). Illusion is therefore on the part of what people are doing, in the actual functioning of reality itself. They know how things really are, but they act as if they do not. When overlooking the illusion which structures our Real, the relation to reality, we get a double illusion. That unconscious illusion could be called the *ideological phantasm*. Cynicism as a form of ideology simply means, that people do not believe in ideological truths and propositions anymore. Cynical distance is just one of many ways (e.g. charity, tolerance, politeness, civility, habits) to see the structuring of ideological phantasm (Žižek 2010, 24). On this point Žižek derives a new reading of ideology today: "The fundamental level of ideology, however, is not an illusion masking the real state of things, but that of an (unconscious) fantasy structuring our social reality itself" (Žižek 2010, 24; Žižek 1989, 30). The author borrows mechanisms from Lacanian psychoanalysis such as *the big Other, point de caption, objet petit a* and others to analyze and explain ideological processes today.

6.4. Practicalities of ideology

The above theoretical concepts of ideology can be explained on the basis of popular culture. As Hegel puts it in his *Aesthetics;* a good portray of a person can be more real than the actual person. In this way popular culture reflects more pure coordinates of ideological mechanisms or influences than our life (Žižek 2008, 19:15). Žižek applies the concept of *differentiality*, which was elaborated by structural linguistics. In this relation the opposite of one signifier is not another signifier but the lack of the first one. It is the gap between its own inscription as to be present and another signifier that would fill this gap when the first signifier is absent. The signifier works on the background of its own possible absence that is materialized and forming positive experience in the presence of its opposite (Lacan in Žižek 2010, 60). That means it is not only important what a thing is, but as a positive part also what a thing is not. It does not only matter what we do say, but as well what we do not say, what is only implied (Žižek 2011, 5:50).

Žižek explained this notion on an example from Ernest Lubitsch film Ninotchka, when the hero enters a cafeteria and orders coffee without crème. The waiter replied: "Sorry we are

out of crème, we only have milk. Can I bring you coffee without milk?" The situation shows it is not the same coffee without crème or coffee without milk, because the part you do not get is also a part of the identity you do get. Bringing that logic further, we can observe how a *double negation* or a *negation of negation* works when people get things, the result is not zero, but in its identity it also includes the lack of substance that is implied. In that matter a cynical person might say that legal stealing is more efficient than illegal, plus the thief is protected by the law (Žižek 2010, 21). Another such example can be found in the movie Brassed-off. In the movie a woman invited the main character for a cup of coffee in her apartment at the end of their date. He then tells her he does not drink coffee, to which she replies, that she does not have coffee at home anyway. They are dealing with an invitation for a coffee, though they both know, they will not drink it. It is making an invitation for a coffee and then negating coffee. The result is not zero it is the pure invitation itself and this is the manner in which ideology functions (Žižek 2011, 7:00). Examples like this can help us to detect some ideological distortions on an everyday level. Ideology works in a similar manner as we do. We are the stories we talk about, or better yet, we want to be the stories we talk about in political discourse or private narrative. But this is not necessarily the truth. What people are telling themselves about themselves is basically what they construct to cope with other difficult dimensions. Psychoanalytically, our truth is not the inner life, the inner stories we are telling ourselves. The narrative we construct to face what we are doing is ideology, a kind of protective smoke screen (Žižek 2007, 7:50).

Is this not how more and more of people, at least in the developed world, relate to the global predicament? Why do we not see, what nonetheless in a way we see? How does ideology enact this suspension? People know about the impending catastrophe (ecological, social, economical …) but they still somehow cannot take it seriously. In psychoanalysis this is called a *fetishist's split* (Žižek 2008, 16:20; Žižek 2011, 12:40). The subject is aware of certain things, but fails to take it seriously, to believe it. Such a split is a clear indication of material force of ideology, which makes us refuse what we see and know. This can also be described by the system Freud sometimes refers to as *Isolation*, where a subject can accept a fact, but what they abstractly know they do not really integrate on symbolic or affective level. Subject rationally deals with the manner in question, but they somehow suspend its symbolic efficiency. Therefore ideology is not about what you know or what you do not know. Ideology resides in underlying selection of things that you know, but you behave and act as if

you do not know (Žižek 2010, 123; Žižek 2011, 13:10). This so called *fetishist function* is a mechanism, through which people can acquire a suspension or a distance. That means that *fetish* as such secretly enables us not to believe and not deal with matters in question. That is the way they get their continuity. A cynical mind is a fetishist in practice not in theory (Žižek 2011, 15:30; Žižek 2010, 22).

This should not be considered as a false consciousness in a sense that people do not know what they are doing. This thesis also stipulates that people cannot really be pure cynics. Even in a cynical position, people embody a belief in their acts. It works like a superstition. We are not superstitious, but we follow some rituals just in case and that is how ideology works. Even if on the surface we are all cynics, we still believe more than we are ready to admit (Žižek 2011, 21:00). Cynicism is precisely what helps people to really believe in the system. That is the belief and minimal alienation, mystification necessary for ideology to reproduce. They do not believe, but they follow the belief materially embodied into the social system. Illusion is not what they think, illusion is what they are doing. This mechanism can be explained by an example from the history of religion. This paradox was formulated ironically by Gilbert Keith Chesterton in his book *Orthodoxy*. Underlying he demonstrates how critics of religion denounce religion as the force of oppression which threatens human freedom, however in their fight with religion they are compelled to forsake freedom itself, thus sacrificing precisely what they wanted to defend. People defend a phenomenon so fanatically, that in the fight of what they perceive as the enemy, they are ready to sacrifice the phenomenon itself. A similar thing is happening in today's system of democracy and human rights which we inherently connect, as some warriors on terror, who love their freedom so much, are prepared to torture others to have it, so they turn it to its opposite (Žižek 2011, 29:00).

How can we detect this inner distortion, the way things go wrong, but for necessary reasons to continue the ideological vectors? When people try to actualize things but in some degree turn them into their opposite or change nothing? We can see this distortion in the everyday critique of the system, if we take a look at the news. They are full of criticism of the system as such, but all the failures (corrupted banker, corporations, politicians etc.) are presented as one-time deviations in the system as such, so we just need to fix those mistakes (Žižek 2011, 47:20). Consequently, society is all the time fixing those little problems by

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finding the guilty parties and while they think they are fixing or changing the system, they do not see this as an inherent part of the system and is what is necessary for its ideological vectors to continue. We are all the time then doing something in order that everything would stay the same (Žižek 2010, 143−144), failing to see that all these ontological catastrophes are the normal part of the current world (Žižek 2010, 121). The mechanism of differentiality helps to produce these ideas. What people see is the explicit order and what they would be able to see is the ideological text offered between the lines, how beneath the official message, ideology offers people a kind of bribery. We are all aware of distortions around the world and we do agree something needs to be done, for example, in Congo, but we turn a blind eye to get chips for our mobile phones and laptops.

