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IDEOLOGY AS PRAXIS
Projekt Ideologie-Theorie's Critical-Structural Theory of Ideology

ABSTRACT

Otto Kyyrönen: Ideology as Praxis: Projekt Ideologie-Theorie's Critical-Structural Theory of Ideology
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The general objective of this work is to study the phenomenon of ideology within Projekt Ideologie-Theorie's (PIT) "critical-structural" framework. PIT's ideology-theoretical formulations have been, as it were, "forgotten" in many ideology-theoretical discussions despite the fact that they are both insightful and significant. PIT conceives of the "ideological" as a social dimension that necessitates alienated socialisation from above. PIT adopts Louis Althusser's distinction between the ideological "in general" and ideologies "in particular". However, they do so by re-historicising Althusser's formulations in accordance with Antonio Gramsci's "philosophy of praxis". PIT locates ideology not at the level of consciousness but at the level of social practices. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the role played by practices and forms of praxis in order to understand how the ideological functions. My main argument is that PIT's "practical" approach makes it possible to both deconstruct and reconstruct ideologies. It is this ability which renders PIT's critical-structural theory of ideology essential for any critical social agent and theorist.

PIT was put together by Wolfgang Fritz Haug with some of his most promising students in West Berlin in 1977. One of these students was Jan Rehmann whose writings serve as an important reference point in this work. Two of PIT's initial goals were to overcome the problems that many other theories of ideology had encountered and to figure out why Fascism had so successfully conquered the German social formation during the first half of the twentieth century.

I will analyse PIT's theory of ideology in three parts. First, I argue that the notion of praxis is found at the core of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' oeuvre. Marx and Engels were among the first writers who made use of the concept of ideology after Antoine Destutt de Tracy coined the term in 1796. PIT studies Marx and Engels' writings in order to construe philologically the most valid reading of their conception of ideology. It is important to understand that Marx saw religion as an ideological form of praxis that has a double function: it is the "opium of the people"; but it is also the "sigh of the oppressed creature". By underlining this double function of ideologies, PIT strives to understand not only what is "false" about ideologies but what about them is "true". In this regard, I also read Gramsci's and Haug's writings about a philosophy of praxis, whose concepts such as "common sense" and "social dispositive" elaborate the relation between humans' practical and intellectual activities.

Second, I focus specifically on *forms* of praxis, through which it is possible to understand that determination results from indetermination; the indeterminate practical activities of humans are channelled to determinate forms of praxis. I differentiate between forms of production and ideological forms, while highlighting that a vulgar dualism of a materialistic "base" and an ideational "superstructure" is neither present in Marx and Engels' writings nor useful for critical social theory. I propose a definition of the capitalist mode of production that consists of fourteen attributes, after which I discuss the essential notion of "objective thought-forms". Then, I analyse concepts such as "ideological powers", "interpellation", "historical bloc", and "hegemony" in order to explain how the ideological operates by the mediation of various ideological forms of praxis. From this it follows that counter-hegemony can only be brought about by participating in ideological struggles which are carried out in the ideological forms.

Third, I explore PIT's distinction between "alienated socialisation from above" and "cultural self-socialisation from below", which makes it possible to understand how the vertical and horizontal axes become intertwined within hierarchical structures of domination typical to class society. It is by the amalgamation of the vertical and horizontal axes that the ideological dimension operates. I also define PIT's concepts of "proto-ideological" and "ideological values", which are important for their approach. Then, based on PIT's theory, I construct seven methodological steps for studying ideologies, and I demonstrate their usefulness by applying them to the analysis of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism can be understood as an organic ideology that promises its subjects emancipation while subjugating them under authoritarian state apparatuses and the silent compulsion of economic relations. I argue that it is possible to deconstruct neoliberalism by emphasising the contradiction between personal freedoms and authoritarian practices, and that a counter-hegemonic project ought to bring about individual liberation by way of social emancipation.

Keywords: ideology, theory of ideology, Projekt Ideologie-Theorie, Haug, Rehmann, Marx, Engels, praxis, forms of praxis, ideological powers, Gramsci, common sense, hegemony, Althusser, interpellation

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä tutkielma käsittelee ideologian ilmiötä Projekt Ideologie-Theorien (PIT) "kriittisrakenteellisen" ideologiateorian viitekehyksessä. PIT:n ideologiateoreettiset tutkimukset on ikään kuin "unohdettu" monissa ideologiateoreettisissa keskusteluissa siitäkin huolimatta, että ne ovat erityisen oivaltavia ja merkittäviä. PIT:n mukaan "ideologinen" on yhteiskunnallinen ulottuvuus, joka saa ihmiset yhteiskunnallistumaan vieraantuneesti ylhäältäpäin. PIT omaksuu Louis Althusserin erottelun ideologiseen "yleisesti" ja ideologioihin "erityisesti", mutta PIT palauttaa Althusserin esittämät epähistorialliset ajatukset takaisin historiallisiin yhteyksiinsä Antonio Gramscin "praksiksen filosofian" mukaisesti. PIT:n teoria on kiinnostava, sillä se paikantaa ideologian tietoisuuden sijaan yhteiskunnallisiin käytäntöihin. Jotta ideologisen ulottuvuuden toimintaperiaatteita voidaan ymmärtää, onkin välttämätöntä tarkastella, miten käytännöt ja käytäntömuodot toimivat. Pääargumenttini on, että PIT:n "käytännöllinen" teoria mahdollistaa ideologioiden dekonstruoimisen ja rekonstruoimisen. Juuri tämä tekee PIT:n kriittisrakenteellisesta ideologiateoriasta keskeisen.

Wolfgang Fritz Haug perusti PIT:n lupaavimpien opiskelijoidensa kanssa Länsi-Berliinissä vuonna 1977. Yksi heistä oli Jan Rehmann, jonka julkaisut toimivat tämän tutkielman keskeisinä lähteinä. PIT:n pyrkimyksinä oli ratkaista ongelmat, joihin monet muut ideologiateoriat olivat ajautuneet, ja selvittää, miksi fasismi oli onnistunut valloittamaan Saksan yhteiskuntamuodostuman 1900-luvun alkupuoliskolla.

Aloitan argumentoimalla, että käytännön käsite on keskeinen Karl Marxille ja Friedrich Engelsille. Marx ja Engels olivat ensimmäisten joukossa, jotka käyttivät Antoine Destutt de Tracyn vuonna 1796 nimeämää termiä "ideologia". PIT tutkii Marxin ja Engelsin tekstejä konstruoidakseen filologisesti pätevimmän tulkinnan kaksikon ideologiakäsityksestä. On tärkeää ymmärtää, että Marx käsitti uskonnon ideologisena käytäntömuotona, jolla on kaksoisfunktio: se on "kansan oopiumia" ja "ahdistetun luontokappaleen huokaus". Ideologioiden kaksoisfunktiota painottaen PIT pyrkii selvittämään, miten ideologiat voivat olla "valheellisuuden" lisäksi myös "totuudenmukaisia". Tarkastelen tässä yhteydessä myös Gramscin ja Haugin kirjoituksia praksiksen filosofiasta: heidän käsitteensä, kuten "arkijärki" ja "yhteiskunnallinen dispositiivi", kehittävät edelleen ihmisten käytännöllisten ja intellektuaalisten aktiviteettien välistä suhdetta.

Toiseksi keskityn erityisesti käytäntömuotoihin, joiden avulla on mahdollista ymmärtää, että määräytyneisyys seuraa lähtökohtaisesta epämääräytyneisyydestä: ihmisten epämääräytyneet käytännölliset aktiviteetit kanavoituvat määräytyneisiin käytäntömuotoihin. Erottelen toisistaan tuotannolliset ja ideologiset käytäntömuodot ja argumentoin, ettei vulgaaria perusta–ylärakenne-dualismia löydy Marxin ja Engelsin teksteistä, minkä lisäksi kyseinen dualismi ei myöskään ole hyödyllinen kriittiselle yhteiskuntateorialle. Esitän neljätoista määrettä sisältävän määritelmän kapitalistisesta tuotantotavasta, ja tarkastelen "objektiivisen ajatusmuodon" keskeistä käsitettä. Tämän jälkeen siirryn analysoimaan termejä "ideologiset mahdit", "interpellaatio", "historiallinen blokki" ja "hegemonia", joita hyödyntämällä on mahdollista selittää, miten ideologinen ulottuvuus operoi erilaisten ideologisten käytäntömuotojen välittäminä. Nämä käsitteet auttavat ymmärtämään, että vastahegemoniaa ei voi saavuttaa ilman, että osallistutaan ideologisissa käytäntömuodoissa käytyihin ideologisiin kamppailuihin.

Tarkastelen viimeiseksi PIT:n erottelua "vieraantuneeseen yhteiskunnallistumiseen ylhäältäpäin" ja "kulttuuriseen yhteiskunnallistumiseen alhaaltapäin". Näiden avulla on mahdollista käsittää, miten vertikaalinen ja horisontaalinen akseli nivoutuvat luokkayhteiskunnassa yhteen hierarkkisten alistusrakenteiden kanssa. Näin ollen ideologinen ulottuvuus toimii vertikaalista ja horisontaalista akselia yhdistellen ja sekoittaen. Määrittelen myös käsitteet "proto-ideologinen" ja "ideologiset arvot", jotka ovat tärkeitä PIT:n teorialle. Tämän jälkeen konstruoin PIT:n teorian pohjalta seitsemän metodologista askelta ideologioiden tutkimiseksi. Osoitan näiden askelten hyödyllisyyden soveltamalla niitä uusliberalismin analyysiin. Uusliberalismi voidaan ymmärtää orgaanisena ideologiana, joka lupaa subjekteilleen vapautumista samalla, kun se alistaa heidät autoritaaristen valtioapparaattien ja taloudellisten suhteiden äänettömän pakon alaisuuteen. Argumentoin, että uusliberalismi voidaan dekonstruoida alleviivaamalla siihen sisältyvää ristiriitaa henkilökohtaisten vapauksien ja autoritaaristen käytäntöjen välillä, minkä lisäksi väitän, että vastahegemonisen projektin tulee perustua yksilöllisen vapautumisen tavoitteluun yhteiskunnallisen emansipaation keinoin.

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CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Questions

As a term, "ideology" is perhaps as ambiguous as it is popular. The meaning and nature of the concept is widely debated in social sciences, with various intellectuals presenting their own formulations. No social science has been able to establish a consensus regarding a shared theoretical framework for analysing ideologies. Quite ironically, ideology theory seems to serve as a battleground for what is called "ideological struggle".

It was the ambiguous meaning of ideology, accompanied by the fact that almost all people use the concept in their everyday life without being aware of what it might actually entail, that made me decide to study it. As a child of the early 1990s economic depression in Finland whose optimism about the prospects of adult life was also undermined by the 2007–08 financial crisis and the subsequent austerity measures, I became highly interested in understanding the intertwined nature of thought, the economy, politics, and society at large. One could say that my generation was the first that never got to experience the Finnish welfare society during its "heyday" – and, yet, the redistributive policies inherent to the Nordic welfare society were the sole reason why I was able to undertake studies at the university and, ultimately, write this master's thesis.

Theory-wise, I was initially faced with two alternatives. Either I could follow the "Foucauldian" way of rejecting the concept of ideology altogether (see Foucault 1980) or then I could embrace the "liberal" framework according to which "everything is ideological" and all we do as humans is choose between different ideologies that we like the best (see Freeden 2003; Heywood 2012; cf. Kyyrönen 2019).

But neither one of these options seems satisfactory. Michel Foucault's argument is based on his own (highly idiosyncratic) theoretical position, which he formulated in the French academic circles between the 1940s and the 80s. Therefore, we do not have to assume what he assumes, namely that the notion of ideology contains no importance. Neither did Foucault consider the option that, as Antonio Gramsci would say, the

"common-sensical" use of the concept of ideology in everyday life could very well mean that the concept carries a "healthy nucleus", one that should not be disposed of.

Second, the liberal position appears to take too much for granted as well. In order for us to see ideologies as mere "commodities" among which we choose, we need to presume that, at the core of social reality, there is a more or less of a self-sufficient individual who carries out the choosing. Such a view of the relation between humans, society, and history is simply not competent enough, since even the "individual" is a historically peculiar phenomenon.

Fortunately, I found a third alternative when I came across Jan Rehmann's book *Theories of Ideology* (2013). A group of graduate students organised a reading group at the University of Tampere where they read Rehmann's book, and, during the first session, Juha Koivisto gave a talk about the concept of ideology. This is how I discovered Projekt Ideologie-Theorie (PIT); whereas Rehmann is one of the original members of PIT, Koivisto joined the group later.[1]

The goal of this work is not only to clarify certain discussions and debates about the nature of ideology, but also to study PIT's framework, which has been, if I may use the word, "forgotten" by many discussants within ideology theory. It is my argument that PIT's approach allows us to surpass many pitfalls that many other traditions have fallen into, and, in this sense, it helps us better understand the operation of ideology within different social formations.

Obviously, my work asks the question: What does ideology mean? According to PIT, ideology is "alienated/vertical socialisation from above", which takes place within hierarchical structures of domination mediated by "ideological powers" (Haug 1983b, 10–12; Rehmann 2013a, 11; see also Pietilä 1984, 43–44). It is clear that this is where the real question lies. How should PIT's approach be understood? What are the necessary tools for conceiving of it?

In each of the following chapters I present a piece of the answer. First, I study the concept of "praxis" (chapter 2), which helps us understand the manifold ways in which humans participate in the social formation. Then, I take a look at "*forms* of praxis", which PIT grants a central role in their ideology theory (chapter 3). Following Friedrich Engels, ideological forms of praxis can also be called "ideological powers". Here we should

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[1] Both Sami Torssonen (2019) and Olli Herranen (2020) apply PIT's framework in their recent doctoral dissertations. In this sense, PIT's theoretical framework continues to play an important role in the works of Finnish social scientists.

distinguish between productive practices, which are more closely connected with the sphere of production, and ideological practices, which refer to practices that have more to do with securing the continuation of economic domination. In the final chapter, I concentrate specifically on explaining the notions of "vertical socialisation", "horizontal socialisation", "proto-ideological", and "ideological values", which are important for PIT's theory of ideology (chapter 4). I finish the work by proposing seven methodological steps for ideology theory, which I apply to the case of neoliberalism. These considerations prompt three further questions, which I consider in the following three chapters. (1) How to conceive of human praxis? (2) How to look at society as consisting of definite forms of praxis? (3) How to study the operation of ideology and the potential for anti-ideology within an antagonistic social formation?

1.2   Projekt Ideologie-Theorie

PIT was put together by Wolfgang Fritz Haug in West Berlin in 1977. At the time, Haug asked some of his most promising students to join him in an ideology-theoretical project. The goal was to overcome the problems that many other theories of ideology had encountered. There were at least three such problematic frameworks against which PIT articulated their own position. I will review them here.

First, an approach of ideology critique using the notion of "false consciousness" did not seem to lead very far (Rehmann 2013a, 6–8; 2015, 434).[2] This approach has its roots in György Lukács and the first generation of the Frankfurt school (Rehmann 2013a, 92; 2019, 112). It equates ideology simply with false consciousness, a term that is itself articulated around a crude dualism between thought and matter.[3] According to this approach, being ideological means that one does simply not see the way things truly are. From this idea it also follows that ideological humans can be turned unideological by

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[2] I also refer to this approach as "vulgar ideology critique".

[3] The term "false consciousness" derives partly from one of Engels' letters, where Engels (2010c, 164) writes that an ideologue does not recognise '[t]he actual motives by which he is impelled', which means that 'the motives he supposes himself to have are either spurious or illusory'. However, it is extremely important to understand that Engels is not speaking of "false consciousness", per se. Instead, he argues that ideologues do not recognise their own position in the social formation, which causes them to see the substance and form of their thought 'as deriving solely from thought' (*ibid*.). This leads to a situation where ideologues' thought gets "detached" from the social formation, that is, an ideologue 'works solely with conceptual material' (*ibid*.). Therefore, I argue that Engels is not making a crude separation between false and true phenomena of consciousness, on which the conception of ideology as false consciousness is based, but he is discussing the relation between one's intellectual activities and the social formation in general. PIT further elaborates this "practical" point in their theory of ideology.

telling them the truth about the world. It is obvious that such an understanding of ideology cannot explain, for example, why many lower-class people continue to vote *against* their material interests despite some, supposedly, "unideological" politicians and scientists telling them otherwise. Neither is this approach able to consider the fact that even science might have an ideological function.

The tradition of Marxism-Leninism posed a second problem (Rehmann 2015, 439; 2019, 112). V. I. Lenin made a dualistic distinction between the material "base" and the ideational "superstructure", which was based on his interpretation of the two concepts used by Karl Marx (Rehmann 2013a, 8–9). This is why Lenin saw ideology as "class ideology" determined by one's class position in society.[4]

In his book *Historical Materialism* (1921), Nikolai Bukharin presented some ideas which were included in and turned into the Marxist-Leninist dogma during the course of the 1920s and 30s (see Labica 1999b, 716–717). Bukharin's book was highly criticised by Gramsci (1992, 434–435), whose point was that a *systemic* philosophy "from above", as was expressed by Bukharin, cannot consider the importance of human praxis, the *active* role played by humans during the course of history. And, indeed, this seemed to be the case insofar as Marxism-Leninism saw history as being driven forward by the processes taking place in the "base".

The problem is that Marxism-Leninism, which equates ideology with class ideology, cannot explain, for example, why such a big part of the labour population currently thinks in bourgeois terms. If ideology is determined by one's class position, it does not make sense, again, why the bulk of the labour population votes *against* its material interests.

Finally, there is the "Althusserian" school. Louis Althusser's theoretical elaborations presented a massive forward step for ideology theory (Rehmann 2019, 112). Althusser neither separated false consciousness from the materialistic truth (vulgar ideology critique) nor equated ideology with one's class position (Marxism-Leninism). Instead, he emphasised the "relative independence" of the "ideological" in relation to

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[4] Interestingly, many non-Marxist sociologists of knowledge seem to hold a similar understanding as well. For instance, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1991, 151) argue that humans are socialised into society by "significant others", which causes them to share the views held by these significant others. According to Berger and Luckmann, this explains why humans have different "perspectives" on social reality. Therefore, each human's "ideology" seems to be determined by the position or group to which that human happens to be born. However, Berger and Luckmann do not consider why it is that our society produces so different, even *hierarchical*, "perspectives", such as *classes*.

questions of production. He wrote about the *materiality* of ideology[5], which operates through ideological state apparatuses by way of ideological "hails" or "interpellations"; ideological state apparatuses interpellate humans as ideological subjects. This can be understood in the sense that humans obtain ideological thought-forms by taking part in certain ideological social practices. Although it might be tempting to see the words "social practices" and "thought-forms" as dualistic entities, there is no dichotomic distinction between them.

However, PIT identified a problem within Althusser's theory of the ideological subject-effect, namely, the assertion according to which ideological subjection is, as it were, eternal (Haug 1983a, 11; Rehmann 2015, 434). This ahistorical argument was caused most likely by Althusser's interest in Lacanian psychoanalysis, which makes similar claims (see Althusser 1971).

Althusser's ahistorical formulation of ideological subjection is why PIT decided to re-historicise the theory of ideology, a move which also allowed PIT to understand ideology critically as a phenomenon that does not express the *full* truth about social practices. This resulted in their first book *Theorien über Ideologie* (1979).

By combining the two categorical pairs of "neutral/critical"[6] and "phenomenon of consciousness/something that somehow constitutes consciousness", Juha Koivisto and Veikko Pietilä (1996, 43) have constructed a figure that shows four alternatives for understanding ideology. Three of these four slots stand for the approach of ideology critique using the notion of false consciousness (i.e. "critical phenomenon of consciousness"), Marxism-Leninism (i.e. "neutral phenomenon of consciousness"), and the Althusserian school (i.e. "something neutral that somehow constitutes consciousness"), but the fourth one represents PIT's framework.

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[5] Rehmann (2018, 220) describes the "materiality" of the ideological by mentioning 'its reality of hegemonic apparatuses, of different types of intellectuals, and of ideological practices and rituals'.
[6] The terms "neutral" and "critical" denote, respectively, whether ideology is seen as a phenomenon that exists in all human communities or is understood as something that is only typical to class society.

	Phenomenon of Consciousness	Something that Somehow Constitutes Consciousness
Neutral Conceptions	Contesting, unified class- or group-specific world-views	Primarily institutionally based discourses or practices that produce consciousness, meanings, and/or subjects and that are engaged in constant struggle over ideological elements and topics
Critical Conceptions	"False consciousness" (opposed by science and practices enlightened by it, engaged in the anti-ideological struggle)	Projekt Ideologie-Theorie situates the above in the context of a critique of ideal socialisation (*Vergesellschaftung*) "from above"; this form of dominating social relations ("ideological in general") is embodied in the ideological powers and contested discourses specific to them

FIGURE 1.   Four conceptions of ideology (Koivisto & Pietilä 1996, 43)

By virtue of the above figure, we can grasp PIT's conception of ideology as "ideal socialisation from above". It is the goal of this work to shed light on what this formulation stands for.

However, PIT's starting point did not only concern theory, since they also set themselves the crucial task of understanding and explaining the success of German fascism (Haug 1983a, 10). Why was fascism able to win so much ground against liberal, social democratic, and socialist forces? Why did it become hegemonic in Germany?