Nonetheless, in the financial crisis today, the people are awakening from their comfortable numbness that forces them to re-examine the foundations of their lives. But the first spontaneous reaction to the crisis was panic, which points to "*back to the basics*" behaviour. That is how the basic premises of the ruling ideology were not questioned, but reinforced. The main job of ideology in the time of crisis is therefore to impose a narrative, a discourse, which will not blame the system holistically as such, but its secondary accidental deviations. So even though we believe that almost nothing is impossible today or at least in the near future through technology, biogenetics, physics etc., when it comes to the economy, matters become impossible. To increase investment in social matters like social programs, education or healthcare it becomes impossible due to competitiveness, but to bail out, in effect nationalizing a failing bank rather than a factory is seen as a logical self-evident move by the reasons provided to us (Žižek 2010, 162−163; Žižek 2011, 48:20).

This is the material force of ideology, where people follow the belief materially embodied into the social system. The everyday ideology decides what is possible and what is impossible. Another example of effective materiality of ideology can be found in consumerism, where the before mentioned opposing signifiers become exchangeable. Through cultural capitalism in daily life, ideology works in little things like buying a pair of shoes with which we donate another pair to the needy or going to the Starbucks coffee shop. Starbucks developed a sustainable ideological mechanism, where people upon entering the store get information that their coffee is more expensive but, one percent goes for example for saving the rain forest, one for Guatemala children, one for literacy of women etc. So they

already include into the price of the commodity the anti-consumerist solidarity aspect, so the more people consume, the more they display their social solidarity, which is part of the commodity price. By buying this product we are already participating in helping humanity and mother earth. We buy our clear consciousness to feel good and in a way keep a distance. The very relationship between egotistic consumerism and altruistic charity becomes one of exchange. We are working inside the ideological frame (Žižek 2011, 53:00; Žižek 2009, 24:30), where the economy itself is becoming the predominant ideology. This is how universities are pushed to function today, as intervention in what Kant called private space. The university's so-called freedom is taken away to produce academics in a factory way, who are useful to society. It means utilizing "intellectual freedom". The intellectual's role is or should be to reflect on the problem, use the public use of reason and here ideology does its work. It is effective because it deals with real problems and the very way people perceive them. The mystification is the way it formulates, perceives these problems for us (Žižek 2011, 30:45; Žižek 2007, 3:20).

We can now divide the conception of ideology on three different levels, influencing subjects from both the "inside" and "outside" under different concepts of ideology critique. Firstly, with the emergence of the field, ideology was perceived as an external doctrine, a complex set of ideas, theories, beliefs or concepts. It distorted the very reality from the outside due to external power interests and exploitation. On the other end of the split, ideology resides in the very notion of the thought, penetrated by hegemony as a power strategy of the ruling class. Ideology therefore always comes as an external distortion from some hegemonic group. Under further development through Adorno and Althusser, this external distortion became split in two different levels, affecting the individual from the inside with the help of the decentred symbolic order that provides identification and meaning to the subject, and from the outside as the Ideological State Apparatuses, social rituals and practices materialize ideology and interpellate the individual in the place of his inscription by the symbolic order. What we observe on this point is a certain lack of explanation of ideology being at work at the level of the "text" itself, as well as the external features of "social reality", of our social and political interactions. This latter category is then finally split into institutional apparatuses that dominate and regulate the life of individuals "from above" (ISA)

and ideology that emerges spontaneously "from bellow", out of the individual activities exercised by commodity fetishism. ISA therefore represent a materiality that always-already pertains to ideology as such, providing ideology with a form. In the contrary, commodity fetishism always-already pertains to materiality as such, as the social actuality of production. Žižek places this opposition as the ultimate opposition between the State and the Market, between an external organisation of society "from above" and seemingly spontaneous organisation "from bellow" (Žižek 2012, 17, 18).

That inevitably leads to the broader question of opposition between reality and illusion, as well as occasional outbursts of what remains from the Real (spectral apparitions, for example reproachful, burning child), as inherited part of social reality. This can be explained with the help of Lacan who says, that what we experience as reality is not the thing itself, as it is always-already symbolized, constituted and structured by symbolic mechanisms. The problem is that such symbolization necessarily always fails, as it never fully covers the Real, leaving some symbolic debt. It is this debt from the Real that remained un-symbolized, that returns in the guise of spectral apparitions. Therefore reality is never directly itself, as it represents itself only through its incomplete and failed symbolization. From this gap the spectral apparitions of the Real emerge, filling up the hole of the real, which separates reality from the Real (Žižek 2012, 21).

6.5. Legacy and critique

As we have seen, the author binds together several concepts and develops them further with the features of Lacanian psychoanalysis. He moves beyond Althusser's theory of ideology as interpellation and imagination, and like Laclau draws on Lacan to add the role of "lack" to the theory of ideology. The *lacking empty subjectivity* has to be regarded as the cause of ideological effects, for which a theory of the imagination alone cannot account (Gunder 2010, 306). That means the subjects in ideology are the cause themselves. As Žižek has remarked: "Ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality; in its basic dimension it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our "reality" itself: an "illusion" which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel," (Žižek 1989, 45). To say it with other

words, Žižek deploys Lacanian instruments to show that the horror of dealing with the unknown, leads people to construct imaginary webs, or fantasies, of what they claim can be known, and to fabricate harmonies where antagonisms reign (Freeden, 2003, 111). This is also the answer to the *End of history* thesis, since ideology is really doing its work when we do not feel any opposition between it and reality, when ideology succeeds in determining the mode of our everyday experience of reality itself (Žižek 1989, 49). Introducing *enjoyment* as a political category, Žižek claims a compulsory enjoyment is central to the contemporary doctrine of neoliberalism. The ideological interpellation in global capitalism is no longer that of the sacrificial devotion to a Cause, but in contrast to previous modes of ideological interpellation, the reference of enjoyment in all its modes. It is a guiding principle of ideological interpellation today, but not necessarily constituting specific ideological narrative. It is constructed in the Real of capitalism itself, underwriting all interrelationships. The more we claim to be free in a free world, the more we blindly submit to the command of enjoyment, which is binding us to the logic of the market (Gunder 2010, 307), as it is presented as the ultimate goal of life. The ultimate ideological effect then is not passivity or dumbness, as a conservative critique would claim, but on the contrary the deprivation of our genuine passivity. This lack of authentic passive experience serves to prepare us for mindless activity. The central form of ideology is therefore *distance*, a dimension that is generally regarded as a defence towards a direct ideological interpellation. This distance blinds us that in ideology a belief may not be a direct identification with some given order of ideas, but serves as a reflective mechanism that presupposes us not to believe (or to actually believe). To say it differently, we believe that the big Other exists and also believes and this is how we contribute to the strengthening of the ideological machine (Vighi and Feldner 2007, 31, 32).