In order to answer these questions, PIT used the notions of "praxis" and "forms of praxis", which allowed them to analyse not only orthodoxy, but also *orthopraxy*. Their argument was that different practices, as opposed to simple verbal dogma, played a central role in the rise of fascism in Germany (Rehmann 2014, 98). This study led to the publication of their two-volume book *Faschismus und Ideologie* (1980).[7]

PIT's emphasis of practices is rooted in the writings of Marx and Engels. The two Germans were among the first writers who used the concept of ideology after it was coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy in 1796 (Labica 1999a, 560). PIT makes a return to

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[7] For more works published by PIT and people working closely with the project, see Haug (1993). This bibliography contains around 150 entries.

the original "source" in order to construct the most valid reading of how Marx and Engels actually used the concept.

PIT argues that Marx and Engels operated outside the "consciousness discourse", which is described by Haug (1984a, 33) as dividing 'all things by means of its binary code' of inner consciousness and outer reality. Marx and Engels saw ideology as something that exists on the level of practices. By concentrating on practices, the two Germans did not have to separate crudely between thought and matter.

In a widely quoted passage, Marx and Engels (1998, 42) write that '[i]f in all ideology men and their relations appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process'. How should the metaphor of "*camera obscura*" be understood?

It is PIT's argument that *camera obscura* stands for a material apparatus, as opposed to some cognitive instance; *camera obscura* refers less to the internal state of mind of humans than it does to those social practices in which humans participate in their everyday life. Haug (1984a, 22; see also Rehmann 2013a, 42) explains this by writing that *camera obscura* 'stands for practice-spaces and -forms which must be conceived in the context of the complex structure of the division of labor, class antagonism and the state'. According to Haug, the real task is to study how it is possible for practices to be ideological and why this is so.

Let me finish this section by briefly summarising what are the larger stakes of this argument. Following Marx and Engels, PIT analyses social formations in their "historical motion" by looking at the specific features of each society. They argue that the increasing degree of social and economic complexity, caused by the division of labour and the production of excess product, created historically two necessary ways of answering these complexities: the market was born to govern and allocate resources; and it became useful to have a group of people who specialised in organising the social formation. However, those who specialised in organising the social formation became a separate class, because they started to appropriate the surplus product produced by the surplus labour of direct producers. This, in turn, gave rise to the class antagonism between the appropriators and direct producers. (Haug 1983a, 13; see also Pietilä 1984, 48.) This process is depicted in the following figure.
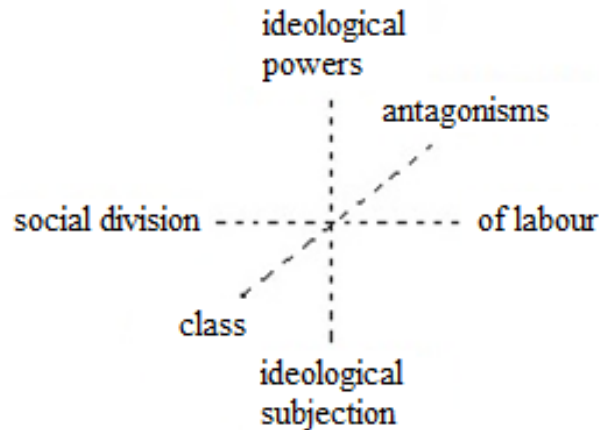
FIGURE 2.   Schematic representation of PIT's theoretical approach to the ideological (Haug 1983a, 13)

The above figure represents the axes of an antagonistic social formation. The division of labour can be understood as a "horizontal" process inasmuch as it already exists in communities where there are no state apparatuses. When the social and economic contradictions and complexities force the state to be established, hierarchical structures of domination, or class structure mediated by ideological powers, are created. This results in the "ideological" dimension, which necessitates alienated/vertical socialisation "from above". By way of ideological subjection, humans become participants in the antagonistic social formation. Therefore, the class antagonism exists somewhere between the horizontal and vertical axes.

The existence of the state signifies the existence of the class antagonism. The state, as an "ideological power" (*ideologische Macht*), arises above society as an alienated community. When humans practice their practical activities, including intellectual activities, in such hierarchical structures of domination, such as the state and class structure, their activities are "channelled" into definite *forms* of praxis. These forms of praxis are historically specific, which is why their transformations and transitions ought to be studied.

After PIT was established in West Berlin, it found its way to Finland through the lectures, writings, and studies by intellectuals such as Lauri Mehtonen, Veikko Pietilä, Kauko Pietilä, and Juha Koivisto. This explains the peculiar fact that, before Rehmann started publishing texts about the project, it was actually easier to find PIT's writings in Finnish than in English. While working as a Visiting Professor in the United States,

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Rehmann has fortunately published texts in English where he either explains PIT's position (see Rehmann 2013a; 2014; 2015; 2018; 2019) or applies it in practice (see Rehmann 2013b; 2016). I am looking forward to seeing where PIT travels next.

1.3 Overview of Chapters

Each of the following three chapters is meant to answer one question. The combination of these three answers will ultimately provide us with an understanding of PIT's conception of ideology.

The second chapter asks: How to conceive of human praxis? Here I read especially the writings of Marx, Engels, Gramsci, and Haug. I argue that Marx and Engels' oeuvre is best understood as "practical materialism", which emphasises the indeterminate role of human praxis, as opposed to some deterministic conception of history. Marx and Engels' works such as *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845/1888) and *The German Ideology* (1845–46/1932) help understand why this is the case. I also follow Rehmann's argument about Marx's interpretation of religion as not only the "opium of the people" but also the "sigh of the oppressed creature". In this sense, ideological forms of praxis have a double function in an antagonistic society: they subjugate humans, but they also provide a sense of (alienated) community.

After exploring Marx and Engels' ideas, I move on to analyse Gramsci's philosophy of praxis. Gramsci saw a philosophy of praxis as a coherent and non-systemic tradition, which asks critically about its own social genesis. His understandings of language, common sense, and philosophy are useful for conceiving of the highly intricate relation between humans' practical activities and their consciousness.

The analysis of a philosophy of praxis continues when I explore Haug's subversion of the subject-object paradigm. It is Haug's argument that this paradigm is produced by an alienated "social dispositive", which is why a critical theory of ideology ought to overcome the subject-object paradigm altogether. PIT bases their ideology theory on the critique of the subject-object paradigm carried out by Haug in the sense that they analyse how social dispositives give rise to definite thought-forms. Then, I finish this chapter by discussing Klaus Holzkamp's theory of "action potence", which offers an interesting way of conceiving of alienation. Since PIT's theory was influenced by Holzkamp's ideas, it is important to have a look at how he formulates his concept of action potence, which also paves the way for the third chapter.

The third chapter asks: How to look at society as consisting of definite forms of praxis? I start with concentrating on productive practices and defining what the concept of "capitalist mode of production" stands for. Here I propose fourteen features of capitalist social practices to which humans must subject themselves in order to successfully operate within the capitalist social formation. Then, I examine the notion of "objective thought-forms", which is used by Marx and elaborated by PIT. Objective thought-forms are thought-forms that stem, as it were, "automatically" from capitalist production. Hence, objective thought-forms are "true" – and, yet, they denote inverted practices. It is PIT's argument that objective thought-forms operate as a "sounding-board" for elaborate ideologies.

After discussing productive practices, I move on to explore ideological forms of praxis.[8] PIT's argument is that each social formation includes definite forms of praxis – namely, fields of activities – which have become determinate in the sense that the practical activities of humans are channelled to these forms. PIT then uses Marx and Engels' concept of "ideological powers" to refer to forms of praxis which result from the class antagonism and ascend above society. Two of the most defining features of ideological powers are that they produce new kinds of antagonisms to society and generate a sense of alienated "generality" to their subjects, as opposed to the "actuality" of the class antagonism. For instance, the *modus operandi* of the state is to present itself as a guardian of the "general interest".

The discussion concerning ideological powers is deepened when I review the history of Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses, which will also allow us to understand how ideological subjection operates. I read not only Althusser himself but also some of Althusser's students who tried to overcome their teacher's problematic formulations. Here I also contrast Foucault's theory of power to PIT's separation between power *and* domination. Insofar as Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses was an important point of departure for PIT, it is necessary to examine it here.

I finish the discussion concerning ideological forms of praxis by concentrating on Gramsci's concepts of "historical bloc" and "hegemony", which play a crucial role for

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[8] Here the reader might be tempted to juxtapose ideological forms of praxis with *non*-ideological forms of praxis. However, it is not that simple. PIT's argument is that it is the task of emancipatory social movements to bring about non-ideological forms of praxis within the ideological forms of praxis typical to an antagonistic social formation, which can happen only by way of constructing a counter-hegemonic "historical bloc". This also requires resolving the class antagonism and moving past the "state form" of society. These themes will be discussed more thoroughly in the third chapter (see section 3.3).

PIT. I demonstrate the importance of these concepts by analysing, respectively, Brecht De Smet's and Rehmann's applications of them to the 2011 occupations of Cairo's Tahrir Square and New York's Zuccotti Park, which serve as examples of counter-hegemonic social movements. These cases then lead me to briefly discuss Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential election campaign in the United States as another example of counter-hegemonic projects, with the exception that Sanders' campaign operated within the institutions of representative politics, although Sanders mobilised grassroots movements as well. These three different kinds of counter-hegemonic projects make Gramsci's concepts more understandable.

The fourth chapter asks: How to study the operation of ideology *and* the potential for anti-ideology within an antagonistic social formation? I start the chapter with examining PIT's analytical concepts of "alienated/vertical socialisation from above" and "cultural/horizontal socialisation from below". Vertical (or alienated) socialisation stands for a form of socialisation through which humans become members of hierarchical structures of domination, whereas horizontal (or cultural) socialisation refers to a collective form of socialisation that manifests when humans relate to one another democratically as equal social beings. It is the amalgamation of these two types of socialisation that explains how the ideological dimension operates in class society. Then, I explain two other concepts used by PIT, those of "proto-ideological" and "ideological values", which shed more light on how the ideological dimension is born in the first place.

In the latter half of the fourth chapter, I propose seven methodological steps for studying ideologies, which are based on PIT's ideology-theoretical approach. Then, I use the rest of the chapter to illustrate the usefulness of PIT's theory by applying it to the analysis of neoliberalism. The goal is to demonstrate how a critical theory of ideology could both deconstruct ideologies *and* reconstruct their "healthy nucleus".

The reader might now be tempted to ask: Why is only the fourth chapter devoted explicitly to the issue of ideology, if the overall goal of this work is to better understand what ideology means? My answer is that I have structured this thesis as I have in order to avoid and overcome the prevalent way of understanding ideology, that of the consciousness discourse. If I had started this thesis by explicitly analysing the issue of ideology, there would have been a greater chance that the reader intuitively would conceive of my discussions within the consciousness discourse. Now that the emphasis is on (social) practices, the meaning and importance of the analyses presented in the fourth chapter will be much more understandable.

Before moving on to the second chapter, let us take a look at a brilliant passage found in Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (1886), which sums the task at hand wonderfully. Engels writes:

> 'Men make their own history, whatever its outcome may be, in that each person follows his own consciously desired end, and it is precisely the result of these many wills operating in different directions and of their manifold effects upon the world outside that constitutes history. Thus it is also a question of what the many individuals desire. The will is determined by passion or deliberation. But the levers which immediately determine passion or deliberation are of very different kinds. In part they may be external objects, in part ideal motives, ambition, "enthusiasm for truth and justice", personal hatred or even purely individual whims of all kinds. But, on the one hand, we have seen that the many individual wills active in history for the most part produce results quite other than those desired – often quite the opposite; that their motives, therefore, in relation to the total result are likewise of only secondary importance. On the other hand, the question also arises: What driving forces in turn stand behind these motives? What are the historical causes which transform themselves into these motives in the minds of the actors?' (Engels 2010b, 387–388)

Engels explains that often in history the effects of humans' actions differ significantly from the conscious motives behind these actions, on top of which the actions and motives of humans are based on forces of which they are themselves not aware. These two points get to the heart of ideology. It is only by understanding the role played by human praxis that we are able to become aware of those forces which deem certain motives *intuitive*.

2 PRAXIS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to discussing the notion of praxis[9], a term which is perhaps as manifold as it is important. The underlining tenet of a "philosophy of praxis"[10] – a term coined originally by Antonio Labriola (see Rehmann 2013a, 62) – is to understand how to philosophise critically about praxis as well as how to understand philosophy as a historically determined "field" of social practices. When the concept of praxis is comprehended specifically in relation to actually existing social practices and struggles, and not simply as an abstract concept, it can help us understand the sophisticated ways in which humans' thought and their practical activities interact with and traverse one another. Projekt Ideologie-Theorie (PIT) builds their theoretical apparatus on such insights, which is why they will be discussed here.

However, one immediate problem is that the concept of praxis, already present in the writings of such thinkers as Plato and Aristotle, has a considerably long history. And since this history conveys certain meanings to the term, the narrative presented in this chapter begins only from the nineteenth century. I believe this choice to be a defensible one insofar as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' work rearticulates the concept's meaning and thus introduces a moment of rupture in relation to previous writers who theorised about praxis.

In the first half of this chapter, I read Marx and Engels' early writings in order to argue that they did not hold a "vulgar" materialist conception of language, consciousness, history, and society. Instead, Marx and Engels saw humans' *practical* relation to nature and each other as the key insight on which the ideas and political activities of the two Germans were based. This is why I believe Wolfgang Fritz Haug to be correct when he

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[9] It should be highlighted that "praxis" is never a singular concept inasmuch as it refers to manifold social practices that intersect and even contradict each other. In this sense, I will use the two terms "praxis" and "(social) practices" interchangeably throughout this work.

[10] I emphasise the critical and non-systemic nature of a philosophy of praxis by never accompanying it with the definite article. I only talk about *a* philosophy of praxis as an open but also coherent "tradition".

uses the term "*practical* materialism" to refer to Marx and Engels' work, which also questions the accuracy of the infamous base-superstructure dualism.

I use the latter half of the chapter to discuss the writings of, respectively, Antonio Gramsci and Wolfgang Fritz Haug, both of whom have made use of the ideas put forth by Marx and Engels. The first subsection discusses Gramsci's philosophy of praxis, which has a lot to do with his insights about language, common sense, and philosophy. The immanent nature of Gramsci's critique – that is, his way of basing social critique on the "good sense" of common sense – presents one alternative framework to the traditions of Marxism-Leninism and "dialectical materialism", which are similar in many respects.

The final subsection analyses Haug's arguments for subverting the subject-object paradigm, since it serves as a point of departure for PIT's theory. Haug underlines the role played by the "social dispositive" of thought, which stands for those social practices, and their definite forms, by which humans become aware of their social existence. Haug examines René Descartes' reasoning of "*cogito ergo sum*" as one such case where the social dispositive produced Descartes' conception of a subject-object dualism. Consequently, Haug argues that the phenomenon of ideology should be studied not within the subject-object paradigm but by understanding that it is the social dispositive which is ideological. I then conclude the chapter by having a look at Klaus Holzkamp's notion of action potence, which will allow us to better understand PIT's theory of ideology and the discussions of the third chapter.

2.2   Marx and Engels' Practical Materialism

Before turning our attention to Marx and Engels' writings, we should consider the general importance of the concept of praxis for Marxist theory. W. A. Suchting (1983, 118–120) distinguishes between two ways of understanding the tradition of historical materialism. In the first place, it is possible to counter the "individualist" emphasis of bourgeois social theory by underlining that social relations precede individuals; for instance, when humans are born, they are socialised to become appropriate members of society. There are thus certain social practices, relations, and structures already at play into which every new-born is socialised. This is highlighted by the "relational" conception.

However, Suchting (1983, 119–120) argues that the emphasis on social relations merely turns the critiqued object on its head. Instead of individuals existing before social relations, we have social relations existing before individuals. The problematic is not

overcome but turned over. This is why Suchting argues that we ought to find another approach that allows us to think altogether differently. Fortunately, we can find such an approach in Marx and Engels' writings. Suchting explains this second way of understanding historical materialism, which allows us to truly undermine the bourgeois emphasis of the individual, by writing that

> '[t]he only way to escape this entirely is to cease setting things up in terms of individuals on the one hand, and relations on the other, and to make fundamental the idea of modes of transformation as articulated in the notion of a practice. What is determinant about the character of a practice is neither the objective material which is transformed nor the executor of the transformation, but the means by which the transformation is effected, means which determine both what sorts of materials may be transformed and also the nature of the activity of the executor of the practice. Thus a central intent of the relational conception, namely, the demotion of the individual as a primary explanatory factor is preserved.' (Suchting 1983, 120)

Indeed, Marx (2010e, 30), too, writes that '[p]roduction therefore produces not only an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object'. It is neither the subject nor the object that is primary, since practices – or *forms* of praxis – posit both subjects and objects.

As the concept of praxis seems to propose a new way of understanding the tradition of historical materialism, this first section is dedicated to analysing what kind of a role praxis plays in Marx and Engels' writings: we will start with their view on the relation between praxis and "religious forms"; proceed to their ideas about the five "moments" of history; and finish with their conceptions of language and consciousness. This will pave the way for Gramsci and Haug.

2.2.1   Praxis and Religious Forms

Marx wrote *Theses on Feuerbach*[11] (1845/1888) in order to come to terms with the theoretical framework he and Engels were developing. Although the text is rather brief – it contains only eleven short theses –, it is a highly significant piece of writing for anyone trying to understand Marx and Engels' arguments. We should therefore pay special attention to these theses.

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[11] *Theses on Feuerbach* was written by Marx in the spring of 1845, after which the text was edited and published by Engels in a revised edition of *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* in 1888. I have decided to refer to Suchting's translation of the text, which he presents in his article "Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*" (1979). Suchting's translation is based on the first version written by Marx. In this work, I will refer to *Theses on Feuerbach* by simply marking the quoted thesis (e.g. *ThF*, Thesis 1).

In the first thesis, Marx (*ThF*, Thesis 1) discusses the dialectical relation between materialism and idealism by writing that '[t]he chief deficiency of all materialism up till now (Feuerbach's included) is that objectivity, reality, the sensible world is conceived only in the form of the *object or of observation*; not however as *sensible human activity*, *practice*, not from the aspect of the subject'. Engels (2010b, 388) further explains that the old materialism takes for granted the "ideal" driving forces of history, such as the conscious motives of historical figures, without studying the (unconscious) driving forces behind such ideal driving forces. This is what G. W. F. Hegel's philosophy of history brings to the table insofar as it 'recognises that the ostensible and also the actually operating motives of men who act in history are by no means the ultimate causes of historical events; that behind these motives are other motive powers, which have to be explored' (*ibid.*).

The problem with Hegel's philosophy of history, however, is that it imports these "motive powers" from philosophical ideology and not from history. In this sense, Hegel's idealism is limited, since it does not really grasp what sensuous activity is. Out of this conflict between the old materialism and Hegel's philosophy arises Marx and Engels' own project, which can be named "practical materialism" (Haug 2011, 209).

Marx devotes the second thesis to discussing the nature of truth and the function of philosophy. He argues that, ultimately, "objective truth" is less a theoretical question than a practical one, which can be understood in the sense that all questions stem from certain practices. As Marx (*ThF*, Thesis 2), writes '[i]n practice must man prove the truth, that is reality and power, this-worldliness of his thinking'. Although we are not yet fully capable of grasping this idea, it can still be said that the questions posed by humans are determined by those forms of praxis to which the practical activities of humans are channelled. For example, the mental labourers' inclination to ask for the abstract attributes of "objective truth" implies that they live in a social formation where intellectual forms of praxis are somewhat alienated from the "immediately practical life".[12]

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[12] I understand "immediately practical life" to refer to experiences of those humans whose everyday life consists of praxis *par excellence*, that is, those humans whose practical activities are not elevated above the social formation (like in the case of mental labourers) but whose inner, intellectual life is more or less directly related to the sphere of production. For instance, a working-class woman working as a practical nurse (*lähihoitaja*) in the public sector – thus taking part in the practices of social reproduction in the form of wage labour – is less likely to intuitively come up with the idealist conclusion that material reality is secondary to the movement of the Spirit trying to come to terms with its own identity than is a mental labourer whose family background is in the bourgeois class and who has never been forced to come face to face with the practical, *material* realities of low-wage labour and poverty.

This is why Marx (*ThF*, Thesis 2) argues that those philosophical problems that are articulated only in relation to abstract thought or "pure" consciousness – to which he refers as "scholastic questions" – are more or less alienated from the horizontal level of society; '[t]he dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking – that is isolated from practice – is a purely *scholastic* question'. This statement is enforced in the eighth thesis where Marx (*ThF*, Thesis 8) writes that '[a]ll mysteries that turn theory towards mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice'. That is, all theoretical mysticisms find their rational solutions when one takes into account the relations between forms of praxis and thought-forms. Engels (2010b, 367) repeats this same point by explaining that '[t]he most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical quirks is practice, namely, experimentation and industry'.

Peter D. Thomas (2009, 307–308) points out that the second thesis signifies a dismissal of a "metaphysical" point of view.[13] That is, when studying social, political, and philosophical questions, one should not refer to abstract conceptions such as "Truth", "Knowledge", "Being", and so forth. Instead, one should study how such alienated concepts and notions are produced, and even necessitated, by the material and mundane functioning of the social formation.

This is a theme further elaborated in the fourth, fifth, and sixth theses, where Marx criticises Ludwig Feuerbach for presuming an ahistorical notion of human nature. Against Feuerbach, Marx argues that

> 'Feuerbach resolves the essence of religion into the essence of *man*. But the essence of man is no abstraction indwelling in each separate individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations.' (*ThF*, Thesis 6)

The mistake of presuming an ahistorical human nature leads Feuerbach, first, to view the religious sentiment as an ahistorical and universal feature typical to all humans and, second, to conceive of human nature as a static and "mute" essence hidden in every human individual (*ThF*, Thesis 6; see also Engels 2010b, 375–377). Because of this mistake, Feuerbach is not able to understand the religious sentiment as an effect produced by specific kinds of social practices which constitute the social formation.