Ideological critique for Žižek would be a deconstruction of these ideological discourses and their fantasy components of enjoyment. To comprehend the functioning of ideology we must therefore first locate its invisible centre. But since we are always-already subjects this is a demanding task. According to the author, this can be achieved through subjectivity, the libidinal content of our unconscious desires. A transmission of fantasy would allow us to think of the questions regarding the relationship between ideology and fantasy itself. When Žižek claims that in order to be ideologically effective, fantasy has to be disavowed, he is referring to the Real of fantasy. The line between fantasy as a protective, explicitly ideological, screen and fantasy as a disruptive, implicitly ideological, core is indeed

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very thin, but also very significant. In ethical terms, the only true act of freedom towards the repressive ideological predicament lies in over-identification with this gap, with the full assumption of the traumatic core of ideology. This means by identifying a moment of suspended reason, and re-inscribing a politically viable understanding of antagonism within today's increasingly saturated, self-enclosed and impenetrable ideological coordinates (Vighi and Feldner 2007, 38−40).

Through this and other chapters we can identify three major contributions of Žižek's work. His Lacanian theory of ideology, which focuses on phantasmatic beliefs and transgresive enjoyment, and accompanies ideological practices. That is to say that under a subject's conscious attitudes and explicit ideals promised by regimes (democracy, freedom, equality, etc.), ideological fantasy binds him to regimes that may be unjust. Connected to it is the re-examining of the Cartesian subject and philosophy of German Idealism from the dustbin of theoretical history. The third component is to apply this theoretical confusion to a practical understanding of modern regimes. But given this mixture of philosophy, there are certain critical problems with the theory due to the internal division of his work. Most recognisable among them is the intellectual inconsistency of his theory. Žižek's commitment to Lacan and Hegel run into inconsistencies as soon as he tries to apply "Lacanian dialectics" to politics. The criticism targets his descriptive political work, as accounts of what the world is, and his (lack) of recommendations of a way to change the world (Sharpe and Boucher 2010, 219). Sprawling from here is his notion of the radical political revolutionary Act, which was labelled as untrue to Lacan and meaninglessly violent, intervening "courageously" for intervention itself (Sharpe and Boucher 2010, 219, 220). Žižek's limitation in using psychoanalysis might be in his positioning of society or political regimes under the mechanism of the "big Other", shaping coordinates of subject's understanding and identifications of the world. Mostly using one method alone is not adequate to address the particularities of all these realms (Sharpe and Boucher 2010, 223). From here emanates the deepest criticism of his work. Instead of providing alternatives to the present neoliberal order, Žižek implies a need for an absolute breakup of everything that exists (Sharpe and Boucher 2010, 225).

The production of the social order that post-Marxists and poststructuralist envision on signifiers is therefore the role of ideology. Since free society is a chimera, ideologies are a

necessary illusion. Žižek in opposition to Marx claims they cannot disappear without creating the chaos and panic of staring into the void it will cause. However, ideology is in a state of continuous renewal, as new signifiers need to be invented to keep up the masking process when old ones lose their bite. But the secret now is that there is nothing behind the mask. If people create imaginary webs, fantasies to fabricate harmonies where antagonisms reign, they create a deep dichotomy between the self and the other. It requires a spectral, ghostly status since the "other" is a mirage and the subject's temporary identity is made together due to psychological comfort. On such views, ideologies cannot even be illusions or distortions. It is impossible to distort the truth if there is no truth and reality itself is inaccessible, since it is filtered through a network of symbols. Ideology should be recognized as a powerful indicator of the ways people construct the world through discourse. But since discourse is short-lived, it cannot create the stability that social life lacks (Freeden 2003, 111, 112).

7. Conclusion

The central thought running through the research is the development of ideological critique through different philosophical concepts in time. The whole text is concerned with seemingly basic questions of social interactions, of some fundamental organisation of our social discourse. In postmodernism and late capitalism, society and its symbolic organisations (signifiers in the form of economy, politics, culture, media ...) designate the libidinal economy of individuals today. The underlying question regards the ability of ideology to constitute every single element or individual with the help of its symbolic organisations (for example commodity fetishism) and place it on the spot of its inscription, defined by the symbolic order. There are legitimate questions to be raised to what extent individuals are led by various ideological mechanisms, as it can be argued that those patterns vary from one to another. Therefore analysing ideology necessarily stipulates analyzing its subjects, which is the reflected underlying question of this research. The level of identification of individuals with the ideological discourse is underlined by the level of social unity hegemonic ideology

provides. From the very beginning to the modern critique of ideology, philosophers have tried to point out the place where ideology retains its power and conducts the process of interpellation. Critics in modern capitalism have identified it as a category of ideological *enjoyment*, visions of personal happiness, place of particular satisfaction of desires, which are in an interwoven relationship with some sort of a signifier, promising and enforcing that enjoyment. It is the aim of this research not only to define ideological purposes or its consequences, but also to understand its origin and the conditions of production. For that reason we developed an ideological critique, guiding us through the entire reconstruction of the concept of ideology and its reflected question of individual position. In the study of ideological critique, the underlying task is aimed at the identification of interdependent relationships between individuals, society and the state in regard with their power relations. That is the reason why we divided the work of ideology along the lines of an oppositional split, influencing subjects from both inside and outside, as our theses are constructed in a way to reflect both aspects. Individuals experience ideology on two levels, on the one hand as an internal, universal, all-embracing and spontaneous experience and on the other, as an external ideological machine, distorting the perception of life from the outside.

When the early Marxist critics studied ideology as something external, distorting the reality as a *camera obscura*, it was thought that such ideological discourse was deliberately produced through false consciousness by the bourgeois, to maintain their hegemonic position. The masses merely reflected the economical interests of dominant classes, instead of their own (Jost 1995, 398, 399). Gramsci quickly spotted that such domination is based on consent, not force and as such becomes the common sense of the age through language, morality, intellect and culture. Individuals were subordinated by a diffusion of their own views of the world through fabric of society as a whole, thus seeing one's own interests as the wider interests of society. That necessarily takes into account deeper levels of consciousness and conceptions of the world (Eagleton 2007, 112, 116; Gunter 2010, 300; Heywood 2007, 7, 127; Vincent 1995, 7). Ideology secures the participation of the masses in the project of the ruling class, where individuals are mercilessly signified into the vain space of dominant interests. We already owe much to Gramsci's awareness of consensual subordination of individuals through ideological means, for the basis of our first thesis.

However, early critics regarded ideology only as an external influence of ideas, legitimizing the existing social relations. It was not until Adorno made the crucial turn towards an investigation of false consciousness and ideology that new theoretical insights were brought into the study. For him and the Frankfurt School of thought, the entire capitalist mode of production rested on false consciousness, suggesting to people that the current social order is not only rational, but also inevitable. They turned to Marx's mechanism of commodity fetishism and applied it to ideology, where it mystifies the relations between humans as relations between commodities. The nature of such exchange is the origin of false consciousness (Agger 1991, 107, 108; Eagleton 2007, 85; Eyerman 1981, 52, 53). We must note though, that the fetish character of commodities is not inscribed in the subjective false consciousness, but objectively deduced out of the social conditions from the process of exchange. In this sense, commodity fetishism is the central mechanism for constituting the actual world around us (Adorno 1979, 165; Holloway 2004, 49, 53) and has been revived and elaborated in modern ideological critique into a powerful system of explanation. The Frankfurt School attempted to prove that a capitalist experience of society not only produced a false perception of interests defined economically, but also how this experience produced a "false" sense of self. This falsity was formed through emotional cognition, while ideology served to explain and justify social conditions, seeking shelter in distorted and false explanations under the pretence to free the individual, but only to further distort reality (Eyerman 1981, 53, 54, 55). Ideology seems to intervene from the economic by providing the structure of social order. Next to the introduction of commodity fetishism to ideological critique, the Frankfurt School also established a critical difference between ideology and false consciousness.

What Adorno and his followers suggested is a concept of ideology where it provides logically consistent and ethically acceptable answers as a holistic system of truth. Gramscian consensual hegemony is in a way elaborated and internalized through the mechanism of *domination*, consisting of a combination of external exploitation and internal self disciplining, allowing external exploitation to go unchecked. Individuals internalize certain values and beliefs to rationally explain the world and participate in the division of labour (Agger 1991, 108, 109). Ideology is therefore not merely an external distortion in the form of a simple lie, but must be necessarily experienced by the subjects as the truth in order to be effective. Commodity fetishism serves as a symbolic organization, imposing the logic of capitalistic

order and constituting our social world after its reflection. That means a "voluntary" submission of subjects and objects through the form of exchange and the organisation of society as a commodity market. This is how formal submission of individuals turns into a real submission (Holloway 2004, 49, 53).

These thoughts include two crucial predispositions for confirmation of both of our theses. Firstly, it clearly indicates that certain logic and actions of subjects must come from the subjects themselves, since this is how ideology can pose as an effective lie, meaning by subject's voluntary submission. It therefore marks ideology also as an "inner" dimension, not only an external distortion, giving Althusser a firm ground to specifically determine such subordination, as well as to define the process of interpellation itself. It offers the fundamental theoretical platform for the last part of our first thesis, on perceiving the work of ideology as natural and free conduct. Secondly, it also indicates that the conception of ideology as an external smoke screen, distorting the reality from outside, is not enough. If ideology is a system that owns the truth, then an external smoke screen is not just covering the actual reality, but indicates that the ideological distortion is inherited in its core, thus confirming the first part of our second thesis.

With such development, Althusser's thought shifted from ideology as an externally derived distorted picture, to ideology as a filter of those ideas. One of the first conditions for ideological reproduction is the reproduction of conditions of submission to the rules of the established order, to the ruling ideology, which is guaranteed through different institutions of socialization. The real conditions of submission are necessarily ignored or repressed, since domination is effective only if it is concealed (Althusser 1971, 183, 184; Eagleton 2007, 142; Žižek 2012, 8). For Althusser, ideology exists when it is performed as a lived experience of the world. We practice it when we use concepts that ideology provided us with to make our way in the world. These are learned through the process of subjecting ourselves to ideology, which constitutes us as subjects with the help of ideological interpellation. This process results in subjects "working all by themselves", by material forms of ideology, realized in the Ideological State Apparatuses. Their concrete material life is the inscription of ideology, since in ideology people do not misrecognize the world, but themselves. Althusser defined this subjectivisation to ideology as individuals being interpellated as free subjects, that in the process freely submit to the higher Subject, Cause or Meaning, etc. When a subject freely

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accepts his subjection, he also carries out the gestures and actions of his subjection by himself. This leads the subject to conclude that such process is natural and necessary, which influences even in the consciousness and attitudes of the subjects. This mechanism produces a reality which must necessarily be ignored, meaning that behaviour constituted by ideology is perceived as natural and free (Althusser 1971, 182, 183, 184), thus confirming the last part of the first thesis. At the same time it also answers the beginning of the same thesis, as ideological interpellation necessarily subjects the individual to certain ideological coordinates. To further this claim, we can draw on Žižek's critique of Athusser, where he pointed out to the missing part of subject identification, which would render the ideological interpellation complete. With the help of Lacan, we approached subjectivity as the place where the process of identification takes place. The *lacking subject* stimulates desires and causes the constitution of identity through processes of identification with socially available objects of identification, such as political ideologies, patterns of consumption and social roles. The constitution of a subject in a certain environment, or as Lacan calls it, subjectivisation, is a process in which the big Other, a symbolic structure, shapes the individual. The relationship between social reality, society and the subject is then theorized as a function of political identification (Lacan in Gunder 2010, 305; Gunder 2010, 305; Lacan in Salecl, 2011, 103), corresponding to identification of ideological enjoyment as a realm of critique.

A careful reading of the above concepts and authors fully confirms our first thesis: *Ideology works and reproduces itself through mechanisms of identification and subjectivisation in such a way, that individuals do not only subordinate to its coordinates, but perceive that as natural and free conduct.* We can read this thesis in a reflective way to get to the answers for our second thesis, for which Adorno has already indicated, that some ideological distortions reside in the very core of society. Ideology posing as the truth gave ground to Althusser's interpretation of ideology as imaginary relations of individuals to their real conditions of existence.

But to return to the previous thoughts on ideological identification, we realized that it takes place between social reality, society, and the subject. Ideological identification places the actions of the subjects within the sphere of ideology and ideology itself lends the human subject enough illusion to become a practical social agent (Eagleton 2007, 141, 143). This is what Lacan described not only as the lack of the subject, but as the incompleteness of the

socio-symbolic framework of reality itself (Gunder 2010, 305). It is out of this incompleteness, the gap of failed symbolization in the social order that is unable to completely cover the traumatic core of the Real, from which distorted images emerge. The origin and causes of these spectral apparitions can be analysed and ideology can be studied on the level of its manifestation. We must bear in mind though, that the function of ideology is to do exactly the opposite, to exile the point of social incompletion, antagonism or rupture to a safely exterior site, leaving the phantasmatic appearance of totality (Brockelman 2008, 72).

We might take the opposite path of explanation, to arrive at the notion of ideological phantasm structuring our social reality as such. Althusser already made progress from previous authors by detailed theoretical analysis of the interconnectivity between ideology influencing subjects from within by symbolic order and ideology as an externality, influencing with ideological apparatuses. We learn from him that ideology simultaneously designates a subjective and objective dimension. By taking into account his definition of ideology as a representation of imaginary relations of individuals to their real conditions of existence (Althusser 1971, 163), we note, that the unmasking of ideology as merely a smoke screen to interpret the truth behind it does not suffice, as Adorno has already suggested. That would leave the question of necessity of such imagining unanswered, since people do not imagine their real conditions of existence, but above all their relation to those conditions of existence, which is represented to them in ideology. There lies the cause for the imaginary distortion of the real world (Althusser 1971, 163, 165, 166). Ideology exists in material ideological practices, rituals, and institutions, and is practised and reproduced by subjects, governed by their beliefs, which are defined by the ideological apparatus. The subjects follow the rituals in all free consciousness, as an effect of inner belief, while the external ritual generates its own ideological foundation (Žižek 2012, 12, 13). Looking from an individual psychological position, ideology then is more a set of images, symbols and occasional concepts which we live unconsciously, than a system of articulated doctrines. However, the question of the origin of these ideas remains. Althusser seems to forget, that ideology is a matter of meaning, which is not material (Eagleton 2007, 148, 149). What his theory of ideology overlooks is the semiotic value of the text itself, of how and why things are said and done, as well as the social reality structured around it (Žižek 2012, 18), namely the form of consciousness.