In other words, Marx criticises Feuerbach for only reducing the essence of religion back to its "secular basis", thus moving methodologically from religion towards secular

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[13] Here the term "metaphysical" refers to those ways of thinking that do not take into account the practical relation between forms of praxis and thought-forms.

practices. Instead, Marx states that, by doing so, Feuerbach disregards the most important task which Marx describes as follows:

> 'that the secular basis takes off from itself and establishes itself as an independent realm in the clouds can only be explained in terms of the inwardly riven and inwardly contradictory character of this secular basis. Therefore this itself must both be understood in its contradiction and revolutionized in practice. Thus once for example the earthly family is revealed as the secret of the holy family, the former must itself be destroyed in theory and in practice.' (*ThF*, Thesis 4)

This is to say that the "practical" method begins by examining the contradictions inherent to the social formation, after which it moves on to study religion as something that is necessitated by contradictory (or antagonistic) social practices and relations. The practical method starts from the practical "basis" and moves towards the religious sphere where social contradictions are expressed and dealt with. This emphasis of social practices is, in my view, one of the most paramount insights of historical materialism and, indeed, the same one that Marx carries out in the first volume of *Capital* (1867), his *tour-de-force*. There Marx writes that

> '[i]t is, in reality, much easier to discover by analysis the earthly kernel of the misty creations of religions than to do the opposite, i.e. to develop from the actual, given relations of life the forms in which these have been apotheosized. The latter method is the only materialist, and therefore the only scientific one.' (Marx 1976, 494)

David Harvey (2010, 8) describes Marx's method as a dialectic between the two methods of "descent" and "ascent": first, we look deeper into the immediate reality around us in order to find the 'concepts fundamental to that reality'; and, second, 'we can begin working back to the surface'. Although Harvey's depiction might be accurate, one should still be extremely careful with such metaphors of "descent" and "ascent" insofar as they pose the danger of activating the dualistic-deterministic (mis)understanding of Marx and Engels' oeuvre. In reality, one neither descends to the "base" nor ascends to the "superstructure". Instead of a predetermined dialectic between the material base and the ideational superstructure, Marx's method emphasises the roles played by (antagonistic) social practices, relations, and structures, which is why this method helps us understand the interplay between the forms received by humans' practical activities and their thought-forms. Haug provides a more thorough description of this method of "ascent" by writing that

> 'Marx solved our original problem, which appeared to be a *Munchhausen* dilemma, by grasping the object in the "history of its formation" – that is, by analyzing its

movement and development in the practical, mediating connections of its necessity. To sum up this pioneering scientific rule in a formula: Marx solved the fundamental social-scientific problem, not analytically-reductively, but "from the bottom to the top" – and that is what is meant by the dialectical materialist methodology. […] Science emancipates itself from the narrow, unscientific forms in which it originally developed, only when the directly given forms are mediated – i.e. when its real mediatedness can be theoretically grasped.' (Haug 1977, 13; see also 2017, 65)

In other words, the social formation consists of definite forms of praxis that are "articulated" in relation to one another – and science is one of such forms. This means that participating in the practices of everyday life causes humans to develop certain thought-forms and common-sensical understandings of the social formation, and only a truly scientific method, presented by Marx, allows us to grasp science as one of such forms of praxis as well as to conceive of the reasons why certain forms of praxis prevail in society when others do not.

How should we understand, in Marx's (1976, 494) words, these "forms" in which the actual, given relations of life have been apotheosised? The basic idea is that humans always reproduce the means of their survival by functioning together in a definite kind of social formation and that, by living and operating in each social formation, their activities start to adopt very specific and recurring patterns, forms (see Rehmann 2018, 215; see also Silvonen 1985, 7).

For instance, the capitalist mode of production is mainly based on the private ownership of the means of production, which forces most humans to carry out wage labour and, therefore, sell their labour power in the labour market – otherwise they would have no source of income. This social relation, which constitutes the capitalist process of production, is antagonistic insofar as it is based, first, on preventing most humans from using the means of production without selling their labour power and, second, on the exploitation of wage labour carried out by capitalists in order to generate profit. This is to say that, when humans operate in the capitalist mode of production, they must succumb to these *forms* of praxis in order to reproduce their everyday existence. This is why Marx uses such concepts as "value-form", "commodity-form", and so forth, which are practices that have become "objectified" in the capitalist mode of production, that is, they have obtained definite forms.

The sphere of production is not the only social domain where we should concentrate on the role played by forms of praxis. Jussi Silvonen (1991, 193–196) argues that the social formation should be divided into three analytical levels: first, there is the economic level which emphasises relations of production (i.e. class relations) and the principle of

exploitation; second, we should also focus our attention on historically transforming institutions and discourses whose function it is to produce domination; and, third, we must not forget the (individual) psychological level which concerns the mechanism of "ideological subjection". These ideas will be discussed throughout this thesis, but for now it is important to understand that the concept of "form" lies at the root of all these analytical levels, which is why it will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter.

Following in Marx's footprints, one of PIT's main goals is to highlight that all kinds of social formations necessitate very intricate, sophisticated, and complicated modes of sociality. That is, every social formation includes a degree of "common-being" (*Gemeinwesen*) as an essential property without which humans could not reproduce their existence and thus stay alive. PIT's critical theory of ideology strives to theorise how the "horizontal" level of society is hijacked by oppressive and hierarchical social structures that exist in class societies. According to this idea, the ideological dimension is understood as something that depicts alienated socialisation from above. This socialisation then produces a sense of alienated community for its subjects, which is a topic on which I will concentrate in the final chapter.

In this regard, there has been a vast debate concerning Marx's (2010c, 175) phrase the 'opium of the people'. Vulgar ideology critique has used this phrase to claim ideology to be false consciousness. However, this interpretation seems problematic when one takes into account what Marx (*ibid.*) wrote right before he mentioned opium, that is, '[r]eligion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions'.

Emphasising the importance of this latter phrase, Jan Rehmann (2013a, 27) argues that the expression "opium of the people" could actually signify a twofold notion of religion – that is, it is possible to read Marx's critique of religion consisting of '*on the one hand* a "sigh of the oppressed creature", and *on the other hand* an imaginary and paralyzing "opium of the people"'. Rehmann sees the sigh of the oppressed creature and the opium of the people as two sides of the same coin and underlines their dialectical relation. Religion is not a mere mental distortion of material reality, but it consists of social practices that stem from an antagonistic social formation which allows the full realisation of neither the "heart" nor the "spirit". In effect, religion is one of the *ideological* forms of praxis created by humans who are trying to seek emancipation in an oppressive social formation.

Marx saw religious forms of praxis as products of class society. Religions can be understood as (alienated) communities that serve a double function: first, they provide humans with "shelter" in an oppressive social formation; and, second, they subjugate their members to religious practices and ideas. In this sense, Marx comprehended religion as something more than mere "false" or "mental" phenomena. Religion exists because it is materially practiced and the reason why it is materially practiced is because it provides people with some safety in an antagonistic social formation, while it subjugates people to embrace alienated conceptions about the world. If one understands Marx's (immanent) critique of religion in this way, it is easy to see how the (mis)interpretation of religion merely as a false and ideational instance, which is typical to vulgar ideology critique, actually prevents us from understanding Marx's original insights.

Rehmann's (2013a, 29) argument is based on a philological analysis, because he points out that there are in fact two textual levels apparent in Marx and Engels' writings about religion and ideology: there are 'on the one hand a terminology belonging to a Feuerbachian critique of religion'; and 'on the other hand a significant theoretical paradigm-shift towards an analysis of the contradictions of class societies, of their "inner-strife"'. Similarly, Haug (1991, 93–94) maintains that Marx and Engels were forced to use the concepts of their time which conveyed some unintentional implications into their discourse. These implications are the reason why there are currently so many differing readings of Marx and Engels' concept of ideology (see Koivisto & Pietilä 1996; Pietilä 1991). Rehmann (2013a, 29) notes that one such term is "inversion", which can be understood both as "false consciousness" and as "alienation". Louis Althusser describes this same issue when he writes that

> 'this problematic *avowed* by the eighteenth century from Locke to Condillac, is profoundly present in Hegelian philosophy, however paradoxical this may seem; and that Marx, for the reasons we are analysing, *had to use it* to think the lack of a concept whose effects he had produced nevertheless, to formulate the (absent) question, i.e., that concept, which he had answered nevertheless in the analysis of *Capital*; that this problematic has survived the wear it received from its twisting and distortion by Marx who transformed it *in fact*, although he still used its terms (appearance and essence, outside and inside, inner essence of things, real and apparent movement, etc.); that we find it at work in many passages of Engels and Lenin, who found a motive for its use in the ideological battles in which the most urgent parrying was required beneath the enemy's brutal assault and on his chosen "terrain", first of all by turning against him his own weapons and blows, i.e., his ideological arguments and concepts.' (Althusser 2015, 38)

If Althusser, Haug, and Rehmann are correct, a large part of the debate concerning the concept of ideology can be solved with a careful re-reading of the original texts. This has, in turn, multiple consequences for the discipline of ideology theory, which Rehmann describes as follows:

> 'Read in this way, one approaches a dialectical understanding of religion as a field of contradictions which contains potentially activating and paralysing dynamics. The task of critical theory would then be to take the sigh of the oppressed seriously and enlighten it in a way that it overcomes the illusionary forms in which it was expressed.' (Rehmann 2013a, 27)

According to Rehmann (2013a, 54; see also Haug 1991, 101), no longer can ideology be grasped as a term that denotes a mere "castle in the sky" type of misconception. Instead, ideology should be viewed as a concept that refers to the complicated dialectic between forms of praxis that both pacify *and* activate. Furthermore, thought-forms that stem from these forms of praxis are, in actual fact, "true" in the sense that they are really practiced in the social formation. According to Marx and Engels' early texts and the critical method apparent in them, it is less important to "debunk" ideologies than to deconstruct *and* reconstruct them.

By emphasising these aspects of Marx and Engels' oeuvre, we can leave behind the vulgar approach of ideology critique and move towards the critical school of ideology theory proposed by PIT, one that is more aligned with the method of trying to understand the contradictory and antagonistic forms adopted by social practices, relations, and structures.

2.2.2 Moments of History, Language, and Consciousness

For now, we must look at yet another early text written by Marx and Engels, that of *The German Ideology*[14] (1845–46/1932). Here Marx and Engels distinguish between five "moments" typical to human life which explain how the human animal exists in the social formation. By doing so, Marx and Engels (1998, 48) aspire to 'give the writing of history a materialistic basis'.

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[14] *The German Ideology* consists of a set of manuscripts which were written in 1845–46. A debate concerning the credibility of later editions of these manuscripts exists (see Carver 2011), but I will nonetheless treat *The German Ideology* as a legitimate part of Marx and Engels' oeuvre.

However, we should first say a few words about this "materialistic" interpretation of history. It should be clear from the very start that Marx and Engels discuss "moments" and not "stages", since they explicitly state that

> '[t]hese aspects of social activity are not of course to be taken as [...] different stages, but just as [...] aspects or, to make it clear to the Germans, [...] "moments", which have existed simultaneously since the dawn of history and the first men, and which still assert themselves in history today." (Marx & Engels 1998, 48; see also Rehmann 2013a, 24)

The reason why this terminological point is so important is that, by differentiating between *simultaneous* moments and *chronological* stages, it is possible to defend Marx and Engels against those charges that blame them to have been promoting an "evolutionistic" view of society and history.

It is central to emphasise this "non-evolutionistic" reading of Marx and Engels, since the usefulness of an evolutionary framework for the analysis of social and political phenomena is highly questioned today. The evolutionistic (mis)understanding of Marx and Engels' writings delimits the number of productive collaborations between Marxist and other kinds of critical theories. For instance, Amy Allen (2016, 8–9) claims that Kant, Hegel, and Marx were basically the same, since they all allegedly embraced deterministic conceptions of development, ones that are also typical to evolutionistic frameworks.[15] Allen (*ibid.*, 8) writes that 'these classical philosophies of history rested on metaphysically loaded conceptions of the goal or telos toward which progress aimed, whether that was understood as the realization of the kingdom of ends on earth, the attainment of the standpoint of Absolute knowing, or communist utopia'. However, the central role assigned to praxis in Marx and Engels' texts undermines Allen's generalising claim.

Let us now focus our attention specifically on *The German Ideology*. According to Marx and Engels (1998, 47–48), humans first need to satisfy their most elementary needs, such as the needs of eating, drinking, housing, and so forth. The second moment is that, while humans produce the means to satisfy their elementary needs, humans produce new

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[15] In this regard, researchers working in the contemporary *MEGA* project (*Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*) have put forward interesting arguments. For example, Marcello Musto (2011, 14–15) argues that an evolutionistic understanding of history was created by figures such as Karl Kautsky, who was a member of the Second International. It has been an objective of PIT to argue against these kinds of accusations directed towards Marx and Engels.

kinds of needs. Marx and Engels (*ibid*., 48) state that, as such, these two moments constitute the "movement" of history.

The next two moments overlap insofar as they both have to do with humans propagating other humans. Marx and Engels propose a twofold concept of "production of life" (*Produktion des Lebens*), according to which humans produce new humans not only biologically by procreating with one another but also by coming together in historically definite social practices, relations, and structures in order to guarantee one another's survival. They write:

> 'The production of life, both of one's own in labour and of fresh life in procreation, now appears as a twofold relation: on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a social relation – social in the sense that it denotes the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end. It follows from this that a certain mode of production, or industrial stage, is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a "productive force".' (Marx & Engels 1998, 48–49; see also Rehmann 2013a, 24)

For example, during the early stages of industrial capitalism production functioned hand in hand with working-class families where it was men's job to do wage labour in factories and women's job to do unpaid labour inside the household. In Marx and Engels' view, the family institution should be examined less as a biological necessity than as a historically definite form of praxis that functions differently in different kinds of social formations.

The history of humanity is inherently related to the history of different forms of co-operation, such as industry (i.e. relations of production) and exchange. Human nature is a highly adaptable entity, determined by the manifold relations typical to each social ensemble. This is what Marx (*ThF*, Thesis 6; see also Fine & Saad-Filho 2016, 10) means when he writes that human nature 'is the ensemble of social relations'.

Now we can finally move on to the fifth and last moment presented in *The German Ideology*. Marx and Engels argue that consciousness is a social product which arises due to humans interacting with each other. They write as follows:

> 'The "mind" is from the outset afflicted with the curse of being "burdened" with matter, which here makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, of language. Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical, real consciousness that exists for other men as well, and only therefore does it also exist for me; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men. […] Consciousness is therefore from the very beginning a social product and remains so as long as men exist at all.' (Marx & Engels 1998, 49–50; see also Rehmann 2013a, 23–26)

Thus, the term "consciousness" should be understood neither in the materialist nor in the idealist senses of Marx and Engels' time: the former grasps consciousness as a simple effect of matter; and the latter alienates consciousness from its social environment. The issue of consciousness is much more sophisticated, and it is exactly the task of ideology theory to solve it.

Strikingly, Marx and Engels state that both language and consciousness derive from the *practical* necessity of intercourse with other humans, which is why the dualism of a "materialistic" base and an "ideational" superstructure is not adequate. Therefore, Rehmann (2013a, 25) argues that consciousness 'could *only* be understood as an integral part of life-practices, and, therefore, as a composite of social relations'. Consciousness is not directly reducible to the mere movement of matter – which is a view promoted by "vulgar" materialism – but, instead, we should analyse the ways in which forms of social practices and thought-forms coexist with and penetrate one another.[16] The latter half of this chapter will explore the significance of understanding language and consciousness as human praxis.

Juha Koivisto (1983, 47–48) makes this same point by arguing that Marx's conception of value, which is presented in the first volume of *Capital*, would be unintelligible if one tried to understand it simply in terms of objective reality being imprinted or replicated in the mind. According to this line of thought, value-form becomes "objectified" in the capitalist mode of production due to a definite form of praxis, that of commodity exchange; the reality-mind dualism does not apply here. The same goes for language insofar as words have no meaning outside their practical usage – and, yet, words obtain an "objective" and relatively independent existence despite the fact that they are "objectified" forms of the sensuous and practical activities of humans. As Marx (1976, 167) writes in the first volume of *Capital*, 'for the characteristic which objects of utility have of being values is as much men's social product as is their language'.

One person who seems to have misunderstood this aspect is Terry Eagleton. Eagleton (1991, 75) argues that Marx and Engels promoted "real life" over "meaning", which leads him to claim that, for the two Germans, "meaning" is something secondary to "real life". According to Rehmann (2013a, 23–25), Eagleton's argument seems to

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[16] One should be careful not to lapse to an empiricist understanding of the relation between "objects" and "subjects". The practical conception of consciousness already conceives of consciousness as a *material* instance (see Althusser 2015). Consciousness is thus not a mere mental imprint of the material world on one's mind, but consciousness is one's practical relation to the social formation, like human nature is the 'ensemble of social relations' (*ThF*, Thesis 6).

follow the logic inherent to the Marxist-Leninist base-superstructure argument (see Jessop 1982, 11–12) in the sense that "consciousness" is replaced with "meaning" and "material existence" with "real life". Eagleton's claim is wrong, since it is not consciousness, per se, but the "pure" form of consciousness – that is, consciousness detached from the immediately practical life – that Marx and Engels criticise. Their point is to highlight the *practical* natures of language, consciousness, and the social formation by emphasising the inherent relation between forms of praxis and thought-forms. Marx and Engels are not trying to reduce "meaning" to "real life". This is why Rehmann writes that

> '[a]lready at this point one can recognise an approach to ideology that was fundamentally different from the dualistic separation of the "material" and the "ideal" in Marxism-Leninism. Societal determination was no longer theorised in a way that an "objective" reality was then reflected in human thought, but rather in terms of a philosophy of praxis, which started from what Marx's first thesis on Feuerbach entitled "sensuous human activity, practice".' (Rehmann 2013a, 118)

One way to become more certain of the fact that Marx and Engels did not hold a vulgar materialist view about consciousness is to see how other Marxist theorists have interpreted Marx and Engels' writings. I will do so next by examining, respectively, Gramsci's and Haug's writings. At the end of this chapter, the reader has hopefully become certain of the fact that Marx and Engels did not understand consciousness vulgarly as a mere effect of "matter". This also allows us to make sense of the insights offered by PIT.

2.3   Praxis, Philosophy, and Philosophy of Praxis: Gramsci & Haug

Gramsci's oeuvre, like that of Marx and Engels', is such a profound whole that it is simply impossible to do it full justice in such a brief section as this one. This is why I will simply go through some of those aspects of Gramsci's writings which are useful for a (critical) theory of ideology. In order to construct a coherent picture of his philosophy of praxis, I begin by discussing Gramsci's criticism of "dialectical materialism" – which is a tradition of thought that came about in the Soviet Union during the Stalinist era (see Thomas 2009, 23–24; Tosel 1999) –, after which I move on to explore his conceptions of language, common sense, and philosophy.

Haug has developed and applied Gramsci's ideas concerning a philosophy of praxis in order to better understand the phenomenon of ideology. However, I will not discuss

ideology explicitly in this section, as it will be the specific task of the next two chapters to deal with this topic. Instead, I examine Haug's reading of a philosophy of praxis, after which I have a look at his subversion of the "subject-object paradigm". Haug critiques the subject-object paradigm by analysing the "social dispositive" that gives rise to this paradigm. His critique is important, since nowadays most people grasp ideology intuitively and misleadingly within the subject-object paradigm. PIT's ideology theory follows the immanent critique carried out by Haug.

2.3.1   Language and Common Sense

Thomas (2009, 251–255) proposes that, in *Prison Notebooks*[17], one of Gramsci's goals was to overcome the problematic views promoted by the tradition of "dialectical materialism". Dialectical materialism prioritises the base, or infrastructure, over the superstructure and sees history as developing in relation to objective laws that exist mainly in the base. This way dialectical materialism ends up removing the social and political roles played by humans during the course of history.[18] It was exactly Gramsci's goal to battle the theoretical and political impasses arrived to by those who undermined the role of human praxis.

Since dialectical materialism distinguishes between "objective" and "subjective" instances and endorses the former over the latter – that is, objective reality rules over subjective ideas that humans have of this reality –, Gramsci refers to it as one of the forms taken by the ideology of "objectivism". He analyses those "relations of forces" that produce an inclination to look for a correspondence between a subjective "inside" (i.e. consciousness) and an objective "outside" (i.e. reality). Gramsci then identifies this problematic to be one of religious origin, according to which the world was first created by God and only later found by humans. Even today, this question continues to be one of the most persistent elements of everyday thought; humans still inquire about the correspondence between a subjective consciousness and an objective reality. Even dialectical materialism, being intentionally secular, is articulated around a religious element. (Thomas 2009, 302–306.) Engels makes a similar point when he writes that

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[17] Gramsci wrote his *Prison Notebooks*, consisting of thirty-three volumes, while he was imprisoned by the Italian Fascist regime between 1926 and 1937. Gramsci died in 1937 due to severe health issues, some of which were caused by the horrible prison conditions.

[18] In a more or less of a pejorative fashion, dialectical materialism can also be referred to as "vulgar materialism".