The form of such consciousness today is based on ideological enjoyment and is cynical by its attitude, argues Žižek (Dean 2006, 2, 8; Vighi and Feldner 2007, 29). In the late capitalism we are free to doubt in our social order and even demonstrate with massive public support. What we fail to see, is that such particular protest, solidarity or charity action, mostly means fixing the mistakes that are inherited in the system as such and are intentionally reproduced. The majority of populist movements are as well a part of ideology, as Ernesto Laclau describes in his essay *Towards a theory of populism*. They are a necessary part of it, taking time and energy of its subjects to fix them in order for the system to reproduce itself despite its traumatic Real, the necessarily hidden distortion for ideology. Ideology is therefore not reality, but the repressed Real. While some populist movements thus seem to be in contradiction with the established order, they are actually serving as an appendix, fixing the system's mistakes in order for the ruling ideology to reproduce itself further with the inherited disturbances gone unnoticed. The argument today is that individuals are well aware of particular interest behind such ideological universality, but somehow find the reasons to follow the mask (Žižek 2010, 20, 21). Whenever those practices are disturbed in functioning by emerging distorting images, we can analyse these spectral apparitions as what is left from the Real, which the symbolic order failed to integrate in our social reality. Our response to the outburst of the Real through ideology is similar to our dreamer in the Freudian dreams. We wake up in order to prolong our dreams, since the reality we would encounter going through spectral apparitions is more traumatic than the surrounding social reality with its disturbances. That is the reason we reproduce the system's coordinates with our attitudes and desires. Desiring also means an established social order, through which we learn how and what to desire. Like our dreamer, we learn through fantasy what other people want from us and thus avoid the traumatic kernel of the Real. As Lacan said, fantasy is then on the side of structuring reality. This is the process of structuring our ideological phantasm, which fills the gap between the abstract intention of an act and its actual realization, producing hesitation and fear in the process. A cynical mind, despite its ironical distance, leaves the basic level of ideological phantasm intact. This is the level on which ideology structures social reality (Žižek 2010, 21, 22, 95, 96, 105).

It is clear from this point, that any kind of external false consciousness, emanating from the hegemonic project of Marxist bourgeois, fails to see the discrepancy of what people think and what they actually do in reality. An external smoke screen should therefore not be

blamed for the distorted image of reality. In fact, this distortion is inherited into our social reality itself, in our functioning. The whole charade is possible due to the control of this image by a fetishist illusion, as it works as a small lie that enables us to control the truth. That means, what we do recognize is not reality, but the illusion itself, structuring our social reality. This illusion is then materialized in what we actually do in reality itself. In a cynical position therefore, people embody a view of possible truth, but in the last instance act as they do not possess this knowledge, producing a double illusion. It is this unconscious illusion that Žižek calls the ideological phantasm, responsible for structuring social reality (Žižek 2007, 62:50; Žižek 2010, 23, 24). In this sense, ideology works because it is exactly the opposite of internalization of external ideas. Since they emanate from the unconsciousness, we fail to see the continuous inherited logic of ideological coordinates. We tend to keep those as they are, since changing them would mean to encounter the horrible dimensions of the Real. As Žižek said, the fundamental level of ideology is not an illusion masking the real state of things, but that of an (unconscious) fantasy structuring our social reality itself (Žižek 2010, 24; Žižek 1989, 30). While we desire the best comfortable solutions for ourselves, we mostly fail to see that these can be rather unproductive in the long run, since we can point to actual temporary control of our established goals.

What inevitably follows from previous considerations and the first thesis is the answer to our second thesis: *Ideology does not work as something external, as a smokescreen, that we internalize, but on the contrary it comes as an externalized form of inner necessities to be able to predict, reproduce, explain and control the flow of events of political and social life.*

To sum up, the notion of ideology is not the idea held in the time of enlightenment. There is no specific elite group, existing for the production of abstract intellectual constructions in order to distract people from real problems. Ideology is not the false consciousness of the social character, but the character itself, when it is sustained with the false consciousness. To return to Churchill's remark about democracy, we can claim people have come to believe that the current system of liberal democracy is the best out of all the bad options, so it needs to be supported. The rhetorical attachments to depraved practices of other systems (holocaust, gulags...) serve as a reminder and help to consolidate such thinking. Despite the obvious advances for a large part of the population, democracy today is still full of flaws, as it is bending under the weight of profit interests. Massive shifts in human social

history were usually made after our encounter with some sort of horrible dimensions of the Real, emerging in outbursts of war, poverty or exploitation. Our desire to avoid it, usually adds to already existing social antagonisms that are only intensified through time. While such behaviour creates temporary stability and predictability of our social and political environment, these short term solutions inevitably lead to bigger, repressed conflicts. We have described some of such ideological behaviours and actions of the 21st century, under the current mode of production. Nevertheless, a certain note of cautious consideration must be done on this point, as the merit for their interpretation could be as well ideological. However, it is becoming increasingly clear, that even our altruistic behaviour is soaked with narcissistic intensions, exploitation and a false feeling of enjoyment. There are some serious discrepancies in the current system of liberal democracy, under which the existing democratic institutions of the state are not serving their purposes. Another political dynamic is needed, a step further from today's liberal democracy and its mode of production. The basic critique implies we should not simply invent new ideas, but to question those ideas themselves. Ideologically closed space of liberal democracy and capitalism must therefore be submitted to a rigorous critical debate, simply to see how the society should continue. But knowledge humanity is able to attain in such process, should not be taken as arrogance, but as a great responsibility.

8. Povzetek v slovenščini

Prvi teoretično nastavljen koncept ideologije sta predstavila Karl Marx in Friedrich Engels v knjigi *Nemška ideologija* (1864), ki ga moramo brati v kontekstu industrijske revolucije. Kot osnovo življenja posameznikov sta izpostavila pomembnost ekonomske produkcije in trgovanja, ki po njunem mnenju predstavljata temelje za socialno in politično strukturo družbe. Ti obenem artikulirata tudi intelektualna prepričanja, ideje, kulturo in vrednote družbe. Pri tem ima vodilni razred družbene strukture, ki ima kontrolo nad materialnimi produkti družbe, obenem tudi kontrolo nad intelektualnimi produkti družbe (Cohen 2001, 116; Marx 1976, 24; Marx in Engels v Augoustinus 1999, 298). V kolikor materialna osnova določa naš svet in vodilni razred nadzoruje njeno produkcijo ter s tem tudi intelektualno produkcijo, lahko pridemo do zaključka, da so naše misli lahko bile zmanipulirane s strani vladajoče elite. Temu konceptu sta pravila *ideologija* in deluje po načelu *camere obscure*. Ta analogija predstavi ideologijo kot obratno zrcalno sliko

materialnega sveta, kjer ima ta vlogo nekakšne zunanje dimne zavese, posledica katere je *napačna zavest*. Ta je v funkciji odpravljanja nasprotij v družbi, ki jih predstavi kot naravna in nujna ter s tem utrdi družbeno enotnost (Freeden 2007, 5; Marx 1976, 25). S pomočjo napačne zavesti vladajoč razred ohranja hegemonsko pozicijo v družbi na način, da družbene mase namesto lastnih interesov zrcalijo ekonomske interese vladajočih razredov (Jost 1995, 398, 399). Antonio Gramsci je hitro opazil, da takšna dominacija temelji na konsenzu, ne sili, ter kot takšna postane splošno razumevanje sveta skozi jezik, kulturo, moralo in mišljenje. Posamezniki se vladajoči ideologiji podredijo z dekonstrukcijo lastnih mnenj skozi tkivo celotne družbe ter tako zamenjajo lasten interes z interesi družbe. Takšen postopek pa nujno pomeni tudi preoblikovanje globljih delov zavesti in dojemanja sveta. Tako si ideologija zagotovi sodelovanje podrejenih subjektov v ohranjanju moči vladajočega razreda (Eagleton 2007, 112, 116; Gunder 2010, 300; Heywood 2007, 7, 127; Vincent 1995, 7).

Prvi kritiki so torej ideologijo obravnavali kot zunanji vpliv idej, ki so dajale legitimiteto obstoječim družbenim razmerjem v korist vladajočega razreda. Nujno eksterno dojemanje ideologije je začela izpodbijati Frankfurtska šola, ki je v svoje delo integrirala znanje marksistične ekonomije, hegeljanske filozofije ter freudovske psihologije. Eden od vodilnih figur šole je bil Theodor Adorno, ki se je posvečal študiju prej omenjene napačne zavesti. Ta je predstavljala podlago za celoten kapitalističen način produkcije s tem, ko je ljudem družbeni red razlagala kot naraven in neizogiben (McLaughlin 1999, 110, 111; Heywood 2007, 127; Gunder 2010, 301). Za analizo družbenega stanja so uporabili Marksov koncept *blagovnega fetišizma* ter ga aplicirali na delovanje ideologije (Agger 1991, 107, 108; Eyerman 1981, 52, 53). Blagovni fetišizem označuje *vrednost* blaga, ki v socialnem omrežju pridobi na videz naravne značilnosti drugega blaga – denarja. Pri tem je vrednost ene dobrine lahko definirana le z navezovanjem na drugo dobrino, ki ji predstavlja enakovredno vrednost. Tako druga dobrina pridobi zrcalno vrednost prve dobrine. Blagovni fetišizem pri tem ne pomeni zamenjavo subjektov z objekti, temveč mistificiranje dejanskih človeških odnosov z odnosi z blagom (Eagleton 2007, 85; Žižek 1989, 19). Pri tem Adorno opozarja, da fetišističen karakter blaga ni vpisan v subjektivno napačno zavest kot se morda zdi, temveč je objektivno deduciran iz socialnega procesa menjave. V tem smislu je mehanizem blagovnega fetišizma ključen za konstrukcijo sveta okoli nas, saj služi kot simbolno sredstvo vsiljevanja kapitalistične logike in ustvarjanja socialnega redu po svoji podobi. To pomeni »prostovoljno« podreditev subjektov in objektov trgovanju in izmenjavi ter organizaciji

družbe kot blagovnega trga (Adorno 1979, 165; Holloway 2004, 49, 53). Pomen mehanizma blagovnega fetišizma je bil kasneje še razširjen ter uporabljen pri sodobni kritiki ideologije. Frankfurtska šola je želela pokazati, da družba v kapitalizmu ne producira le lažne percepcije ekonomskih interesov, temveč tudi »lažno« percepcijo sebe. Ideologija tako intervenira iz domene ekonomije na način, da strukturira socialni red. Napačna zavest o socialnem redu je bila vzpostavljena skozi kognitivne procese, medtem ko ideologija služi kot sredstvo racionalnega upravičevanja takšnih socialnih pogojev. Ideologija pri tem išče zavetje v izkrivljenih in napačnih razlagah pod pretvezo, da posameznika osvobaja, medtem ko še naprej izkrivlja realnost (Eyerman 1981, 53, 54, 55). Adorno in Frankfurtska šola sta tako poleg blagovnega fetišizma v kritiko ideologije vpeljali tudi pomembno razlikovanje med napačno zavestjo ter ideologijo.

Ideologija te šole je predstavljena kot koncept celostnega sistema resnice, ki ponuja logično skladne in etično sprejemljive odgovore za utrditev napačne zavesti. Za Adorna ima ideologija formo »identifikacijskega mišljenja«, ki kot skrit mehanizem racionalnosti transformira edinstvenost in pluraliteto stvari v fantom same sebe, kjer ji je odvzet obči, naraven pomen in ji pripisan družbeno skonstruiran pomen. Identiteta je zanj primarna forma ideologije, kjer naša materializirana zavest odseva vzpostavljen red objektov in njihovih determiniranih pomenov (Eagleton 2007, 126). Adorno nakaže, da ideologija kot sistem resnice ni enostavna laž, temveč mora biti izkušena kot resnica. Pri tem je pomembno opozoriti, da realnost sama sebe ne more reproducirati brez t.i. *ideološke mistifikacije*. Pomembna razlika z Marxom se kaže v ideološki maski, ki pri Adornu ne maskira le realnega stanja, temveč je ta maska del realnosti, ki ideologijo tudi reproducira (Žižek 2010, 19, 21).

Z vstopom psihologije ter posebno psihoanalize izpod peresa Sigmunda Freuda in Jacquesa Lacana v družbene in politične vede, so se pojavili novi koncepti ideologije, ki so ideje črpali tudi iz drugih pristopov. Eden najbolj vidnih in vplivnih predstavnikov je bil Louis Althusser, francoski marksist, ki je združil prejšnje koncepte ideologije s strukturalizmom in Lacanovo psihoanalizo. Njegova teorija v eseju *Ideologija in ideološki aparati države* nam ponuja opis ideoloških aparatov države, njihovo delovanje ter interpelacijo posameznika skozi ideologijo. Althusser najprej ugotovi, da je za reprodukcijo ideologije pomembna reprodukcija produkcijskih pogojev, kar pomeni tudi reproduciranje podrejenosti vladajoči ideologiji, kar si slednja zagotovi skozi različne institucije

socializacije. Na ta način so pogoji podrejanja nujno prezrti ali potlačeni, saj je dominacija učinkovita le, kadar je prikrita (Althusser 1971, 183, 184; Eagleton 2007, 142; Žižek 2012, 8). Pri tem razdeli državo na državni aparat, državno oblast ter tretjo dimenzijo, ki jo v imenu ideologije upravljajo ideološki aparati države (IAD) in jih vsak vladajoč razred nujno upravlja za lastno reprodukcijo (Althusser 1971, 141−145). Vsi IAD torej strmijo k reprodukciji ideologije, pri tem pa ni pomembno ali delujejo privatno ali javno, saj vsi služijo istemu namenu po svoji specifični funkciji (npr. politični IAD podreja subjekte vladajoči državni ideologiji, komunikacijski IAD služi za vzpostavljanje dnevne doze nacionalizma, liberalizma, moralizma itd.) (Althusser 1971, 155, 156).