'[t]he great basic question of all, especially of latter-day, philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being. From very early times when men, still completely ignorant of the structure of their own bodies, and prompted by dream apparitions came to believe that their thinking and sensation were not activities of their bodies, but of a distinct soul which inhabits the body and leaves it upon death – from this time men have been driven to reflect about the relation between this soul and the outside world. […] Thus the question of the relation of thinking to being, of the mind to nature – the paramount question of the whole of philosophy – has, no less than all religion, its roots in the narrow-minded and ignorant notions of savagery.' (Engels 2010b, 365–366)

In an insightful manner, Gramsci (1992, 336–337) finds in the ideology of objectivism the social position of subalternity. Subalterns do not experience the world as a product of their own actions; insofar as the subalterns are not granted the right to participate in social and economic planning, they tend to conceive of the world as something that is objectively given. Thomas (2009, 304) explains this by writing that '[f]or a social group devoid of historical initiative, confined to the corporative level of civil society in the integral state of another class, the world can indeed appear as "given", or rather, "imposed"'. Since Gramsci's goal is to make humans aware of their active role in order to help them redeem their agency of history, he strives to overcome the prevalent ideology of objectivism.

In this sense, dialectical materialism is the product of subalternity – or, in fact, dialectical materialism stems from the same social practices, relations, and structures which give rise to subalternity. When dialectical materialism pursues to overcome class society, it builds its project on those very same notions that are produced by the practices, relations, and structures inherent to class society. Since dialectical materialism repeats the alienating discourse of oppressive social practices, it embraces "metaphysics" – that is, the subject-object paradigm – at a moment when metaphysics should be overcome. The manoeuvre of dialectical materialism to reduce most history to infrastructural relations conceals the role played by humans and their praxis, which forces it to relapse to those thought-forms of which emancipatory social movements should dispose.

Let us now turn to the question of praxis. For Gramsci, this question is closely tied to the themes of language, common sense, and the nature of philosophy. Of the first, Gramsci writes:

'It seems that one can say that "language" is essentially a collective term which does not presuppose any single thing existing in time and space. Language also means culture and philosophy (if only at the level of common sense) and therefore the fact of "language" is in reality a multiplicity of facts more or less originally coherent and co-ordinated.' (Gramsci 1992, 349)

Gramsci understands language as a heterogeneous combination of diverse elements, which derive from different social environments with their own histories. When an individual speaks some language, she is not fully aware of the things she is saying, since she does not know the full history of those social practices that give rise to the language in question. When an individual thinks with the elements of one language, she uses elements that belong to those social formations and histories which differ from the contemporary one.

This takes us to Gramsci's understanding of "personality", a concept by which Gramsci (1992, 324; see also Rehmann 2013a, 121–122) refers to the "strangely composite" nature of humans; a personality 'contains Stone Age elements and principles of a more advanced science, prejudices from all past phases of history at the local level and intuitions of a future philosophy'. A personality is composite because language and the whole social formation consist of heterogeneous components. This is closely related to Gramsci's (1992, 351–356) understanding of human nature, which follows the one articulated by Marx (*ThF*, Thesis 6), according to which human nature is 'the ensemble of social relations'. Ergo, if these social relations are "strangely composite", so is the personality.

Yet, it is possible to educate oneself of the elements that constitute one's language, society, and personality. Gramsci (1992, 323) thinks that it is 'better to work out consciously and critically one's own conception of the world and thus, in connection with the labours of one's own brain, choose one's sphere of activity, take an active part in the creation of the history of the world'. Gramsci believes it to be crucial that humans strive to understand their own thought and praxis in order to bring about more just social practices.

Since Gramsci strived to create a social and political ensemble where humans could understand the elements of which they themselves consist, the issue of "common sense" (*senso comune*) received a central place in his work. Similarly to his notion of language, common sense can be conceived of as one of the domains existing in language and society, which includes elements that intuitively make sense for people. As Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (1992b, 322), the editors and translators of *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, explain, common sense 'is used by Gramsci to mean the uncritical and largely unconscious way of perceiving and understanding the world that has become "common" in any given epoch'.

Gramsci (1992, 325) writes that 'common sense is a collective noun' and that 'there is not just one common sense'. This means that, while making sense of their everyday life, humans rely on a definite version of common sense that happens to exist when and where they do as well.[19] Each version of common sense derives in complex ways from the social practices that constitute it, which also means that common sense is modified through those same practices. When different kinds of ideologies are articulated, the elements typical to common sense always serve as their building blocks. Ideologies must *make sense* for people, a point which is explained by Stuart Hall as follows:

> 'The first thing to ask about an organic ideology that, however unexpectedly, succeeds in organizing substantial sections of the masses and mobilizing them for political action, is not what is *false* about it but what about it is *true*. By "true" I do not mean universally correct as a law of the universe but "makes good sense," which – leaving science to one side – is usually quite enough for ideology.' (Hall 1988, 46)

This is why Hall (2006, 24) sees ideology as something that 'has especially to do with the concepts and the languages of practical thought which stabilize a particular form of power and domination; or which reconcile and accommodate the mass of the people to their subordinate place in the social formation'. Hall's idea is that, as humans, we always "find our place" in social practices; we are socially "fluent" without consciously thinking about it – even if these social practices are inverted.

Haug (1977, 4) argues that it is necessary to make the transition from "consciousness-in-spontaneous-forms" to "consciousness-about-spontaneous-forms". Only by becoming aware of the forms of praxis can humans obtain true scientific knowledge about the social formation in which they live. Koivisto elaborates this point by writing that

> '[i]f we examine the categories of bourgeois economy as categories of praxis, we notice that Marx's critique is aimed towards our own practices and thought: we are not aware of the conditions of our own practices and thought. In other words, despite its practical validity, our common sense is nevertheless invalid inasmuch as it is unaware of those factors which render it "valid" and "applicable".' (Koivisto 1983, 46; trans. OK)

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[19] Marx (1975) discusses something similar when he examines the fact that political and historical agents understand their own activities with reference to certain symbols. He points out that Louis Napoleon represented himself as the new Napoleon Bonaparte (Bonaparte was Louis Napoleon's uncle). During his own time, Napoleon Bonaparte had represented himself as the new Julius Caesar. And so forth. Marx therefore argues that each social formation contains certain historically and socially definite symbols, which govern agents' own understanding of their own activities. As time passes, these symbols are transformed and replaced by other symbols.

Importantly, Gramsci (1992, 328) discovers the "good sense" (*buon senso*) of common sense, which can be understood as 'the healthy nucleus that exists in "common sense", the part of it which can be called "good sense" and which deserves to be made more unitary and coherent'. Since common sense derives from actually existing social practices inherent to the social formation, there are certain elements in common sense that are valuable and useful for making humans aware of their own historical, social, and political modes of existence. The elements conceived of as essential by Gramsci for criticising and changing the social formation stem from inside the system itself, which is why the concept of good sense deems the quality of Gramsci's critique less "transcendent" and more "immanent".

Now we can focus specifically on the issue of praxis. Gramsci separates between "superficially explicit" and "practical" consciousnesses by writing as follows:

> 'The active man-in-the-mass has a practical activity, but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity, which nonetheless involves understanding the world in so far as it transforms it. His theoretical consciousness can indeed be historically in opposition to his activity. One might almost say that he has two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with all his fellow-workers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one, superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed.' (Gramsci 1992, 333)

This excerpt is very condensed, which is why we need to unpack it carefully. On the one hand, humans who live in a particular social formation already possess superficial elements of consciousness which are inherited uncritically from the past. On the other hand, Gramsci states that humans also have a "practical" consciousness which is more directly related to their everyday life due to the forms adopted by their practical activities, such as labour. Expressed in the most general sense, one thinks in a specific manner, or in specific manners, because one takes part in practical activities that have received more or less stable forms.

Let us take a hypothetical low-income worker in Finland as a contemporary example of a divided consciousness. It is quite realistic to assume that this worker has been educated throughout her school years – and still almost daily by many privately-owned newspapers in Finland – about the tragic history of the Soviet Union. This might cause the worker's superficially explicit consciousness to inform her that policies of economic regulation will always lead at least to a lower level of individual liberties and at most to horrible atrocities.

Yet, the worker's practical consciousness informs her of different points of view as well. Through her practical activities she has noticed that more and more of her colleagues are laid off because they are being replaced by machines that can do their jobs twice as fast. Furthermore, the company she works for is not even producing that much in Finland anyway, since the increasing flows of capital investment abroad have allowed enterprises to move their production to countries with cheaper production costs. The worker realises that this situation is causing her a lot of stress and anxiety, on top of which her wage does not seem to cover as much as it used to insofar as she has less and less money on her bank account after monthly expenses.

Consequently, the worker has a contradictory consciousness: the superficially explicit side of her consciousness tells her that policies of economic regulation have caused horrible incidents in the past; and the practical side informs her that deregulation seems to lead to a situation where she and her colleagues are doing worse while the rich seem to get richer. The superficially explicit and practical sides of her consciousness can merge in manifold and even contradictory ways; her consciousness is 'strangely composite' (Gramsci 1992, 324). This example shows us that humans make sense of their own social existence not only through the practical consciousness inherent to their practical activities but also by the more explicit consciousness inherited uncritically from somewhere else.

Marx and Engels' arguments about the historical development of the state and other "ideological powers" (see subsection 3.3.1) help us understand where the superficially explicit consciousness originates. It is their argument that before the creation of ideological forms of praxis, such as the state apparatus, social formations were organised more or less communally and horizontally, but due to a functional need for some members to specialise in taking care of the surplus product contradictions and ultimately antagonisms started to develop (Engels 2010a, 212–213). This creates various splits between, for instance, productive labour and unproductive labour as well as between manual and mental labourers, and so forth.

One of the main problems is that the division of manual and mental labour causes some practical consciousnesses, such as those of mental labourers', to obtain a more prevalent status than others. That is, the division of manual and mental labour creates such social practices, structures, and relations that cause some voices to reach a much wider audience. These social practices lead to a situation where some mental labourers' practical consciousness turns into a superficially explicit consciousness for manual and

other mental labourers. It is important to underline that the superficially explicit consciousnesses, which are then diffused to masses, are also generated by practical activities – in this case it is just the practical activities of mental labourers. Superficially explicit consciousnesses originate in social practices typical to the division between manual and mental labour.

Therefore, the contradiction between superficially explicit and practical sides of one's consciousness is not simply a question of metaphysics, epistemology, or psychology. Instead, it is a social, historical, and political issue directly related to the division of labour which assigns one group the function of thinking of the social formation and another the job of producing the means to satisfy that social formation's everyday needs.

Gramsci (1992, 352) understands praxis similarly to Marx and Engels, as he thinks that it contains the following three elements: '1. the individual; 2. other men; 3. the natural world'. The last two can also be called, respectively, "social" and "productive" metabolisms, since they denote the relations that humans have to other humans and the natural world (Haug 1981, 7; Haug 1984a, 4). Here the individual is not seen as a self-sufficient entity, like is the case in "bourgeois" social sciences (Suchting 1983, 118–120), but as an intricate instance that is generated by social and productive metabolisms, which themselves manifest as manifold and historically definite forms of praxis. 'The individual does not enter into relations with other men by juxtaposition', Gramsci (1992, 352) writes, 'but organically, in as much, that is, as he belongs to organic entities which range from the simplest to the most complex'.

It is by taking actively part in these "organic entities" that humans obtain the power to transform themselves; individuals do not change themselves in and by themselves, but they transform when the social practices are transformed. And since the social formation exists because it is constantly made, or practiced, by humans – that is, humans have an active and practical relationship to their surroundings – every human both constitutes and changes herself continually in and by her praxis. This is why Gramsci (1992, 352) writes that 'the real philosopher is, and cannot be other than, the politician, the active man who modifies the environment, understanding by environment the *ensemble* of relations which each of us enters to take part in'. Even the "intellectual" forms of praxis, which often seem as nothing more than "descriptive" praxis, consist of practical activities that contain the potential to transform the social ensemble due to their capability of not only repeating but also altering social practices, relations, and structures.

What is philosophy then for Gramsci – and, more importantly, what does he mean by the concept of "philosophy of praxis"? Hoare and Nowell Smith (1992a, xiii) propose that '"philosophy of praxis" is both a euphemism for Marxism and an autonomous term used by Gramsci to define what he saw to be a central characteristic of the philosophy of Marxism'. Haug (2000) and Thomas (2015) explain that, following in the footsteps of Labriola and some other Italians, Gramsci further elaborated the valuable ideas concerning praxis, some of which can already be found in the writings of Marx and Engels.

According to Gramsci (1992, 323), every human is a "philosopher" insofar as every human possesses a "spontaneous philosophy" embedded in language, common sense, and beliefs. In an insightful manner, Gramsci grasps philosophy not as the philosophy of academic philosophers but as the practical consciousness shared by all humans with varying contents. The academic form of philosophy can be understood as an "elaborated" version of philosophy in the Gramscian sense, that is, as an "elaborated" version of the practical consciousness of mental labourers that stems from the division between manual and mental labour. This is an idea upon which we have already touched.

A philosophy of praxis both thinks of the role played by human praxis and aims to change the current forms of praxis by making humans more aware of these forms. This is what Gramsci means when he writes that

> '[a] philosophy of praxis must be a criticism of "common sense", basing itself initially, however, on common sense in order to demonstrate that "everyone" is a philosopher and that it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's individual life, but of renovating and making "critical" an already existing activity.' (Gramsci 1992, 330–331)

This argument can be read as Gramsci's reaction against what he saw as the drawbacks of Marxism-Leninism. This is to say that, against Marxism-Leninism's idea of a vanguard party that introduces from scratch a scientific form of thought (see Rehmann 2019, 121–122), Gramsci highlighted that everyone is a philosopher and that social critique ought to be immanent in the sense that an existing activity is turned critical. Gramsci (1992, 332–333) clearly values the intellectual progress of the "masses" over the advancement of small intellectual groups.

And, yet, the academic form of philosophy should also be understood as a combination of those practical activities in which academic philosophers take part. This

is why traditional philosophy, even in its most academic-alienated sense, includes a "good sense".

Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez (1977, 2–10) discusses the dialectic that takes place between common sense and traditional philosophy. According to him, it is rather intuitive to base one's criticism of traditional philosophy on common sense, and vice versa. Both strategies merely negate, and thus conserve, the targets of their criticisms in the sense that they formulate their own position as a mirror image of the object of their critique. The only way to overcome the separation between common sense and traditional philosophy is by way of a *philosophy of praxis* that bases itself on common sense *and* traditional philosophy, expressing itself as a synthesis of both. Practical life must be made philosophical and philosophy must be turned practical; the reciprocal relation between those who just "live" and those who "philosophise" must be made more explicit and their difference undermined.

Gramsci's writings concerning a philosophy of praxis bring forth and develop important aspects of Marx and Engels' original formulations. By concentrating on topics such as language, common sense, and good sense, Gramsci is able to elaborate the sophisticated and complicated relationship between forms of praxis and thought-forms. These are themes to which I will return throughout the rest of this work. It is essential to understand that a philosophy of praxis scrutinises critically the practical relation one has to her practical and intellectual activities. This is something PIT adopts from Gramsci.

Let us next focus on Haug and the way he has made use of Gramsci's philosophy of praxis. One such application is the subversion of the subject-object paradigm, which has played a crucial role for PIT's theory.

2.3.2   Subversion of the Subject-Object Paradigm

Haug has further elaborated some of the insights inherent to the notion of a philosophy of praxis by looking at the intricate ways in which human action and thought merge. One of his goals is to interrogate the theoretical "mode of production" of academic philosophy (see Althusser 2015), namely, to identify those social practices which produce "metaphysical" knowledge (i.e. knowledge that does not consider the practical relation between itself and the social formation).

Haug (2000, 24; see also 1984b; Thomas 2009, 361–362) describes a philosophy of praxis as something that is both "coherent" and "non-systemic". As opposed to an

ideological articulation "from above", a philosophy of praxis stems "from below", from social contradictions and struggles inherent to everyday life. It is by taking part in social struggles in ideological forms of praxis that subaltern groups can establish their counter-hegemony, a *coherent* project that does not have a *systemic* form similar to traditional philosophy. The issue of (counter-)hegemonic struggle will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter (see subsection 3.3.3).

The understanding of a philosophy of praxis as something coherent and non-systemic takes us back to Gramsci's criticism of the tradition of dialectical materialism. Gramsci argues that dialectical materialism is a *systemic* philosophy, a "metaphysical" tradition, articulated "from above". Against dialectical materialism, Haug (1981, 9–10; see also 2011, 210–214) underlines that, in fact, the concept of "determinism" refers less to self-developing relations of production located in the economic base than to creative human activity. Systemic phenomena should be analysed as practical activities that have received certain historically definite forms. Rehmann explains this by writing that

> '[d]iverging actions thus coalesce around converging experiences, which are then repeated again and again, become fixed habits and are then handed down as such. […] In this sense one could say that determination is a result of indetermination.' (Rehmann 2018, 215)

Inasmuch as "determinate" forms of praxis derive from "indeterminate" practical activities of humans, a philosophy of praxis stems from the practical activities of humans typical to each social formation, organised in terms of definite "fields" of activity. It is imperative to study these activities, as well as their fields, in order to not only understand society in general but to reach a level of self-realisation of one's "persona" in particular by grasping, in Marx's (*ThF*, Thesis 6) words, 'the ensemble of social relations' of which one's "persona" consists. This is what Haug means when he writes that

> '[f]rom the vantage point of such philosophy, our thinking and doing is socially articulated, mediated through praxis and situated in history. History knows no beginning and no end. The philosophy of praxis is therefore in its own terms the self-enlightenment of human reality which arises as a break with all ideology in order to look with sober eyes at the active positions of humans to each other and to nature.' (Haug 2011, 211–212)

Here Haug underlines the difference between traditional philosophy and a philosophy of praxis in the sense that traditional philosophy is seen as a "scientised" system of thought, as alienated "metaphysics", that does not begin from concrete and historical life-processes of humans but from the alienated or inverted sphere of academic social practices (see

Marx 2010a, 17–18). This is the reason why Haug considers traditional philosophy as an alienated form of praxis that produces vertical socialisation "from above". At worst such vertical articulations have a tendency to both legitimise and universalise the existing class society by denying the possibility of alternative ways of organising the social formation.

Yet, it is extremely important to understand that, for Haug, participating in alienated forms of praxis, such as traditional philosophy, does not condemn someone – for instance, an academic philosopher – to be forever alienated from the immediately practical life. Such a view would be very deterministic (i.e. humans have no agency) and reductionist (i.e. humans are completely reduced to those social practices in which they happen to take part), which would actually make it the antithesis of a philosophy of praxis. Instead, it is Haug's point to argue that the people operating in alienated forms of praxis should conceive of the relations between themselves and other forms of praxis, that is, the relations between alienated forms of praxis and the immediately practical life.

For example, traditional philosophy could try to seek a dialectical unity between itself and common sense and thus aim to rearticulate itself as a philosophy of praxis, as a way of thought that is self-conscious of its own relation to the rest of class society. This is how traditional philosophy could help realise social emancipation. The emphasis of the practical activities of humans would incite academic philosophy to take a more "practical" stance in society, which, as Koivisto (1983, 44) points out, would surpass the form obtained by traditional philosophy altogether. Problems do not find their solutions in contemplation but in praxis.

To better understand Haug's criticism of traditional philosophy, let us first take a look at Althusser's understanding of empiricism. Althusser writes that

> '[t]he empiricist conception of knowledge presents a process that takes place between a give object and a given subject. At this level, the status of this subject (psychological, historical, or otherwise) and of this object (discontinuous or continuous, mobile or fixed) is not very important. This status only affects the precise definition of the *variants* of the basic problematic, while the basic problematic itself is all that concerns us here. […] The whole empiricist process of knowledge lies in fact in an operation of the subject called *abstraction*. To know is to abstract from the real object its essence, the possession of which by the subject is then called knowledge. […] Empiricist abstraction, which abstracts from the given *real* object its essence, is a *real abstraction*, leaving the subject in possession of the *real* essence.' (Althusser 2015, 35)

Empiricism constructs itself in terms of a subject-object relation, which is an *a priori* relation in the sense that this epistemological formation governs all human experiences,

beliefs, senses, and so forth. The *a priori* subject-object relation cannot be altered – it can only receive *posteriori* content.

However, following in the footsteps of Gramsci and Haug, it is possible to argue that empiricism, as an actually existing way of *practicing* science, represents an alienated form of praxis insofar as it condemns humans to a highly passive role. A subject is merely the receiver of knowledge about an object that lies outside her grasp. Therefore, the *a priori* subject-object relation is turned into a conceptual cage through which everything must be conceived of and studied. The subject-object relation does not itself have a history, since it is always already present as the condition of possibility, in this conception, of knowledge itself.

According to a philosophy of praxis, on the other hand, all thought-forms are historical and should be, indeed, historicised. As Gramsci writes,

> '[t]he philosophy of praxis as the result and the crowning point of all previous history. Out of the critique of Hegelianism arose modern idealism and the philosophy of praxis. Hegelian immanentism becomes historicism, but it is absolute historicism only with the philosophy of praxis – absolute historicism or absolute humanism.' (Gramsci 1992, 417)

Here we should briefly consider the meaning of the concept of "absolute historicism" used by Gramsci. As it is a rather complicated term, we should have a look at the insightful way in which Thomas explains its significance in relation to another notable concept, that of "immanence".