Althusser ponudi tudi novo branje pozicije subjekta v ideologiji, ki je sicer v njegovi teoriji močno determiniran. Ideologija nam namreč daje vtis, da jo je potrebno samo interpretirati, če se želimo dokopati do realnosti za njo. Vendar, če interpretiramo imaginarni transfer in njegovo inverzijo ideologije ugotovimo, da si subjekti predstavljajo svoje realne pogoje eksistence v imaginarni obliki. Takšna interpretacija ideologije izpusti vprašanje potrebe po imaginarnem predstavljanju. Althusserjeva formula subjekta v ideologiji se zato glasi: *subjekt si v ideologiji predstavljajo svoje imaginarno razmerje do svojih dejanskih eksistenčnih razmerij* (Althusser 1971, 163, 165, 166). Ti subjekti so vpeti v materialne ideološke prakse, saj avtor trdi, da ideologija vedno obstaja v materialni praksi nekega aparata. Obstoj idej subjektovega verovanja so njegova materialna dejanja vnesena v materialne prakse, ki jim vladajo materialni rituali, zapisani v ideoloških aparatih, od koder subjekt dobiva ideje (Althusser 1971, 170). Imaginarna razmerja, s katerimi si subjekti predstavljajo svoj odnos do svojih eksistenčnih razmer ima torej materialno osnovo. Subjekti namreč nakazujejo svoja verovanja skozi svoje vedenje. Na tej materialni instanci pridobijo določeno vedenjsko držo in sodelujejo pri rednih praksah določenega ideološkega aparata. V kolikor je ta na primer religijski, se subjekt podreja volji Boga, hodi v cerkev, kjer sodeluje pri praksi maše, kleči, moli in tako dalje (Althusser 1971, 168, 169). Avtor razdela tudi teorijo konstitucije posameznikov v subjekte ideologije skozi proces ideološke interpelacije. Pri tem ta novači med individuumi in jih interpelira v subjekte. Ti individuumi vselej-že so subjekti, saj ideologija deluje le od subjektov in za subjekte. Ta navidezen paradoks je razložil že Freud, ki nas je opozoril na vso ideološko proceduro pred otrokovim rojstvom (izbira imena glede na spol, obleka in oprema in barva sobe ipd.) (Althusser 1971, 173, 174, 177).

Za Althusserja ideologija torej obstaja le, v kolikor je izvedena kot doživeta izkušnja sveta. Ideološko delujemo, kadar smo s pomočjo interpelacije podrejeni ideologiji ter zavedno ali ne delujemo po njenih konceptih (Gunder 2010, 305). Ta proces pomeni samostojno delovanje subjektov skozi materialne forme ideologije, ki je vpisana v IAD. Konkretno materialno življenje subjektov je tako ideološki zapis, saj ljudje v ideologiji napačno ne prepoznavajo sveta okoli sebe, temveč sami sebe. Avtor je definiral takšno ideološko podrejenost kot interpelacijo svobodnih individuumov, ki se v tem procesu prostovoljno podredijo višjemu Subjektu, Vzroku, Zakonu in podobno. Ko subjekt prostovoljno sprejeme svojo podreditev, avtomatsko izraža tudi dejanja in geste svoje podreditve. To v posameznikih ustvari mišljenje, da je takšen red ne le naraven, temveč tudi nujen, kar pa vpliva na samo zavedanje in držo subjektov. Kot smo že omenili, mora takšen proces podreditve nujno potekati mimo našega zavedanja, če naj bo uspešen v svoji navidezni naravnosti (Althusser 1971, 182, 183, 184).

V Althusserjevi opisni teoriji so subjekti torej determinirani v svoji slepoti do ideološkega procesa. Subjekt je tako skonstruiran kot ideološki efekt, kjer mu je odvzeta avtonomija kakršnekoli konstrukcije lastne identitete. Teoretično je tako subjekt le produkt socialne strukture, brez lastne avtonomije (Eagleton 2007, 141). Na tem mestu je torej pomembno omeniti opombo Slavoja Žižka, ki s pomočjo Jacquesa Lacana določi glavno pomanjkljivost Althusserjeve teorije. Ta se nanaša na identifikacijo subjekta v procesu interpelacije, ko ta subjekt izpostavi določenim ideološkim koordinatam. Subjekt bi moral avtomatsko ponotranjiti označevalni ideološki aparat, vendar ne Althusser, ne njegova šola, nikoli niso znali pojasniti, kako ta proces poteka. Teoriji manjka ključen moment produkcije ideološkega verovanja v Vzrok in s tem povezanega efekta podreditve in prepoznanja lastne pozicije v ideologiji. Ugotovili smo, da ideologija skozi eksterne IAD vsiljuje svojo moč, katera pa za svoje delovanje lahko obide filter naše zavesti ter je uspešna, če se vsili kot travmatičen, nerazumen red. Že Pascal je razumel, da je ta ostanek travmatične nerazumljivosti ključen za samo podreditev subjekta in nasprotno kot se morda zdi, ne predstavlja motečega elementa, ki bi to podreditev pravzaprav preprečeval. Ta neintegriran presežek nesmiselnega travmatizma namreč priskrbi Zakonu njegovo brezpogojno avtoriteto s tem, da uide ideološkemu smislu ter vzdržuje ideološki *jouis-sense*. Ta lacanski termin označuje užitek-smisla lastnega ideologiji, v katerem užitek izhaja iz razumevanja sebe kot subjekta, ki užitek sproducira iz svoje nesposobnosti, da bi se končno dokopal do objekta.

Althusser namreč opredeli interpelacijo kot proces, v katerem je simbolični sistem ideologije ponotranjen v ideološko izkušnjo Pomena in Resnice, zaradi katerih subjekt verjame in deluje znotraj koordinat ideološkega sistema. Kot nam je znano, ti procesi niso vedno uspešni, zaradi česar subjekti vedno nujno ne podležejo identifikacijski vlogi ideologije. Za razlago te praznine med interpelacijo in identifikacijo, si Žižek na tem mestu sposodi analogijo Kafkinega romana *Metamorfoza*, kjer je subjekt prav tako interpeliran s strani skrivnostne birokratske entitete v obliki Zakona ali Gradu. Subjekt nikakor ne najde svojega mesta, saj ta interpelacija poteka brez identifikacije in podreditve. Kafkovski subjekt tako obupano išče sled s katero bi se lahko identificiral, saj ne razume poziva velikega Drugega (Žižek 1989, 42, 43). Lacan je namreč opozoril, da je prav »subjektivnost prostor, v katerem se odvija celotna politika identifikacije,« kar pomeni, da ravno »manko stimulira *želje* in nujno vodi do konstrukcije vsake identitete skozi proces identifikacije s političnimi ideologijami, vzorci potrošnje in socialnimi vlogami,« (Lacan v Gunder 2010, 305). Konstrukcija subjekta, oziroma lacanovska subjektivizacija je proces v katerem veliki Drugi, simbolna struktura v obliki jezika, kulture ali institucij, oblikuje posameznika. Razmerje med socialno realnostjo, družbo in subjektom ima torej funkcijo politične identifikacije (Salecl, 2011, 103).