> 'The philosophy of praxis, therefore, redefines the previously established fields of knowledge not as "component parts" but as "moments" of its own dynamic overdetermined constitution. It is the "unitary synthetic moment" of the new concept of immanence that makes such relations of translation possible[.] […] Each moment is now internally related to the other; that is, they are immanent to each other, because the social practices they sought to comprehend are recognised as determined by the same relations of forces. […] Precisely as an absolute historicism founded upon a non-speculative-metaphysical concept of immanence, the philosophy of praxis remains an unfinished project that, by definition, must seek to absorb, or grasp, the new initiatives and relations of force that define its conditions of possibility.' (Thomas 2009, 361–362)

A philosophy of praxis sees itself in connection to other aspects of the social formation inasmuch as both a philosophy of praxis as well as social practices, relations, and structures relate to each other immanently; that is, all of them are determined by the same relations of forces. This is what the notion of absolute historicism stands for, to

understand the historically determinate, and at its core indeterminate, forms of praxis from which language, common sense, and philosophy originate.

Following this line of Gramsci's and Thomas' thought, the notions of absolute historicism and immanence can also be understood as two *moments* of a philosophy of praxis, which make the imperative to historicise thought-forms more conceivable. Hence, a philosophy of praxis stands for a drive to grasp the relations of forces from which even a philosophy of praxis itself derives. This self-conscious and self-critical insight can be seen as one of the core strengths of a philosophy of praxis, since there are not that many "traditions" in existence that radically ask for their own historical and social genesis. In general, I believe this to be an intrinsic property of most, if not all, (practical) traditions which stem "from below" and whose main interest it is to realise emancipatory practices. We can find a similar idea expressed by Engels in *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (1886) where he writes that

> '[j]ust as the bourgeoisie by large-scale industry, competition and the world market dissolves in practice all stable time-honoured institutions, so this dialectical philosophy dissolves all conceptions of final, absolute truth and of absolute states of humanity corresponding to it. Against it (dialectical philosophy) nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure against it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and passing away, of ascending without end from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain. It has, however, also a conservative side: it recognises that definite stages of cognition and society are justified for their time and circumstances; but only so far. The conservatism of this outlook is relative; its revolutionary character is absolute – the only absolute dialectical philosophy admits.' (Engels 2010b, 359–360)[20]

According to Engels, "dialectical philosophy" presents a break with respect to previous traditions of philosophy in the sense that dialectical philosophy believes in neither historical nor philosophical absolutes. Dialectical philosophy studies how definite forms of "cognition" and "society" are justified "for their time and circumstances", emphasising the historical motion of such forms. Here Engels' (2010b, 360) words, according to which

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[20] Here we should once again remember the argument made by Althusser, Haug, and Rehmann according to which Marx and Engels operated inside already existing deterministic discourses. We see the influence of such discourses in Engels' (2010b, 360) expression of 'the uninterrupted process of becoming and passing away, of ascending without end from the lower to the higher'. Such discursive "remnants" should not lead us astray, since the true argument of this passage by Engels is to highlight the contingent nature of history and the practicality of thought. Neither history nor thought include absolutes – if it is not the absolute of non-absolutes. As Engels (*ibid.*, 362) writes, '[o]ne leaves alone "absolute truth", which is unattainable along this path or by any single individual; instead, one pursues attainable relative truths along the path of the positive sciences, and the summation of their results by means of dialectical thinking'.

'dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain', should not be read along empiricist lines, that is, as material reality only imprinting itself on mental consciousness. Instead, Marx and Engels promote a "practical" conception of consciousness which stems from humans making sense of their own social existence in historically determined and transforming forms of praxis.

In this regard, Haug asserts that Marx and Engels constructed a conceptual apparatus that allows us to historicise such ahistorical notions as the subject-object paradigm. He argues that Marx and Engels stepped outside the "consciousness discourse" (see section 1.2) and explained different kinds of thought-forms with reference to forms of praxis that constitute these thought-forms. This is why Haug (1984a, 36) writes that Marx 'conceptualizes in the hard core of his theoretical thought […] the ensemble of societal relations and the specific formations in which the relations articulate themselves'.

Here Haug is discussing what can be called the "social dispositive" of thought. This term refers to an ensemble of practices that generates thought-forms; that is, it stands for social practices within which humans become conscious of their own practical activities. For instance, Haug (1984a, 17–19) emphasises that a "metaphysical" form of consciousness should not be understood as mere "false consciousness", but as (partially) "true" consciousness produced by the structure of the social ensemble which includes the division of manual and mental labour and other forms of praxis. This is what Koivisto (1983, 45) means when he argues that it is far more fruitful to analyse why certain "non-practical" questions are posed than it is to produce answers to such questions; by studying the social dispositive of thought, we can understand why certain questions are posed in the first place.

According to Haug (1983b, 89), the "interpellation" (see subsection 3.3.2) of an alienated consciousness, which understands its own nature as autonomous and abstract, leads to a situation with two equally problematic sides of the same coin: first, most members of society see reality as a strictly "objective" instance without any agency for altering relations of forces; and, second, the social group who actually has the power to modify relations of forces does so in terms of abstract and alienated conceptions, although it should be exactly the opposite – that is, relations of forces should be modified in an explicitly *practical*, or "organic", relation to the immediately practical life. Haug (1984a, 20) explains this by writing that, in class society, '[t]he autonomization (*Verselbständigung*) of consciousness is made possible by the dispositive of social domination'.

When we take into account the role played by the social dispositive, we are forced to ask the following question: What are the relations of forces from which the subject-object paradigm stems? Or, in other words, what is the dispositive that gives rise to a "metaphysical" consciousness that sees its own relation to the world through the ahistorical and alienated separation between a subject and an object?

Haug identifies the philosophical formulation of the separation between *intérieur* and *extérieur* in the early modern philosophy of Descartes' "*cogito ergo sum*". In other words, Haug argues that Descartes' distinction between an internal consciousness and external reality is produced by a definite social dispositive, namely, those social practices in which Descartes participated and which conveyed specific kinds of thought-forms to his philosophy. Haug writes:

> 'The "intérieur" is multiply determined. It was a touch-and-go adventure until Descartes was finally able to withdraw to the four walls of his study, to take and keep his place at the desk. He had been born into the civil-service aristocracy, a wealthy family. He was integrated from the outset into a societal sphere in which one was, in principle, always "in society"; privacy and intimacy were not yet – at least not for aristocracy and peasantry – institutionalized. In order to escape from this permanent accessibility which left him forever bothered by his peers and greatly inhibited the possibility of research and writing, Descartes steals away, gives no forwarding address – and Paris is a big place. Nonetheless he is found by an acquaintance who runs into his servant in the city, threatening him with a dagger because he suspects he has murdered his master – in short, forces the servant to reveal the secret hide-away. The solitary seclusion of the private scholar gives way once again to "society". Descartes finally emigrates not only from one country to another, but from one social form to another: from feudal absolutism into bourgeois society. From his new domicile he writes to a friend who understood his problem well and who had also attempted to flee "society" in the "country". Descartes recommends Amsterdam, in the country, he writes, comfort is lacking and one has no defence against neighbourly intrusions.' (Haug 1984a, 26)

Descartes' urge to find a place of privacy and intimacy in a social formation where he belongs to the aristocratic class leads him to escape the French countryside and move to Netherlands. In Amsterdam, he hides himself inside the four walls of his workspace in order to escape those social, and societal, obligations placed upon him by his affluent background. Then, in front of his writing desk Descartes observes the (social) "reality" from which he has detached himself. Ironically, this detachment is enabled by the fact that Descartes belongs to aristocracy and does not therefore have to take part in the practices of manual labour in order to survive. Descartes is able to detach himself from the social world exactly by being provided with such an opportunity by social practices, relations, and structures – which in Amsterdam have acquired the forms typical to

bourgeois society. As Descartes begins to come to terms with his newly discovered (bourgeois) location inside the walls of his workspace, the social dispositive starts to have its effects on his thinking.[21] Haug describes this as follows:

> 'We take note: Descartes does not leave his study in order to investigate that which happens "out there", in the "outside world"; and at least in this last example the window between him and the outside world is at once a (filtering) inlet and a separating pane. We recognize the installation of the *camera obscura*.' (Haug 1984a, 26)

Descartes is a mental worker grasping the world through the windows of his study. The social dispositive, made possible by his position as an aristocrat living in bourgeois society, gives Descartes' relation to the outside world a "contemplative" form, that is, Descartes relates to the social world outside his office as a subject to an object. In the contrast between the interior of Descartes' office and all the social phenomena external to his office we find the elements that constitute Descartes' distinction between internal consciousness and external reality. The reason why Descartes is able to consider the constitution of the subject-object relation in such a way is the social dispositive typical to a person of his status, that is, to an individual who is freed from the necessities of immediately practical life and who has access to social practices typical to bourgeois society.

Haug's reading of Descartes' philosophy illustrates how forms of consciousness are related to social practices; forms of praxis give rise to thought-forms. This argument follows Marx and Engels' understanding, according to which

> '[d]ivision of labour only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labour appears. From this moment onwards consciousness can really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice, that it really represents something without representing something real; from now on consciousness is in a position to emancipate itself from the world and to proceed to the formation of "pure" theory, theology, philosophy, morality, etc.' (Marx & Engels 1998, 50)

When the social dispositive obtains an "appropriate" form, the *practical* consciousness of humans adopts a thought-form of "pure" consciousness, which then masks the relation between consciousness and social practices. Such a conception leads "pure"

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[21] I should highlight that one of the reasons why Descartes is able to "detach" himself from society and construct the subject-object dualism the way he does is that he finds refuge from feudal absolutism in the bourgeois society of Amsterdam. For a historical account of the development of bourgeois society and the public and private spheres, see Habermas (1991, 1–56).

consciousness to think that it is governed only by ideas and not by social practices. In this sense, the subject-object problematic can be thought of as an expression of a "pure", or alienated, consciousness trying to find its way back to the social formation from which it has been detached by the social dispositive consisting of social practices, relations, and structures.

Haug believes the Cartesian problematic to be misleadingly constructed, since the way in which it poses the "metaphysical" question does not take into account how it is itself produced by social practices. Traditional philosophers should understand that, when the issue regarding how contents of thought relate to the material reality external to thought is raised, the people who ask such a question are already positioned in a specific kind of social ensemble where they take part in definite forms of praxis. And if the social practices, or forms of praxis, are such that they prevent one from seeing one's relations to social practices and, thus, to the immediately practical life, perhaps there is something inverted in the way in which the forms of praxis are organised (see Koivisto 1983, 46).

Instead of a "metaphysical" subject-object problematic, Haug (1981, 7–8; see also 1984a, 4) argues that a philosophy of praxis is interested in those economic and ideological relationships and practices through which economic domination is secured. When it comes to the economic sphere, humans' relations to nature as well as to other humans operates through, respectively, "productive metabolism" (mainly in the form of production) and "social metabolism" (mainly in the form of exchange). According to Haug, productive metabolism should not be thought of in terms of humans (i.e. subject) interacting with or dominating over nature (i.e. object), since production is carried out through definite forms of praxis inherent to each historically determinate social formation and mode of production. Suchting describes this same point by writing that

> '[w]hat is determinant about the character of a practice is neither the objective material which is transformed nor the executor of the transformation, but the means by which the transformation is effected, means which determine both what sorts of materials may be transformed and also the nature of the activity of the executor of the practice.' (Suchting 1983, 120)

Similarly to Suchting's description, Haug (1984a, 33–36, 68–72) argues that the concept of labour introduced by Marx in the first volume of *Capital* provides a non-binary conception by which it is possible to think of nature as something other than an external object; that is, labour should be understood as a "productive *activity*" in which instruments of labour are applied to the material of labour. The result of such a productive

activity is neither the externalisation nor transubstantiation of the material of labour but its *transformation*, which is caused indirectly by labour and directly by the use of instruments of labour (by labour power). Marx describes the instruments of labour and the process of labour as follows:

> 'An instrument of labour is a thing, or a complex of things, which the worker interposes between himself and the object of his labour and *which serves as a conductor, directing his activity onto that object*. […] It is not what is made but how, and by what instruments of labour, that distinguishes different economic epochs. Instruments of labour not only supply a standard of the degree of development which human labour has attained *but they also indicate the social relations within which men work*.' (Marx 1976, 285–286; italics OK)

Although Marx uses the concept of "object" in the quoted passage, this term does not operate within the subject-object paradigm, since, for Marx, the process of labour is clearly something *more* than a mere objectification of a worker's internal subjectivity to external reality. An instrument of labour serves as a *conductor* that directs a worker's activity onto the object of her labour; that is, the instrument, not the worker, is the conductor. Furthermore, insofar as the instrument of labour indicates the social relations within which humans work, there is an immense social element present in the process of labour. The emphasis is on the social relations, structures, and practices through which humans interact with nature and each other by virtue of their labour *activities*.

Haug seems to be correct about Marx not applying the subject-object paradigm in *Capital*; instead, Marx thinks with non-binary concepts that present the process of labour as a productive activity which mediates the social and productive metabolisms. This is what Haug (1982, 135–136) means when he says that the seeming contradistinction between humans and nature – which is inherent to the subject-object paradigm in the sense that humans are conceived of as subjects and nature as an object – makes as much sense as the opposition between birds and nature; in praxis, humans are never in opposition to or outside nature but parts of it.

It is clear that Haug (1982, 110–111; 1984a, 63–64) is here highlighting the rupture between Marx's early and later works, especially between those of *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* and *Capital*. In the 1960s, Jacques Rancière (1965/2015) made a similar claim, stating that in *Capital* Marx abandoned his earlier "humanism" and understood the capitalist mode of production in such a way that, in contrast to *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, no original "subject",

nor the subject-object paradigm, can be identified.[22] Rancière's point is that the argumentation in *Capital* is based on social relations, which is to say that the mode of production and social formation are seen as ensembles of social relations. The emphasis is less on human nature, from which humans become alienated, than on the "relations of forces", as Gramsci would say, to which humans are *subjected*.

Rancière's "relational" insight is echoed by Haug's (1984a, 77) conception of the social dispositive, according to which '[t]he real dialectic of subject and object is the dialectic of the social dispositive in which the elements of social life are disposed over in these forms and therein called to order'. When studying social phenomena, we should focus our attention more on the social dispositive, which consists of definite forms of praxis in which humans participate in their everyday life, and less on the "metaphysical" subject-object paradigm. Behind the dialectic of subject and object we discover the real dialectic of the social dispositive.

Yet, Haug and PIT are not fully in sync with Rancière and the rest of the Althusserian school, since the Althusserian school abandoned the concept of "alienation" altogether as a sign of Marx's early humanism. As Rehmann explains,

> 'Althusser's subject-theory had the weakness, however, that it no longer identified alienation with specific structures of domination in society, but with the human condition as such, so that human beings were conceived of as "ideological animals" – forever subjected to an omnihistorical "ideology in general". Althusser's over-integrative model of "interpellation" could not adequately conceptualise how and under what conditions the subjects can talk back at and resist the ideological appeals addressed to them. The contradiction between Althusser's attempt to establish a historical-materialist theory of ideological state-apparatuses and his unhistorical concept of "ideology in general" became one of the reasons for the decomposition of the Althusser school.' (Rehmann 2013a, 10)

Against this mistake of overgeneralisation to which Althusser lapses, PIT pursues to rehabilitate the concept of alienation by identifying it with, indeed, specific structures of domination in society. In other words, PIT understands alienation not as an abstract process where humans are alienated from their inner subjectivity but as assimilation to oppressive social practices, relations, and structures which necessitate socialisation "from above". This idea will be discussed more thoroughly in the next two chapters.

PIT's approach was influenced by Holzkamp, a critical psychologist whose work offers an alternative conception of alienation. I will finish this chapter by exploring some

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[22] For a different view, see Marcuse (1973).

of Holzkamp's ideas, such as "action potence", that allow us to understand alienation without lapsing to "humanism". This will also make PIT's theory more understandable.

Holzkamp (1991, 53–56; see also Silvonen 1991, 197–198) begins with a model of evolutionary biology and argues that there was a point in time when the previously determinant laws of development by mutation and selection were replaced by the societal-economic form of life production. This was supposedly the moment when humans, as something distinct from animals, came to exist in the first place.

One of the most important incidents in this shift between prehuman and human forms of life production was the production of tools, since it caused a "functional change"; no longer were instruments created only for immediate use but for similar future activities performed by other humans as well. 'The central significance of this functional change', Holzkamp (1991, 54) writes, 'lies in the fact that it represents an instance of *planned generalized provision* finding its way into the life production process'. This instance of planned generalised provision – that is, an early instance of sociality – replaces the earlier laws of mutation and selection. Through various phases, humans ultimately reach a point where the early biological principles, such as the "survival of the fittest", no longer have much say in how social formations function. This point seems to be confirmed by the excess of different kinds of social formations, both past and contemporary, that follow different social processes.

As the planned generalised provision becomes more and more complicated, the limits of human capacity are no longer reached during the lifespan of one human, but, instead, the human potential begins to "accumulate" during the course of history. In effect, this potential – that is, all the social practices that exist in society – starts to adopt sophisticated, different, and even contradictory forms. This goes hand in hand with what Marx (*ThF*, Thesis 6) means when he writes that 'the essence of man is no abstraction indwelling in each separate individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations'. And, vice versa, 'the maintenance of individual existence', Holzkamp (1991, 58) says, 'is always an aspect of the maintenance of societal life'. Humans are not *humans* without other humans with whom they can practice their societal nature.

Holzkamp (1991, 58) infers that 'the development of human subjectivity, as the possibility of conscious control over one's own life conditions, always and necessarily requires *moving beyond individuality* toward participation in the *collective determination* of the societal process'. Since "human nature" is tied to the historical events, such as the production of tools, that give rise to sociality, humans' very agency already necessitates

the collective control over social processes. This is to say that the notion of agency[23] contains the need to control those individually relevant societal life conditions that affect the agent, but, as societal life conditions consist of other humans as well, individually relevant societal life conditions can only be controlled together with others. This is the basic idea behind Holzkamp's (1991, 59; see also Silvonen 1991, 209) term "personal action potence", the 'transcendence of individuality in union with others with the general aim of consciously provisioning control over societal-individual life conditions'.[24]

From the notion of action potence it follows that the inability to participate in the collective control over societal life conditions – and thus being at the mercy of uncontrollable contingencies – will result in "action *impotence*", which manifests itself as subjective suffering and anxiety (Holzkamp 1991, 59–60; see also Silvonen 1991, 210). Holzkamp (1991, 60) argues that humans are not fully satisfied when all they can do is reduce "momentary need tensions", such as hunger and sexuality, since true satisfaction results from when humans 'can anticipate the possibility of satisfaction of their needs within the prospect of a provisioned and secure individual existence; that is, when they can develop their action potence in the process of participation in control over societal life conditions'. The point is that the extent of collective, intentional, and purposeful collaboration is extremely limited in an oppressive social formation based on class antagonism, since such a social ensemble prevents most members from controlling their societal-individual life conditions, which then leads to action impotence and hence to subjective suffering.[25] Only a social formation where the full reach of sociality is allowed to operate can this problem be solved.

This argument has interesting consequences for understanding thought. Holzkamp (1991, 59; see also Silvonen 1991, 199) denies the idea that thought simply consists of problems posed by self-sufficient individuals and argues instead that an individual appropriates and realises social thought-forms in her own thought. Only by realising social thought-forms, as well as forms of praxis, in her individual thought can a human become an individual agent. For Holzkamp (1991, 59) this means that, again, an

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[23] Here Holzkamp uses the concept of "subject", thus equating it with that of "agent". However, I do not follow Holzkamp in doing so.

[24] Holzkamp's notion of personal action potence allows us to deem both the psychological "nature-nurture" question as well as the sociological "agent-structure" problem misleadingly framed, since, historically speaking, both sides of each juxtaposition constitute two parts of the same historical process.

[25] Yet, it should be underlined that an oppressive social ensemble provides agency as well. This is exactly the main argument made by Althusser (2014), for whom ideological state apparatuses interpellate subjects; in other words, oppressive social practices turn humans into *subjects* and, therefore, provide humans with *subjectivity*.

individual exists only because she is a member of a social formation; 'with the *objective necessity* of having to participate in the social provisioning process in order to control individual life conditions, a *subjective necessity* also developed'. Therefore, when examining individual thought, we should focus our attention on social thought-forms, an idea that is explained by Haug as follows:

> 'While uncritical psychology in bourgeois society begins with the mindless reproduction of the situation of the private individual in commodity producing society, critical psychology begins with a comprehensive critique of these relations and with the historical derivation of its moments. It is then able to proceed to the study of concrete individual processes. Conceptually undoing the pseudo-natural character of social phenomena as it spontaneously reproduces itself as an objective form of thought in consciousness, is the pre-requisite for the conscious investigation of the natural foundations of social human beings. This lays the foundation for a theory of personality which no longer remains within the limits of privacy.' (Haug 1977, 14–15)

Here Haug is describing what he calls the "bourgeois privacy form of the individual". This term refers to the fact that in capitalist society humans experience themselves as private individuals – with their private, inner lives – who are posited against their social "environment"; that is, humans view themselves as "detached" from other humans and from the social formation. Haug's point is that this is not a false thought-form, per se, insofar as the capitalist mode of production, or social dispositive, truly interpellates subjects who are detached from one another – this is an aspect of what Marx meant by his conception of "alienation". One example of such practices is the capitalist labour market which sets workers against each other (see section 3.2). With Holzkamp's (1991, 59) terms it is possible to understand alienation not as becoming alienated from "human essence", per se, but as being forced to socialise into a social formation that restricts the full realisation of action potence and thus delimits the 'transcendence of individuality in union with others with the general aim of consciously provisioning control over societal-individual life conditions'.

Consequently, the concept of the "ideological" refers primarily to those "inverted" forms of praxis which constitute the alienated social formation. In a social ensemble based on class antagonism, humans' capability to control their life conditions is fundamentally limited, which is why they become socialised into alienated forms of praxis and embrace "mystified" and "inverted" thought-forms. Such mystified and inverted thought-forms are not "false", per se, but they are, indeed, "true"; they are thought-forms that coincide with humans' practical activities and the "ossified" forms that these practical activities have

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obtained. As Marx (*ThF*, Thesis 4) writes, 'that the secular basis takes off from itself and establishes itself as an independent realm in the clouds can only be explained in terms of the inwardly riven and inwardly contradictory character of this secular basis'. This is why the next chapter will focus on looking at those ideological forms of praxis that, indeed, "take off" from the secular "basis".

2.4   Conclusion

I began this chapter by arguing that Marx and Engels' oeuvre is best understood through the concept of "practical materialism". It is the emphasis of practical activities of humans which seems to follow Marx and Engels from their writings all the way to their political actions. In this sense, Marx argues that those who do not take into account the role of practices end up construing "scholastic questions".

Once we highlight the importance of praxis, we can begin to understand how the social formation produces, and even necessitates, "metaphysical" conceptions of social practices, relations, and structures. For example, religion can be seen as a field of practical activities that arises from contradictory and antagonistic social relations. Understood through Holzkamp's notion of restrictive action potence, religion has a double function: it is the "sigh" of the oppressed creature; but it is also the "opium" of the people. Religion alleviates misery *and* pacifies politically and socially. Religious sentiments are not simply "false consciousness" inasmuch as they are practiced in definite forms of social practices. Since religion has a *material* existence, we need to understand why it exists and how it operates. PIT argues that such questions lead us to explore the alienated forms of "common-being" (*Gemeinwesen*) and how they are articulated into oppressive social formations based on class antagonism. By doing so, we might be able to reclaim our common-being, namely, 'to take the sigh of the oppressed seriously and enlighten it in a way that it overcomes the illusionary forms in which it was expressed' (Rehmann 2013a, 27). Debunking should be replaced with a combination of deconstruction and reconstruction.

Yet, we should be careful not to grasp the study of religion and other ideological forms of praxis as if we were simply ascending from the material "base" to the "ideational" superstructure. Marx and Engels' ideas are much more sophisticated than a vulgar dualism between matter and ideas. As Althusser, Haug, and Rehmann argue, the two Germans operated within already existing discourses, which conveyed a lot of

unintentional meanings to their writings. It has been the goal of this chapter to show how a different, *practical* reading of their texts might look. For one, Marx and Engels' understanding of language and consciousness as practical instances seems to undermine the vulgar argument for the existence of a base-superstructure dualism in their oeuvre.

One thinker who tries to contest "metaphysical" interpretations of Marx and Engels is Gramsci, who saw the base-superstructure dualism, constructed by Marxism-Leninism, as a thought-form typical to the social position of subalterns. Conversely, Gramsci highlights that every human is an intellectual and that emancipatory social movements ought to base their projects on an immanent critique that finds the "good sense" in common sense.

This is one of the many insights offered by Gramsci's philosophy of praxis, which is a coherent and *non*-systemic way of thinking that always retains a critical distance to itself, namely, to those relations of forces from which it stems. This is why Thomas (2009, 361–362) writes that '[p]recisely as an absolute historicism founded upon a non-speculative-metaphysical concept of immanence, the philosophy of praxis remains an unfinished project that, by definition, must seek to absorb, or grasp, the new initiatives and relations of force that define its conditions of possibility'. Even the term "philosophy of praxis" underlines that it is enough to neither reject academic philosophy in favour of common sense nor abandon common sense on behalf of academic philosophy. Instead, common sense must be made more philosophical and academic philosophy ought to be turned more practical.

Haug and PIT embrace a philosophy of praxis, which leads them to argue that all determinate fields or forms of practices in each social formation result from ultimately indeterminate practical activities of humans. History should not be understood deterministically but through creative human activity, an idea which further undermines the premises of dialectical materialism.

Although traditional academic philosophy can be seen as an inverted or alienated form of praxis that, on average, does not emphasise the relation between itself and those who are reduced to nothing more than mere "life", it does not mean that academic philosophers cannot become more "practical", that is, that they could not develop more practical conceptions of, as well as become politically and socially more active towards, the social formation where they themselves live in. It is exactly the main point of a philosophy of praxis that humans have the agency to change their practices.

One way of turning academic philosophy more practical would be to study the "social dispositive" that gives rise to "metaphysical" and "mystified" thought-forms. Haug proposes a criticism of the philosophical subject-object paradigm that emphasises its genesis in Descartes' social position as an aristocrat living in bourgeois society, a factor that allowed Descartes to retire himself to his study where it became intuitive for him to conceive of his relation to the rest of the social formation as a relation between a subject and an object. Inverted forms of praxis give rise to inverted thought-forms and questions.

Furthermore, one theoretical conception that allows us to understand the relations among humans (i.e. social metabolism) as well as between humans and nature (i.e. productive metabolism) without the subject-object paradigm is Marx's notion of labour, which makes its appearance in the first volume of *Capital*. When labour is understood as a labour *activity*, the emphasis is on those forms of praxis which posit subjects and objects.

Finally, I discussed Holzkamp's theory of restrictive action potence and the interpretation of the phenomenon of alienation based on it. In this sense, oppressive social practices, relations, and structures serve a double function: they provide humans with agency; but they also delimit humans' ability to collectively control their societal-individual life conditions.

After exploring the writings of Marx, Engels, Gramsci, and Haug, we understand that the way in which social practices determine thought-forms does not happen by way of an economic "base" imprinting itself on an ideational "superstructure". No, the issue is much more sophisticated. Gramsci emphasises how every human is an intellectual, since all activities, even the most monotonous ones, include an intellectual element. He discusses the practical consciousness of humans which is generated in praxis. In their everyday life, humans take part in overlapping, contradictory, and complicated social practices, which is why the full extent of those practices escapes their own awareness and is manifested in such "unconscious" instances as forms of "habitus" and so forth. Hence, it would be a horrible oversimplification to reduce the relation between practical life-processes and thought-forms to a mere dualism of base and superstructure. The next chapter will have a look at an alternative view.

3 FORMS OF PRAXIS

3.1 Introduction

Whereas the previous chapter dealt with praxis, this chapter is devoted to analysing *forms* of praxis. The latter concept allows us to discuss "productive" practices as well as how ideology operates.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part concentrates specifically on capitalist social practices more typical to the "economic" sphere. I will first explain how the concept of "capitalist mode of production" is best understood, after which I define the notion of "objective thought-forms", which helps us understand how productive matters relate to ideological articulations.

The latter half of the chapter focuses on *ideological* forms of praxis. I start with exploring the materiality of ideology, which leads us to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' concept of "ideological powers". After examining such ideological powers as the state and the law, I move on to review, and criticise, Louis Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses. Finally, I define the Gramscian concepts of "historical bloc" and "hegemony" as well as illustrate the importance of these terms for a critical theory of ideology by applying them to three different cases of counter-hegemonic projects: the 2011 insurgency in Egypt, Occupy Wall Street, and Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential election campaign.

The goal of this chapter is to make the relation between social practices and ideology more understandable. In this sense, the theoretical elaborations presented here will pave the way for the final chapter where I concentrate on the topic of ideology more specifically.

3.2 Praxis in Capitalism

Projekt Ideologie-Theorie's (PIT) theory of ideology tries to surpass the consciousness discourse (see section 1.2), according to which ideology is mainly a phenomenon of consciousness (Haug 1984a; Koivisto & Pietilä 1996). For example, the approach of

ideology critique using the notion of false consciousness is a part of the consciousness discourse, as it claims ideology to mostly refer to false phenomena of consciousness. This is why vulgar ideology critique argues that ideologies can be critiqued by pointing out their falseness. However, PIT's claim is that this method is enough neither for a truly emancipatory nor a successful project of ideology critique (Rehmann 2015, 434–435). Jan Rehmann explains this point in more detail as follows:

> 'The ideology-theoretical objections to a traditional ideology-critique of "false consciousness" can be summarised in three points. One, a mere ideology-critique tends to overlook the material existence of the ideological, that is, its apparatuses, its intellectuals and praxis-forms, which impact on people's common sense; two, it overlooks or underestimates, by its fixation with phenomena of consciousness, the unconscious functioning of ideological forms and practices; and finally, the endeavour to refute ideologies risks drawing attention away from the main ideology-theoretical task, which is to grasp their appeal and efficacy. A careful understanding of ideology's power over people's "hearts and minds" is, however, a necessary prerequisite for developing an efficacious critique of ideology able to "release" its appealing elements, which are capable of being transformed, and remounted to function "in a different connection".' (Rehmann 2013a, 6–7)

One exemplary case that demonstrates some of the problems with vulgar ideology critique is the 2019 general election in the United Kingdom. A large portion of working-class voters seem to have chosen Boris Johnson's Conservative Party over Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party due to seeing Corbyn's Labour as too "socialist". According to vulgar ideology critique, these working-class people voted for Conservatives by virtue of being ill-informed and would surely change their minds if they just heard the "truth" about Conservatives' policies. Yet, a large amount of such working-class voters are exposed to news stories that discuss, for instance, the impoverishing effects of austerity policies implemented by Conservatives (although, to be fair, most British media outlets stay strikingly quiet about such issues) and still think that Corbyn's views are too leftist. Such cases seem to hint towards the conclusion that perhaps the phenomenon of ideology is not completely reducible to a distinction between true reality and false consciousness.

Once the consciousness discourse is surpassed, we are able to understand ideology as something that constitutes consciousness, as the inverted social dispositive. The idea is that ideology should be analysed as a function of an oppressive social formation. In this sense, it is much more important to understand what it means for social practices to be "inverted" than it is to reduce ideology to false phenomena of consciousness. I will demonstrate this insight later by discussing real-life cases.

In what follows I will discuss, respectively, what is meant by the concepts of "capitalism" and "objective thought-forms". I propose fourteen attributes that help understand the nature of the capitalist mode of production, which also make the notion of objective thought-forms more conceivable. In short, objective thought-forms are thought-forms that match with existing capitalist practices and are used in ideological articulations.

3.2.1 Capitalist Forms of Praxis

Let us begin by defining the concept of "mode of production", since it allows us to understand the concept of "capitalism" as a historically definite formation consisting of peculiar social practices, relations, and structures that human sociality has obtained. The best place to start is an excerpt found in the third volume of *Capital* (1894) where Marx writes:

> 'The specific economic form in which unpaid surplus labour is pumped out of the direct producers determines the relationship of domination and servitude, as this grows directly out of production itself and reacts back on it in turn as a determinant. On this is based the entire configuration of the economic community arising from the actual relations of production, and hence also its specific political form. It is in each case the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the immediate producers – a relationship whose particular form naturally corresponds always to a certain level of development of the type and manner of labour, and hence to its social productive power – in which we find the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social edifice, and hence also the political form of the relationship of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the specific form of state in each case.' (Marx 1993, 927)

Here Marx highlights that it is the relation between direct producers on the one hand and owners of the means of production on the other that provides each mode of production with its most important properties. As Marx and Engels (2002, 219) propose in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), '[t]he history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another'. It is the nature of this antagonistic relation between those who produce and those who appropriate that defines the predominant features of each mode of production and antagonistic social formation.

However, one needs to be careful when reading Marx, since his words have often been misread. More specifically, it is the last sentence of the excerpt quoted above that

might lead one astray. Marx (1993, 927) argues that the 'specific form of state in each case' depends on the antagonistic relation between direct producers and owners of the means of production, which is the 'hidden basis of the entire social edifice'. When one reads this passage together with the famous quote found in Marx's "Preface" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), it is easy to lapse to deterministic interpretations. In the "Preface", Marx writes that

> '[i]n the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the *economic structure* of society, the *real foundation*, on which arises a *legal and political superstructure* and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.' (Marx 2010f, 263; italics OK)

A reader who is not aware of *Theses on Feuerbach*, *The German Ideology*, and *The Communist Manifesto* might argue that Marx saw the "superstructure" as something that can be completely reduced back to the "economic base". However, in the third volume of *Capital* Marx writes right after the passage quoted above that

> '[t]his does not prevent the same economic basis – the same in its major conditions – from displaying endless variations and gradations in its appearance, as the result of innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural conditions, racial relations, historical influences acting from outside, etc., and these can only be understood by analysing these empirically given conditions.' (Marx 1993, 927–928)

We see that at the core of even this presumably "deterministic" passage there is an emphasis of praxis. It is the practical activities of humans, capable of adopting manifold forms, and not "scholastic" points of view, that provide solutions to abstract issues. In this case, the abstract issue is the relation between the economic "basis" and the legal-political "superstructure", and the practical answer to this problem is to study the concretely existing relations of forces that determine the nature of each social formation. One should not approach social practices from the sphere of abstract thought but should start with practices. Marx should not be equated with Hegel (see Haug 2006).

Furthermore, by underlining the role played by class struggle in *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels (2002, 219) argue that, yes, the capitalist mode of production sets certain objective limits inside which revolutionary subjects must operate, but it is still up to the revolutionary-political activities of such subjects to struggle against oppression and for emancipation. Theorists of ideology should therefore concentrate on the agency

granted to humans by historically determined *forms of praxis*, inside which revolutionary activities must be organised.

According to Ernest Mandel (1976, 18), the dialectical framework leads us to understand various social phenomena in terms of 'their inner connection as an integrated totality, structured around, and by, a basic predominant mode of production'.[26] It is the nature of this mode of production, determined by the structure of its class relations and modalities of surplus extraction, which distinguishes social formations from one another (Fine & Saad-Filho 2016, 5).

The mode of production should be perceived with respect to its historical nature. Mandel (1976, 18) argues that, since all social phenomena are in "dialectical motion", it is possible to identify, first, the earlier forms that led to the current mode of production and, second, those elements that could end up surpassing the present mode of production. Yet, Ben Fine and Alfredo Saad-Filho (2016, 6) point out that, even if it is somewhat possible to guess the direction of historical movement, the future is ultimately unpredictable in Marx's eyes. It is this openness of history which is emphasised by a philosophy of praxis.

We can understand each mode of production not as a homogeneous totality but as a unity of various contradictions which function as thriving forces of change. Mandel (1976, 18) reminds us that change itself can be divided into two categories: "quantitative" changes are the ones that take place on a continual basis (e.g. adaptation, integration, reforms); and "qualitative" changes are sudden transformations that create a new mode of production (e.g. revolution). And as Fine and Saad-Filho (2016, 7–8) explain, the movement of history does not simply consist of a unilinear development of technology, since certain modes of production have their own laws and tendencies that govern the ways in which technological development comes about altogether. In this sense, Ellen Meiksins Wood criticises traditional accounts of the Industrial Revolution by writing that

> '[w]hat fails to emerge from all of this is an appreciation of the ways in which a radical transformation of social relations *preceded* industrialization. The revolutionizing of productive forces *presupposed* a transformation of property relations and a change in the form of exploitation that created a historically unique *need* to improve the productivity of labour. It *presupposed* the emergence of

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[26] Wolfgang Fritz Haug (2017, 65) describes Marx's dialectical method consisting of transitions. This means that one form develops from another form. However, the preceding form is not the constitutive origin of the later form, because the preceding form is also an entity that has its origin in some other form. It is thus the dialectical method's objective to analyse these sequences of transitions.

capitalist imperatives: competition, accumulation, and profit-maximization.' (Wood 2017, 26)

Wood highlights that, although the Industrial Revolution is often thought of as something that changed the world in and by itself, the Industrial Revolution was actually enabled by definite changes in social practices, relations, and structures. Nature does not contain an imperative for technological development, but a mode of production based on the constant need to revolutionise the means of production certainly does.

Furthermore, Ernesto Laclau (1977, 50) writes that 'it is urgent that Marxist theory differentiate modes of production and economic systems as different levels of analysis – the second constituting a more concrete level which presupposes the first'. In other words, the mode of production includes not only strictly economic but also extra-economic relations, such as directly coercive political relations, that cannot be analysed by merely observing the economic system. For example, in feudalism peasants were forced to carry out unpaid surplus labour on the lords' lands by gunmen who were working for these same lords. Such a (directly) oppressive relation was an inherent part of the feudalist mode of production but it is not a strictly *economic* relation. (Marx 1993, 926; see also Hilton 1976, 24.) The difference is that in capitalism class power operates mainly in the "economic" sphere, whereas state power operates through the "political" sphere – that is, economic appropriation and political coercion do not go hand in hand in capitalism. I will discuss this later (see subsection 3.3.1).

How should we then understand the capitalist mode of production? Wood provides a wonderful definition:

> 'Capitalism is a system in which [1] goods and services, down to the most basic necessities of life, are produced for profitable exchange, where [2] even human labour-power is a commodity for sale in the market, and where all economic actors are dependent on the market. This is true not only for workers, [3] who must sell their labour-power for a wage, but also of capitalists, who depend on the market to [5] buy their inputs, including labour-power, and to [6] sell their output for profit. Capitalism differs from other social forms because [7] producers depend on the market for access to the means of production (unlike, for instance, peasants, who remain in direct, non-market possession of land); while [8] appropriators cannot rely on "extra-economic" powers of appropriation by means of direct coercion – such as the military, political, and judicial powers that enable feudal lords to extract surplus labour from peasants – but must depend on the purely "economic" mechanisms of the market. This distinct system of market dependence means that [9] the requirements of competition and profit-maximization are the fundamental rules of life. Because of those rules, [10] capitalism is a system uniquely driven to improve the productivity of labour by technical means. Above all, it is a system in which the bulk of society's work is done by propertyless labourers who are obliged to sell their labour-power in exchange for a wage in order to gain access to the means of life and

of labour itself. In the process of supplying the needs and wants of society, [4] workers are at the same time and inseparably creating profits for those who buy their labour-power. In fact, [11] the production of goods and services is subordinate to the production of capital and capitalist profit. [12] The basic objective of the capitalist system, in other words, is the production and self-expansion of capital.' (Wood 2017, 2–3; see also 2012)

This lengthy but highly insightful quote gives us at least twelve intrinsic features of the capitalist mode of production. These can be summarised as follows:

(1) *Goods and services are produced for profitable exchange*. In capitalism no production is organised unless it is meant to produce profit for capitalists through exchange.

(2) *Human labour power is a commodity for sale in the market*. Humans seek employment in the labour market where they compete against one another for jobs.

(3) *Workers sell their labour power for a wage*. Workers receive wage payments for the use of their labour power, which is different from the value of their labour. That is, the value of *labour power* often coincides with wage payments, but the value of *labour* equates with all the products produced in the process of production. The subtraction between the value of labour power and the value of labour consists of unpaid surplus labour carried out by workers, which is what constitutes capitalists' profits.

(4) *Workers create profits for those who buy their labour power*. Without labour power being used in production, as well as without workers carrying out unpaid surplus labour whose product is appropriated by capitalists, the capitalists would not be able to create profit.

(5) *Capitalists buy their inputs, including labour power, from the market*. After capitalists have bought inputs from the market, these inputs are used in the process of production. This results in output.

(6) *Capitalists sell their outputs for profit in the market*. If this exchange is successful, capitalists are able to realise the value inherent to the output of the process of production. It is this act of market exchange that veils the fact that the source of profit is in unpaid surplus labour, not in successful market exchange, per se.

(7) *Producers, or workers, depend on the market for access to the means of production*. Without selling their labour power workers would not be able to carry out their labour and thus obtain the means to fulfil their everyday needs. This includes not only workers who seek employment in the labour market, but also capitalists who buy

inputs from and sell outputs in the market. (In capitalism, all economic actors, not only workers and capitalists, are dependent on the market.)

(8) *Capitalists depend on the "purely economic" mechanism of the market to appropriate surplus labour.* According to Marx (1976, 899), '[t]he silent compulsion of economic relations sets the seal on the domination of the capitalist over the worker. Direct extra-economic force is still of course used, but only in exceptional cases. In the ordinary run of things, the worker can be left to the "natural laws of production", i.e. it is possible to rely on his dependence on capital, which springs from the conditions of production themselves, and is guaranteed in perpetuity by them'. Workers are not forced to carry out wage labour by gunmen, but they are forced to carry out wage labour because they have no other access to the means of production, that is, they have no other way of obtaining the means to fulfil their everyday needs. For instance, in feudalism many peasants owned land (i.e. means of production) on which they worked, producing the means to fulfil their everyday needs, such as food and clothing. In capitalism, however, workers are deprived of access to the means of production unless they sell their labour power and carry out wage labour.

(9) *Competition and profit maximisation are the fundamental rules of life.* Without succumbing to these two imperatives workers would not be able to stay alive and capitalists would not be able to maintain their businesses. Although workers do not necessarily have to worry about profit maximisation directly, capitalists' motive to maximise profit has drastic consequences for workers' everyday life as well, on top of which workers are forced to compete against other workers in the labour market.

(10) *Capitalist practices force capitalists to improve the productivity of labour by technical means.* Since it is in their interest to maximise profit and cut production costs, capitalists strive to make labour power more productive by improving the production technology.

(11) *Production of goods and services is subordinate to the production of capital and capitalist profit.* All production in capitalism – notwithstanding some exceptions, such as some public sector jobs – is organised in order to create profit for capitalists. That is, production is not organised to fulfil the needs of the social formation, but the needs of the social formation are, hopefully, fulfilled as a result of capitalists' thrive to maximise their profits.

(12) *Capitalist system necessitates the ever-increasing production of capital.* Without doing so, capitalists would lose their businesses after which (capitalist)

production would be impossible and the everyday needs of the social formation would not be fulfilled. Fine and Saad-Filho (2016, 36) explain this point by writing that 'the nature of capital as self-expanding value imposes a qualitative objective on every capitalist on pain of extinction (that is, business bankruptcy and, potentially, degradation into the class of wage workers): profit maximisation, or at least that the growth of profitability should take a high priority'. The expansion of capital is the main principle of the capitalist mode of production and social formation.