Z zadnjimi argumenti pa smo se že približali Žižkovi teoriji ideologije, ki vsebuje koncepte prej omenjenih avtorjev skozi prizmo psihoanalize in kulturne teorije. Njegov najbolj originalen prispevek je lociranje zgoraj omenjenega *užitka* kot domene politične analize (Dean 2006, 2, 8; Vighi in Feldner 2007, 29). V današnjem sistemu liberalne demokracije smo namreč svobodni dvomiti v organiziranost družbenega reda, kot tudi protestirati z množično javno podporo. Kljub temu pa obenem spregledamo, da večina takšnih partikularnih protestov, solidarnosti in dobrodelnosti, popravlja le sistemske napake trenutne družbene ureditve, katerih produkcija je sestavni del sistema samega. Tako so razna populistična gibanja del vladajoče ideologije, kot v eseju *K teoriji populizma* ugotavlja Ernesto Laclau. Posamezniki tako na videz le začasno pustijo ob strani resna vprašanja ekonomske produkcije in socialnega redu, da rešujejo trenutne probleme, sproducirane s strani sistema samega. Resna vprašanja so tako sicer vedno na seznamu, a jih prehitijo določene človeške potrebe, ki zahtevajo naše takojšnje angažiranje. Tako do temeljnih vprašanj nikoli ne dospemo, saj se je subjektom v ideologiji lažje soočati s posledicami kapitalistične produkcije, kot z njegovim travmatičnim Realnim jedrom. Da se ta lahko reproducira, mora biti subjektom tudi nujno skrit. Ideološka tako ni realnost, ampak potlačen ostanek Realnega.

Ta v obliki potlačenih prikazni zeva iz praznine neuspele simbolizacije socialnega redu, ki ji ni uspelo popolnoma prekriti tega travmatičnega jedra. Kljub temu, da so določena populistična gibanja vsaj navidezno v nasprotju z ustaljenim redom, dejansko služijo kot njegov podaljšek, saj popravljajo sistemske napake, medtem ko se vladajoča ideologija neopaženo reproducira naprej. Argument, ki ga predstavi Žižek je, da se danes posamezniki v svoji cinični drži prav dobro zavedajo skritih interesov za navidezno ideološko univerzalnostjo, a kljub temu najdejo razloge, da jih ne upoštevajo (Žižek 2010, 19−21). V kolikor pa potlačeni deli Realnega pridejo na površje pa je naš odziv podoben sanjaču iz Freudovskih sanj, v kolikor sledimo njihovi lacanovski interpretaciji (glej poglavje 6.1.). Potemtakem se zbudimo prav zato, da lahko podaljšamo naš spanec, saj je potlačena realnost, ki jo srečamo v sanjah, hujša od motečih slik naše socialne realnosti (Lacan 1996, 55, 56; Žižek 1989, 44, 45). Podobno lahko trdimo tudi za trenutno finančno krizo, ki ljudi sicer sili v premislek družbene organizacije, vendar je bila prva reakcija na krizo panika in z njo nekakšna »vrnitev k osnovam«, namesto konstruktivnega odpravljanja krize v smeri njenega neponavljanja. To je obenem tudi razlog za reprodukcijo sistemskih koordinat preko našega vedenja in hotenja. Prepoznavanje *želje* same namreč nujno pomeni ustaljen socialni red, skozi katerega se naučimo kaj in kako želeti, saj je želja vedno želja nekoga drugega (Žižek 2010, 95, 96). Kot naš freudovski sanjač se skozi fantazmo naučimo kaj drugi ljudje želijo od nas, da se lahko izognemo travmatičnemu jedru Realnega. Kot pravi Lacan, je fantazma potemtakem v oporo strukturiranju same realnosti (Žižek 1989, 45). V tem procesu torej strukturiramo ideološko fantazmo, ki zapolni praznino med nameravanim dejanjem in dejansko realizacijo, kot stranska produkta pa ob tem nastajata strah in obotavljanje. Ciničen um naj bi tako navkljub svoji ironični distanci pustil osnovno raven ideološke fantazme nedotaknjen. Prav na tej stopnji pa ideologija strukturira našo socialno realnost (Žižek 2010, 21, 22, 105).

Pri tem se pojavlja neizogibno vprašanje nadzorovanja in vzdrževanja lastne iluzije. Ta je razložena s pomočjo fetišizma, ki je na delu, da ohranja uravnoteženo sliko socialnega redu. Pri tem je potrebno poudariti, da fetiš ne pomeni moment resnice, ki moti splošno laž, temveč majhno laž, s pomočjo katere nadzorujemo resnico. Ideologija danes tako ne deluje več na simptomatičen način, kjer ljudje živijo v laži in v redkih momentih spregledajo resnico. Ideologija danes funkcionira preko fetišizma (Žižek 2007, 62:50). Subjekti ideologije pri tem spregledajo, da so ravno v svoji socialni realnosti, v svojem delovanju, pod vplivom

fetišistične iluzije. Kar prepoznajo torej ni realnost kot taka, temveč iluzija sama, ki strukturira našo socialno realnost (Žižek 2010, 23). Ta iluzija se materializira skozi naše delovanje v realnosti. V cinični drži se torej ljudje zavedajo svoje distance do ideologije in prikrite resnice, vendar v zadnji instanci delujejo kot da tega ne vedo, s čimer ustvarjajo dvojno iluzijo. Ta nezavedna iluzija, ki jo Žižek imenuje ideološka fantazma pa je na koncu odgovorna za strukturiranje socialne realnosti same (Žižek 2007, 62:50; Žižek 2010, 23, 24). Kot pravi avtor »ideologija tako ni raven iluzije, ki maskira realno stanje stvari, ampak raven (nezavedne) fantazme, ki strukturira našo družbeno realnost samo,« (Žižek 2010, 24; Žižek 1989, 30). Na tej točki je jasno, da ideologija ni eksterna napačna zavest, dimna zavesa, ki prekriva realno stanje stvari, kot so trdili začetni marksisti (Žižek 2010, 19; Žižek 2009, 20:00). Prav tako ni dovolj reči, da je ideologija Adornov eksplicitni sistem resnice (Žižek 2010, 21), kjer vladajoči razredi podrejajo ostale. Takšno razumevanje spregleda protislovje med tem, kar ljudje mislijo ter tem, kaj dejansko počno. Znan Marxov stavek iz Kapitala »Tega ne vedo, vendar to počno,« lahko sedaj beremo kot »Prav dobro vedo, a to vseeno počno,« (Žižek 2010, 19−21). Ideologija torej ne temelji na marksistični napačni zunanji zavesti, temveč je ta napačnost vpisana v realnost samo, v naše delovanje. Ideološka ni napačna zavest socialnega karakterja, temveč socialni karakter sam, v kolikor je podpiran z napačno zavestjo.

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