In addition to these twelve features, we can add two more:

(13) *The capitalist social formation is based on reproductive labour which is undervalued, mostly unpaid, and often gendered and racialised*. This sphere of labour is referred to as "social reproduction". As Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser (2019, 21) write, 'capitalism did not invent the subordination of women. […] But capitalism established new, distinctively "modern" forms of sexism, underpinned by new institutional structures. Its key move was to separate the making of people from the making of profit, to assign the first job to women, and to subordinate it to the second.' Even in such social formations as the Finnish welfare society the paid reproductive labour carried out mostly by women in the public sector is low-paid.

(14) *In capitalism the "economic" and "political" spheres become separated from one another.* This means that the two "moments" of economic appropriation (i.e. class power) and physical coercion (i.e. state power) become "relatively independent" of each other. However, although the separation of these spheres is a practical fact in capitalism, it should not be forgotten that production and politics are still *social* matters, which is why Wood (2000) has tried to look for openings to re-politicise production in order to reunite the economic and political spheres.

History teaches us that these fourteen features have been quintessential to the capitalist mode of production and that they lead to various situations where humans follow the logic typical to capitalist forms of praxis without fully realising what they are doing. People are not fully aware of those practices that they themselves practice. For example, Marx writes in the first volume of *Capital* that

> '[m]en do not therefore bring the products of their labour into relation with each other as values because they see these objects merely as the material instruments of homogeneous human labour. The reverse is true: by equating their different products to each other in exchange as values, they equate their different kinds of labour as human labour. *They do this without being aware of it*.' (Marx 1976, 166–167; italics OK)

Here Marx is discussing his "labour theory of value", according to which the average amount of socially necessary labour time objectified in one commodity determines the amount of "value" each commodity embodies. This is so in capitalism mostly because the products of labour are produced for exchange and not directly for use. This means that, when commodities are exchanged in the market, the average amount of socially necessary labour time objectified in each commodity – that is, the amount of value embodied by each commodity – serves as the basis which is reflected by "exchange value", namely, by price. In addition to exchange value, every product of labour has some "use value" as well, which is simply the usefulness of a thing endowed to it by virtue of its physical properties. It is use value on which exchange value is based; a commodity must be useful in order for it to be exchangeable.

Therefore, the point Marx is making in the above quote is that humans are not aware of the fact that they are bringing the products of their labour into relation with each other as embodiments of homogeneous human labour – that is, as objectifications of the average amount of socially necessary labour time – despite the fact that this is exactly what they are doing. The capitalist forms of praxis, such as the productive practice of producing products of labour for exchange, are something humans are forced to carry out. It does not matter whether humans understand the full extent of those social practices in which they themselves take part because they are still forced to take part in them – or otherwise they would not be able to stay alive.

Furthermore, carrying out such social practices does not require a full consciousness of the nature of these social practices, which is what Juha Koivisto (1983, 46; trans. OK) means when he writes that 'despite its practical validity, our common sense is nevertheless invalid inasmuch as it is unaware of those factors which render it "valid" and "applicable"'. In other words, the practical elements of consciousness, which arise when humans take part in capitalist social practices, are enough for humans to successfully operate in the social formation, but such elements of consciousness are nevertheless "invalid", since they do not tell the full story of those social practices. This same point can be expressed by the term "real appearance" (Wood 2000, 23).

Marx and Engels highlight that capitalist social practices sustain domination. Although these social practices have the tendency to make humans feel free and equal, they actually exacerbate oppression. For instance, when workers sell their labour power for capitalists in the labour market, this form of praxis makes workers intuitively see themselves not only as free subjects but also as equal with capitalists. In addition, the

labour market makes workers embrace the principles of private property and egoism as properties inherent to human nature. Marx describes this as follows:

> 'The sphere of circulation or commodity exchange, within whose boundaries the sale and purchase of labour-power goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. It is the exclusive realm of Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, let us say of labour-power, are determined only by their own free will. They contract as free persons, who are equal before the law. Their contract is the final result in which their joint will finds a common legal expression. Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property, because each disposes only of what is his own. And Bentham, because each looks only to his own advantage.' (Marx 1976, 280)

Workers adopt the intuitive experiences of freedom, equality, supporting private property, and egoism by taking part in the capitalist form of praxis of the labour market. By participating in this social practice, humans obtain a practical common sense that allows them to survive in the labour market, but since this common sense tells them that they are free, equal, for-private-property, and egoistic, it does not tell the full story. The "validity" of such common sense is in fact "invalid". Marx explains this by writing that

> '[w]hen we leave this sphere of simple circulation or the exchange of commodities, which provides the "free-trader *vulgaris*" with his views, his conceptions and the standard by which he judges the society of capital and wage-labour, a certain change takes place, or so it appears, in the physiognomy of our *dramatis personae*. He who was previously the money-owner now strides in front as a capitalist; the possessor of labour-power follows as his worker. The one smirks self-importantly and is intent on business; the other is timid and holds back, like someone who has brought his own hide to market and now has nothing else to expect but – a tanning.' (Marx 1976, 280)

In the capitalist mode of production there exists a stark hierarchy between workers and capitalists, since it is only by appropriating the products of unpaid surplus labour carried out by workers that capitalists are able to accumulate their wealth. (Here we should also include the unpaid labour done by people working in social reproduction in our category of workers.) This is the antagonistic relation between workers and capitalists on which the whole social formation is based, which leads structurally to the enrichment of a wealthy minority and to the impoverishment of the producing majority. This is why Rehmann (2013a, 46) asks: 'what is the reality of contractual freedom and equality if the majority is forced to sell their labour-power in order to survive, while the few buy their labour-power in order to make profit?' However, it is difficult to fully understand that this is the case, since humans' participation in the capitalist forms of praxis generate

"automatically" practical consciousnesses that tell them otherwise – or, as Marx (1976, 280) summarised, 'Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham'.

3.2.2 Objective Thought-Forms

How should these kinds of thought-forms, which stem from existing productive practices, be understood? Rehmann (2019, 119) explains that 'Marx's ideology critique operates simultaneously on the level of societal reality and "thought-form." He analyses the sphere of circulation as the real basis of the "human rights" of the French and American Revolution *and* at the same time reveals their restricted and imaginary nature'. In order to better understand this point, we need to have a look at how Marx criticises the conception of human nature found in Adam Smith and David Ricardo. In *Economic Manuscripts of 1857–58*, Marx writes that

> '[t]he individual and isolated hunter and fisherman, who serves Adam Smith and Ricardo as a starting point, is one of the unimaginative fantasies of the 18th century. […] It is, rather, the anticipation of "bourgeois society", which began to evolve in the 16th century and was making giant strides towards maturity in the 18th. In this society of free competition the individual seems to be rid of the natural, etc., ties which in earlier historical epochs made him an appurtenance of a particular, limited aggregation of human beings. The prophets of the 18th century, on whose shoulders Smith and Ricardo were still standing completely, envisaged this 18th-century individual – a product of the dissolution of the feudal forms of society on the one hand, and of the new productive forces evolved since the 16th century on the other – as an ideal whose existence belonged to the past. They saw this individual not as an historical result, but as the starting point of history; not as something evolving in the course of history, but posited by nature, because for them this individual was the natural individual, according to their idea of human nature.' (Marx 2010e, 17–18)

Here Marx is not contesting Smith's and Ricardo's conception of human nature simply as an illusory or false notion, but, instead, he argues that humans' participation in social practices, such as "free competition", typical to the developing bourgeois society caused humans to view themselves in their essence as economic individuals. It was this thought-form of individuality, which resulted from actually existing social practices, that Smith and Ricardo further elaborated in their theoretical writings. Marx's critique of Smith and Ricardo highlights the idea that ideology critique should be based on a proper understanding of the relation between forms of praxis and thought-forms.

It is clear that thought-forms of this kind are not "false", per se, since they tell the "truth" of those social practices in which humans take part in their everyday life. This is why Marx calls them "objective thought-forms" (*objektive Gedankenformen*), which is a

notion emphasised by PIT (see Haug 1977, 9–10; Rehmann 2013a, 41–46; 2019, 116–120). Marx uses this term in the first volume of *Capital* (1867) in the following manner:

> 'The categories of bourgeois economics consist precisely of forms of this kind. They are forms of thought which are socially valid, and therefore objective, for the relations of production belonging to this historically determined mode of social production, i.e. commodity production.' (Marx 1976, 169)

Following Marx's own usage of the term, PIT understands the concept of objective thought-form in the sense that different modes of production and social formations consist of definite kinds of forms of praxis. This causes the social formation to include thought-forms that match with these definite forms of praxis. There is no real difference between thought and praxis; thought is praxis. Wolfgang Fritz Haug describes this idea in more detail as follows:

> 'The central category for the scientific grasping of the consciousness which arises spontaneously in the capitalist economic forms of everyday life is the category of *the objective forms of thought*. Insofar as individuals must mediate their lives in action within determined economic forms, they learn the objective lawfulness of action-in-these-forms. Their consciousness is conceived here not as autonomous, in the sense of a mechanically functioning apparatus, which passively reflects an external existence. On the contrary, consciousness stands here as what it in fact is – namely conscious, active existence in determined economic forms. These economic forms are the fundamental forms of social praxis, and hence the forms of social praxis of individuals. Individual praxis in these forms mediates consciousness, just as consciousness mediates this praxis. Thinking, from the standpoint of the praxis of life in these forms, is subject to their "logic." Rather, it must subjugate itself to this logic, in order to mediate successful practice.' (Haug 1977, 9)

In order for humans to be able to practice capitalist practices successfully, their thinking must subjugate itself to the logic of such practices. Hence, humans learn the objective lawfulness of action-in-these-forms, which allows humans to operate successfully within capitalist practices without these practices telling them the full "truth" about their operation.

In this sense, objective thought-forms are those thought-forms that match with the forms of praxis of which each social formation consists. They are elements of practical consciousness that stem from those social practices in which humans participate in their everyday life. Objective thought-forms assume the existence of not passive but, in fact, *active* consciousness. They result from humans coming to terms with the practices that they perform in their day-to-day life; objective thought-forms are both '"reasonable" practice as well as practical reason' (Rehmann 2013a, 43).

And, yet, objective thought-forms are deceptive inasmuch as they lead humans to embrace historically determined forms of praxis without being conscious of this embrace. One such example is the capitalist form of praxis of the labour market which causes humans to see themselves, in their essence, as free, equal, for-private-property, and egoistic individuals, although it is the labour market, not "nature", that causes humans to behave in such a manner.

Insofar as objective thought-forms stem from forms of praxis – that is, objective thought-forms do not exist outside forms of praxis –, it is possible to understand them as parts of what Antonio Gramsci calls "common sense" (see subsection 2.3.1). According to PIT, we need to find a way to solve the contradictions included in common sense, that is, we must locate what Gramsci refers to as the "healthy nucleus" of common sense, its "good sense". We should rearticulate the field of common sense in terms of this healthy nucleus.

Another example of objective thought-forms is Marx's famous theory of "commodity fetishism" presented in the first volume of *Capital*, which refers less to a misunderstanding of capitalist social relations than to a true understanding of the actual inversion of these social relations themselves.[27] Marx describes commodity fetishism as follows:

> 'To the producers, therefore, the social relations between their private labours appear as what they are, i.e. they do not appear as direct social relations between persons in their work, but rather as material […] relations between persons and social relations between things.' (Marx 1976, 165–166)

It is not the consciousness of producers but their social relations that are inverted. In capitalism these social relations have become such that relations between things and relations between persons switch places. Consequently, we have material relations between persons and social relations between things: humans assign a social role to the products of their labour; hence, humans are merely forced to adapt to the movements of the products of their labour. Instead of humans controlling the products of their labour, the products of their labour control them. 'Commodity-fetishism can be described as an inversion', Rehmann (2013a, 42) writes, 'because the producers have ceded their collective agency and planning-capacities to the commodity-form which has taken over

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[27] As Rehmann (2019, 116) points out, '[u]nnoted by Kautsky, Plekhanov and Lenin, the concept of fetishism played no role in the traditions of "orthodox Marxism" and "Marxism-Leninism". For Althusser, it was a relic of a pre-Marxist, "humanist" concept of alienation, and, furthermore, "fictitious theory"'.

the regulation of society'. In this sense, commodity fetishism can be understood as an objective thought-form. The method of examining forms of praxis in an immediate relation to forms of thought, and with respect to the historical transformations underwent by these forms of praxis, stays true to a philosophy of praxis.

What does it mean to say that social relations between humans are "inverted"? Rehmann (2013a, 43) explains this in the sense that in bourgeois society such practices as commodity fetishism are, indeed, normal, but when these same practices are analysed from a dialectical perspective – namely, in their historical motion –, they are revealed to be inverted. For example, the practice of ceding the social agency of humans to the products of their labour has become a prevalent practice in capitalism, not before. This is why one does not have to take this practice, as well as its catastrophic effects, as something that is universally necessary in all social formations. By looking at practices in their historical motion, it is possible to see the historical specificity of these practices, which opens the possibility of a social formation where humans could once again hold the *social* role in society.

From this it follows that theoretical or ideological articulations, which argue that objective thought-forms are universally and ahistorically true, are false in the sense that they turn something that is historical into an ahistorical essence. For example, the form of praxis of the labour market gives rise to an objective thought-form of individuality, which then becomes an element inherent to the bourgeois society's common sense. When mental labourers of that society start "philosophising", they use this objective thought-form as one of the elements on which they build their theoretical elaborations. In effect, we get individualism, which understands individuality 'not as something evolving in the course of history, but posited by nature' (Marx 2010e, 17–18). Insofar as such theories created by mental labourers do not take into account the historical and practical nature of objective thought-forms, they are ideological. From this it follows that it is bourgeois economists' 'ideological function to "translate" the objective thought forms immediately into a doctrinaire language' (Rehmann 2019, 120).[28]

Marx (1976, 931–932) mentions one such case at the end of the first volume of *Capital* when he discusses how Western political economists theorise about countries that

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[28] C. B. Macpherson's studies of Thomas Hobbes' and John Locke's writings, presented in his seminal work *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (1990), operates similarly to Marx's critique of Smith and Ricardo. In this sense, Macpherson identifies the emerging social reconfigurations of the capitalist mode of production and market society as those objective thought-forms on which Hobbes' and Locke's views are based.

have been colonised by the "metropolitan" states. When bourgeois political economists explain the economic and social phenomena in Western capitalist societies, they do so with reference to the pre-capitalist world. As we saw above, Smith and Ricardo assumed the existence of a "natural individual", such as Robinson Crusoe, as one of their first premises – although now we see that this premise is produced by capitalist social practices. Bourgeois political economists therefore turn the capitalist mode of production into something essentially "natural", something that has always existed. In addition, the capitalist mode of production is described as a system that contains no structural hierarchies and maximises individual liberties.

Yet, the case is completely opposite when political economists explain the events taking place in colonies. Marx writes that

> '[t]he same interest which, in the mother country, compels the sycophant of capital, the political economist, to declare that the capitalist mode of production is theoretically its own opposite, this same interest, in the colonies, drives him "to make a clean breast of it", and to proclaim aloud the antagonism between the two modes of production. To this end he demonstrates that the development of the social productivity of labour, co-operation, division of labour, application of machinery on a large scale, and so on, are impossible without the expropriation of the workers and the corresponding transformation of their means of production into capital. In the interest of the so-called wealth of the nation, he seeks for artificial means to ensure the poverty of the people. Here his apologetic armour crumbles off, piece by piece, like rotten touchwood.' (Marx 1976, 931–932)

In other words, Western political economists promote the idea that the private ownership of the means of production should be implemented in colonies. And these political economists do so despite the fact that they do not acknowledge that the capitalist societies, in which they themselves live, contain this very same institution, which results in the exploitation of wage labour. If capitalism is simply a natural state of affairs, why should colonies implement the private ownership of the means of production? Such a contradictory position, which forces the apologetic armour of bourgeois economists to crumble off, is caused by those capitalist social practices in which they participate in their everyday life. In effect, bourgeois political economists naturalise and universalise the social practices of their own capitalist social formation.

In accordance with this point, PIT argues that objective thought-forms serve as ideologues' building blocks when they articulate ideologies. This means that objective thought-forms are not ideological, per se, inasmuch as they do not result from the vertical structure of "ideological powers" (see subsection 3.3.1); objective thought-forms are not generated by ideological forms of praxis whose function it is to organise the operation of

class society and to deactivate the realisation of class antagonism. For example, the objective thought-form of individuality is not strictly ideological, but theoretical conceptions of capitalism based on this objective thought-form are, since the latter take the "spontaneous" objective thought-form of individuality and articulate it into an ideological definition of capitalism as an ahistorical, eternal, and universal system.

As Rehmann (2013a, 51) explains, objective thought-forms can be understood 'as a "sounding-board" (*Resonanzboden*) for elaborate ideologies and their "institutionalised discourses"'. This helps understand the idea that every ideology always contains a kernel of "truth". If this was not the case, then ideologies would not be very effective in providing people with practical elements of common sense, which allow them to operate within social practices.

3.3   Ideological Forms of Praxis

Now that we understand what is meant by the notions of "capitalist mode of production" and "objective thought-forms", let us move on to discuss ideological social practices. The first subsection deals with Marx and Engels' writings on the topic, especially their concept of "ideological powers". This notion is highly important for PIT who adopts it for their own use.

The second theme discussed here is Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses. I will not only examine Althusser's own writings but review the many criticisms presented by Michel Pêcheux, Haug and PIT, Stuart Hall, Ernesto Laclau, and Michel Foucault against the top-down mechanism inherent to Althusser's theory. This is important because Althusser's formulations concerning ideological state apparatuses are central for ideology theory and because they served as an initial point of departure for PIT. I also contrast Foucault's theory of power to PIT's separation between power *and* domination.

Finally, I introduce the two highly important concepts of "historical bloc" and "hegemony" used by Gramsci. These terms allow us to understand the materiality of ideology and how productive practices, common sense, and ideology interact with one another in capitalism. I also discuss the occupations of Cairo's Tahrir Square and New York's Zuccotti Park as well as Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential election campaign in the United States in order to make Gramsci's concepts more understandable.

3.3.1 Ideological Powers

Marx and Engels used the concept of "ideological powers" (*ideologische Mächte*) to refer to ideological forms of praxis that necessitate vertical socialisation. However, let us first explore how Gramsci understands the concept of ideology, since it will allow us to see ideology as a "terrain" where humans not only become aware of antagonisms but also fight them out.

Gramsci identifies three steps in how the concept of ideology has been distorted.[29] By reading the following points carefully, we can uncover Gramsci's conception of ideology.

> '1. ideology is identified as distinct from the structure, and it is asserted that it is not ideology that changes the structures but vice versa;
>
> 2. it is asserted that a given political solution is "ideological" – i.e. that it is not sufficient to change the structure, although it thinks that it can do so; it is asserted that it is useless, stupid, etc.;
>
> 3. one then passes to the assertion that every ideology is "pure" appearance, useless, stupid, etc.' (Gramsci 1992, 376)

The first, and partly the second, distortion is to detach ideology from the structure and to argue that it is only the structure that changes ideology. We can thus infer that, according to Gramsci, the structure does not fully determine ideology but that these two notions operate more or less reciprocally. This is why structure and ideology should be analysed in close approximation to one another. This idea becomes more understandable when we read the following passage from Marx's "Preface" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859):

> 'In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and *the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out*. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production.' (Marx 2010f, 263; italics OK)

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[29] Gramsci (1992, 376) does not say explicitly where and by whom this distortion concerning the concept of ideology has taken place, but he seems to refer generally to the (Marxist) discussions of his own time.

Marx argues that we should separate between material transformations taking place in the economic conditions of production on the one hand and the "ideological forms" (of praxis) on the other. The latter can be understood as the material locus where humans become conscious of social contradictions and fight them out. It is important to notice that the phrase "become conscious of this conflict" does not denote an unmediated consciousness; in fact, humans become aware of the class antagonism only by way of historically definite categories typical to their society, culture, politics, and so forth.

The concept of "ideological forms" can therefore be understood in a much more material sense than as mere consciousness, which is a view adhered to by Gramsci when he translated Marx's original expression of "ideological forms" to that of "ideological terrain" (Rehmann 2015, 440). This choice of words emphasises how the practical activities and thought of humans adjust to the ideological forms of praxis typical to each antagonistic social formation. Humans become aware of social contradictions by engaging practically with the ideological forms of praxis where social struggles are carried out.

Furthermore, the second and third steps show that Gramsci views with discontent the conception of ideology that does not realise the concept's practical nature. Therefore, it can be said that the purpose of ideology is not only to neutralise, pacify, and legitimise, which are features typical to the notion of "false consciousness", but also to serve as the *terrain* on which humans become conscious of their own activities, organise themselves, and struggle against other groups in order to change the "structure". The concept of ideology carries "positive" weight as well.

It is this point that has sparked a highly interesting debate between Peter D. Thomas and Jan Rehmann. On the one hand, Thomas (2009, 281) supports the idea that Gramsci had a "neutral" conception of ideology, according to which being "ideological" does not necessarily carry any pejorative weight. Thomas' argument is strengthened by Gramsci's (1992, 377) expression, which says that ideologies '"organise" human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc.'. If the historical motion of human societies necessitates certain ideological forms of praxis that serve as necessary terrains where humans become aware of social struggles and fight them out, how could ideology *not* be a neutral concept?

On the other hand, Rehmann (2013a, 143–146) argues that Gramsci's understanding of ideology is not simply neutral. Rehmann states that, since ideology is related to the existence of class society, it should be conceived of as something that

humans ought to get rid of. Although ideological forms serve as those terrains where humans become aware of social contradictions and fight them out, they are nonetheless phenomena that should not exist in a social formation without structural domination and class antagonism.

And, yet, Rehmann's argument is not as simple as to claim that Thomas is wrong and Rehmann is right. Rehmann discovers a dialectical relation between the neutral and critical conceptions of ideology found in Gramsci, as he insightfully explains in the following passage:

> 'Gramsci's terminology in regard to ideology is heterogeneous and contains both positive and critical usages. […] If one resists the temptation to rashly homogenize Gramsci's contradictory usages of ideology and instead maintains the dialectical tension between them, one can see that they constitute a particular theoretical strength: they indicate that Gramsci tries to do both – on the one hand understand, long before Althusser, the materiality of the ideological, its existence in apparatuses and practices, its efficacy, and on the other hand maintain that a philosophy of praxis has to operate as a permanent ideology-critique, not least in relation to one's own ideologies.' (Rehmann 2015, 441–442)

In other words, Rehmann emphasises the tension between neutral and critical conceptions of ideology in Gramsci and argues that this tension is in fact one of Gramsci's strengths. Ideological forms of praxis are terrains on which humans become aware of social contradictions *and* instances that sustain domination. Ideologies are not simply false; they are material terrains that subjugate humans. Therefore, a critical theorist of ideology should embrace this tension between neutral and critical conceptions of ideology, since it forces her to remain on her toes regarding her own praxis while trying to find her way amongst ideological forms.

Now we can move on to the concept advocated by PIT, that of ideological powers. This term derives from the later works of Engels, according to whom certain phenomena of history, such as the creation of excess product and classes, concurrently gave rise to ideological powers, or ideological forms of praxis, which began to "channel" the everyday practices of humans. Rehmann explains this idea of "channelling" by writing that

> '[m]any debates on determinism, overdetermination, and co-determination are too much fixated on the relationship between already fixed instances of society (economy, politics, culture, etc.) and forget that these instances are in fact institutionalized and ossified forms of social practices. A praxeological approach would need to distinguish for example between concrete activities of people, which are never completely determined but surrounded by a certain space of possibilities, and the respective fields of activities, in which these activities take place.

> Determination is a quality not of the singular action, but of the structured *field*, because it contains "switches" that determine what is considered to be successful or unsuccessful activity and thus give regular feedback to the acting subjects. Diverging actions thus coalesce around converging experiences, which are then repeated again and again, become fixed habits and are then handed down as such. "Laws" are only "resulting laws," in which the interactions typical for a field of activities are condensed. In this sense one could say that determination is a result of indetermination.' (Rehmann 2018, 215)

In this sense, it is possible to redefine the state, religion, the law, and other kinds of less-distinct forms of praxis as institutionalised and ossified forms of social practices. This allows us to get rid of, for instance, the "instrumentalist" view of the state insofar as the state is less a simple tool used by capitalists than an ensemble of "sedimented" social practices that force subjects to adhere to certain ways of doing and thinking about social matters. Rehmann (2014, 98; 2018, 223) explains this notion by using the term "orthopraxy", as opposed to that of "orthodoxy", and argues that, in fact, orthopraxy played a more crucial role for German fascism than any type of coherent verbal dogma.

In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), Engels (2010a, 163–165; see also Haug 1998, 111) argues that it was mainly the development of an increased level of excess product that originally gave rise to the monogamous and patriarchal family institution typical to contemporary society. The division of labour endowed men with the obligation of taking care of all the new excess product, which is why their power grew in society. This, in turn, caused the "mother right" to be replaced by the "father right"[30], which is described by Engels (2010a, 165) as 'the *world-historic defeat of the female sex*' by which 'the woman was degraded, enthralled, became the slave of the man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children'.

The introduction of the father right established the patriarchal family, which already contained, according to Marx (cited in Engels 2010a, 166), 'within itself in *miniature* all the antagonisms which later develop on a wide scale within society and its state'. Engels gives a more detailed explanation of this point by writing that

> '[t]he essential features are the incorporation of bondsmen and paternal power; the Roman family, accordingly, constitutes the perfected type of this form of the family. The word *familia* did not originally signify the ideal of our modern philistine, which is a compound of sentimentality and domestic discord. Among the Romans, in the beginning, it did not even refer to the married couple and their children, but to the slaves alone. *Famulus* means a household slave and *familia* signifies the totality of

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[30] "Mother right" is a term that refers to a system of kinship based on "matrilineality", which is a social principle according to which kinship and inheritance are determined by the mother's lineage. "Father right" stands for a same state of affairs but with regard to "patrilineality".

slaves belonging to one individual. Even in the time of Gaius the *familia, id est patrimonium* (i.e., the inheritance) was bequeathed by will. The expression was invented by the Romans to describe a new social organism, the head of which had under him wife and children and a number of slaves, under Roman paternal power, with power of life and death over them all.' (Engels 2010a, 166)

Here we see that the patriarchal family institution is, from the very beginning, a form of praxis that is directly related to the institution of private property, namely, the private ownership of other humans in the form of slavery. This includes not only women and children but actual slaves as well. The antagonism between a patriarch and his slaves, which is inherent to the patriarchal family, contains, "in embryo", the social antagonism between the ruling and ruled classes. This is why Engels (2010a, 173) writes that '[t]he first class antithesis which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamian marriage, and the first class oppression with that of the female sex by the male'.

However, it should be mentioned that Frigga Haug (1998, 107–109) criticises Engels for not discussing the issue of gender in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* regarding social formations where surplus value-producing labour has become central. The place of gender relations in Engels' book is simply taken later by the state and class; as F. Haug (*ibid.*, 112) writes, '[t]he question of the mutual support of patriarchy and capital is hidden'. Although Engels' studies were highly progressive for his own time, today we should follow the many insights offered by intersectional feminism and analyse how factors such as gender, "race", and class traverse and become articulated with one another in society as well as consider that a social formation without class oppression might still include gender and "racial" oppression.

Later the same social processes that gave rise to the patriarchal family institution, such as the creation of excess product and the deepening division of labour, caused the state apparatus to be established. Engels (2010a, 218) argues that one of the earliest places where this happened was in Ancient Athens, where the legitimacy of the emerging state apparatus was further strengthened by even the oppressed people themselves who turned towards the state in need of protection from their oppressors. And since the "dirty" work of policing was assigned to slaves, '[t]he class antagonism on which the social and political institutions rested', Engels (*ibid.*, 222) explains, 'was no longer that between the nobles and the common people, but that between slaves and freemen, wards and citizens'.

Therefore, the establishment of the state apparatus caused the social antagonism between the ruling and ruled classes to obtain a "political form", which consisted of an

antagonism between wards (i.e. enslaved common people) and citizens (i.e. free common people). In practice and consciousness, the class antagonism was replaced by a "political" antagonism that traversed the other pole of the class antagonism, the common people. It is important to understand that this political antagonism was not simply an illusory one – namely, "false consciousness" – since it really existed on the level of social practices. Indeed, the political antagonism was a truly existing form that the class antagonism had obtained. From then on people concentrated in their everyday life less on the class antagonism and more on the political one mediated by the form of praxis of the state.

In this sense, the term ideological powers, or ideological forms of praxis, refers specifically to those social practices that arise out of the class antagonism. Ideological powers are born to both neutralise as well as deal with the class antagonism. In this sense, they can be understood as those forms of praxis which produce new kinds of antagonisms[31] in society *and* a sense of "alienated consciousness" for their subjects, that is, an intuitive feeling of being somehow detached from social reality, from the immediately practical life. Since entering ideological forms of praxis forces one to participate in practices that do not allow one to fully engage with the immediately practical life, it is important for a critical theorist of ideology to be self-conscious of her own praxis in these ideological forms of praxis in order to envision ways of overcoming ideological subjection and realising emancipation.

To emphasise an earlier point, Engels' (2010a, 213) formulation of the state as 'an institution that would perpetuate, not only the arising class division of society, but also the right of the possessing class to exploit the non-possessing classes and the rule of the former over the latter' does not refer to an "instrumentalist" view of the state as a simple tool of the ruling class. Instead, Engels means that the state gives rise to new forms of praxis that further complicate the issue of class antagonism. As Rehmann argues, the state becomes the ideological *terrain* on which humans become aware – undoubtedly, to differing degrees – of social conflicts and where they fight them out.

In *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (1886), Engels continues his analysis of the state. He writes as follows:

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[31] One example of such new antagonisms is representational politics. After parliamentary politics is born, various parties develop conflicts between one another. Representational politics then becomes all about these conflicts between parties, which are oftentimes detached from the everyday struggles of people living in capitalist social formations. This explains why it is so common for voters to feel that politics does not concern them.

'The state presents itself to us as *the first ideological power over man*. Society creates for itself an organ for the safeguarding of its common interests against internal and external attacks. This organ is the state power. Hardly come into being, this organ makes itself independent vis-à-vis society; and, indeed, all the more so, the more it becomes the organ of a particular class, the more it directly enforces the rule of that class. The fight of the oppressed class against the ruling class necessarily becomes a political fight, a fight first of all against the political rule of this class. *Consciousness of the connection between this political struggle and its economic foundation becomes dulled and can be lost altogether.*' (Engels 2010b, 392–393; italics OK)

The above quote clarifies that ideology has to do with social practices that stem from the class antagonism. These are the same practices to which humans must succumb themselves by virtue of living and participating in the antagonistic social formation. Following Engels, Wolfgang Fritz Haug (1983a, 12–13; 1983b, 60–63) also underlines the role of the state as the first ideological power that ascends "above" the antagonistic social formation in order to govern society's resources and to pacify the class antagonism. In order to achieve these two goals, the state assumes the means of ideological subjection and physical repression.

Furthermore, what is characteristic of the state is that it makes itself independent vis-à-vis society. How should this "independence" be understood? Haug (1983b, 60–64; 1984a, 19–20) explains this notion by calling the state an "illusory" community. Here illusory does not refer to something false, that the state does not really exist. Instead, the concept of illusory community merely signifies that the state, as an ideological power, presents itself as a "horizontal" community without any interest. Humans obtain a "practical" understanding of the state, society, and themselves as something interest-free when they take part in social practices inherent to the state. The social practices typical to the state promote a sense of "generality" – that is, a general and vague sense of (alienated) community – which conceals the class antagonism.

Yet, the state does have an interest, which is to present the antagonistic social formation as an interest-free ensemble where humans should only concentrate on technocratic questions of governance. The generality is exactly the mechanism through which the state takes care of class antagonism: in the first place, it seems as a mere neutral necessity that all human communities require a coercive state apparatus; and, in the second, when humans enter the ideological forms of praxis typical to the state, they too have to abandon their interests and act as if they were just neutrally serving the greater

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good, such as what is best for the "nation". Marx discusses this same theme in his book *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*[32] (1843–44) by writing that

> '[o]f the various elements of national life, the one most difficult to evolve was the political state, the constitution. It developed as universal reason over against the other spheres, as ulterior to them. The historical task then consisted in its (the constitution's) reassertion, but the particular spheres do not realise that their private nature coincides with the other-worldly nature of the constitution or of the political state, and that the other-worldly existence of the political state is nothing but the affirmation of their own estrangement. Up till now the *political constitution* has been the *religious sphere*, the *religion* of national life, the heaven of its generality over against the *earthly existence* of its actuality. […] *Political life* in the modern sense is the *scholasticism* of national life. […] It is obvious that the political constitution as such is brought into being only where the private spheres have won an independent existence.' (Marx 2010a, 31)

In this passage, Marx argues that in capitalism the "generality" of the state – as opposed to the "earthly existence", the "actuality" of other social spheres, such as the economic one – serves as a testimony of the estrangement of the antagonistic social formation. The reason why the state, as well as the constitution on which the state is established, has developed as "universal reason" against the antagonistic actuality of the economic sphere has to do with the fact that in capitalism *class* power becomes separated from *state* power. Wood (2000, 39) explains this in the sense that in feudalism more and more free farmers had to succumb to private masters, which means that the farmers had to do surplus labour for the masters in order to receive personal protection. As time passed, this process led to a situation where private appropriators could expropriate direct producers without the direct support of the state. Wood writes that

> '[t]he eventual development of capitalism out of the feudal system perfected this privatization and integration – by the complete expropriation of the direct producer and the establishment of absolute private property. At the same time, these developments had as their necessary condition a new and stronger form of centralized public power. The state divested the appropriating class of direct political powers and duties not immediately concerned with production and appropriation, leaving them with private exploitative powers purified of public, social functions.' (Wood 2000, 39)

When class power and state power were separated – that is, when the "economic" sphere was distinguished from the "political" one –, the state became a public instance without any direct economic interest. The state was turned into an abstract and "impersonal" institution whose task it is to merely guard the "general interest" of society. However,

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[32] This text was written by Marx in 1843–44, but it remained unpublished during his lifetime.

although class power and state power function, in this sense, separately in capitalism, economic appropriation is reliant on the state "in the last instance" (Haug 2011, 207), which means that 'when there are violent confrontations', Wood (2000, 45) explains, 'they are usually not directly between capital and labour. It is not capital itself but the state that conducts class conflict when it intermittently breaks outside the walls and takes a more violent form'.

The notion of abstract generality, which is typical to state power separated from class power in capitalism, is expressed in the political constitution, which demonstrates the estrangement of society. Here the estrangement of society denotes the separation of the economic and political spheres, which signifies the fact that production is not under democratic control.

Rehmann (2013a, 35–36) argues that Marx's (2010a, 31) phrase – according to which 'the *political constitution* has been the *religious sphere*, the *religion* of national life, the heaven of its generality over against the *earthly existence* of its actuality' – demonstrates a sophisticated method of analysis. Marx discovers a religious element in the everyday practices of class society, one of which is the constitution which serves as the generality over against the earthly existence of society's actuality. This is why Marx identifies even in the strictly "secular" way of life something thoroughly religious. Engels further elaborates the relation between the state and the law as follows:

> 'once the state has become an independent power vis-à-vis society, it immediately produces a further ideology. It is among professional politicians, theorists of public law and jurists of private law that the connection with economic facts gets well and truly lost. Since in each particular case the economic facts must assume the form of juristic motives in order to receive legal sanction; and since, in so doing, consideration has, of course, to be given to the whole legal system already in operation, the juristic form is, in consequence, made everything and the economic content nothing.' (Engels 2010b, 393)

Engels agrees with Marx that ideological social practices, such as the constitution, lead humans to embrace a "general interest" over the whole nation without concentrating on the antagonistic relations of production. Hence, the question is not simply of "false consciousness", of mere illusion, but of definite kinds of social practices that endow humans with definite kinds of thought-forms. By analysing the relation between different kinds of ideological powers, such as the state and the law, and the relation between ideological powers and class struggle, it is possible to examine the historical motion of such social practices and the thought-forms corresponding to this motion.

Therefore, the "relatively autonomous" institutions of law, judicature, and politics (see Jessop 1982, 26; 2008, 418) can be seen to operate by detaching social questions from society and elevating them above it. By doing so, ideological powers generalise, universalise, and alienate social and political issues that stem from and concern the immediately practical life. Hence, we can understand ideological powers as those forms of praxis that generate an alienated community by concealing the existence of an antagonistic social formation (Haug 1983a, 13; Pietilä 1984, 46; 1991, 78–79).

One example of such "generality" is the judicial system in the United States, where the highest court in the federal judiciary is the Supreme Court. The function of the Supreme Court is to serve as an interest-free institution that oversees other courts and provides them with legitimate interpretations of the constitution. However, the Supreme Court also seems to be one of the most important arenas of political struggle. Those who get to nominate and confirm their own Supreme Court candidates also get to determine the contents of "interest-free" interpretations of the constitution and wield more power in society.

The interesting thing is that, as an ideological power, the state can prevent the antagonistic social formation from falling apart only by making itself the locus of social and political struggles. Although this serves mainly the interest of those who hope to maintain "business as usual", it also opens the door for ideological struggle in the ideological forms of praxis. For instance, progressive forces in the U.S. can strive to nominate their own Supreme Court candidates which would, in turn, allow them to implement progressive policies and steer public opinion towards their views. History teaches us that, if one tries to realise progressive policies "outside" the state by way of revolution, the state makes use of its military and police forces in order to prevent such "extra-governmental" actions (Rehmann 2013a, 149–151).

This example illustrates that other ideological powers are "relatively autonomous" of the state in the sense that they rely on the state only "in the last instance" (see Thomas 2009, 137). In other words, the state secures the functioning of other ideological powers, which

> 'are located, if you like, within the sphere of the state but outside the administrative and in the last instance repressively functioning state in its narrower sense. Judges, priests, philosophers and similar figures […] are seen as intervening in society in their respectively specific modes, which are formally independent of this narrowly defined state apparatus.' (Haug 2011, 207)

The "generality" of the state means that any ruling bloc operating inside the representative-democratic system has to frame its interests as universal reason through which the class antagonism inherent to the capitalist mode of production is then controlled (Haug 1991, 98; Rehmann 2013a, 33). Hall (1992a, 179–187) explains how a "general interest" of this kind is obtained. A general election, for instance, can be described as a process by which citizens demonstrate their general approval of a private interest of some political force. At the end of the general election, the private interest of the winning political force is elevated above society as the new "general interest". Bob Jessop (1982, 17) describes this same phenomenon by writing that 'the conquest of state power presupposes the successful representation of a class interest as the general interest'.

PIT argues that, no matter what specific forms the state receives, it must always represent itself as a guardian of the general interest – this is its *modus operandi*. From this it follows that it does not really matter what kinds of particular forms the state receives – that is, it does not matter whether it is a "welfare state" or a "night-watchman state" –, since the state's *modus operandi* is still to represent itself as a guardian of the general interest. And it is exactly for this reason that the state is an ideological power, since it hides the interest-bound nature of the antagonistic social formation.

Although this theme will be discussed more thoroughly in the final chapter (see subsection 4.2.1), we should briefly mention the distinction made by PIT between vertical (or alienated) and horizontal (or cultural) forms of socialisation (Rehmann 2013a, 248–249; 2019, 125). The former concept stands for a form of socialisation through which humans become members of hierarchical structures of domination, whereas the latter refers to a collective form of socialisation that manifests when humans relate to one another democratically as equal social beings.

Yet, the separation between these two analytical axes – the vertical and horizontal – should not be taken as a given empirical state of affairs, since it is only an analytical tool for the study of real-life phenomena. PIT underlines that these two levels are intertwined to a larger or smaller extent and that, by applying the concepts of vertical and horizontal socialisation, we can see how subjects come to accept their subjection voluntarily. In other words, since the vertical and horizontal dimensions are always mixed in class society, ideological subjection includes a degree of horizontal socialisation, which is why humans *subject* to it.

PIT's analytical separation between vertical and horizontal forms of socialisation presents two insights. First, it enables one to see how humans are ideologically subjected

in an antagonistic social formation. That is, although the ideological subjectivity granted to humans by the antagonistic social ensemble is restricted, humans are still granted agency. We should therefore understand ideological subjection not only through its restrictions, its negativity, but by its enabling and positive nature as well. Without the positive aspect, ideological subjection would not be very effective. Keeping in mind Rehmann's argument about religion being both the opium of the people and the sigh of the oppressed creature (see subsection 2.2.1), we can describe ideological forms of socialisation as providing a sense of (alienated) community in an antagonistic social formation.

Second, PIT's distinction allows us to identify potential points of resistance in hierarchical structures of domination and vertical forms of socialisation necessitated by such structures. A critical theory of ideology should try to counter these vertical forms of socialisation by reclaiming the elements of common-being inherent to them. As Rehmann writes,

> '[a] Marxist theory of ideology goes of course beyond the denouncing or pulling apart of a competing theoretical formation. It aims deeper and tries to grasp the inner connections between a specific stage of capitalism and the predominant subjectivities that emerge from it. […] [W]e need to look at for its inner contradictions, just as Marx analyzed the culture of modernity dialectically as a conflicting field of progressive potentials and destructive forces.' (Rehmann 2018, 222; see also Engels 2010b, 365)

I will demonstrate the task of "reclaiming" elements of common-being in the final chapter. However, for now, we should have a look at Althusser's theoretical framework, since it serves as a point of departure and as a target of criticism for PIT.

3.3.2 Historicising Ideological State Apparatuses and the Ideological Subject-Effect

Althusser discusses his theory of the ideological most extensively in his seminal essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1970). According to Althusser (2014, 268), the "ideological subject-effect" stands for a process in which humans become subjects when they are subjected to an ideological order. Althusser argues that this subjection is mostly voluntarily, which is why ideology can be understood as voluntary subordination. Laclau, one of Althusser's students, sums this point as follows:

> '*Individuals*, who are simple bearers of structures, are transformed by ideology into *subjects*, that is to say, that they live the relation with their real conditions of existence as if they themselves were the *autonomous principle* of determination of that relation. The mechanism of this characteristic inversion is interpellation.' (Laclau 2011, 100)

Althusser (2014, 264–265) uses the verb "*interpeller*" to refer to the process in which humans are "hailed" as subjects. Only when an ideological state apparatus calls out to the subject, the subject appears. Hence, Althusser dismisses the common-sensical view of human subjectivity as a stable entity and claims subjectivity to only exist as an effect of various hails performed by ideological state apparatuses. This turns ideology into a material instance; ideological subjectivity must be produced by material apparatuses by way of various rituals and the like.

Therefore, Althusser's (2014, 269) notion of the ideological subject-effect makes use of the equivocal meaning of the word "subject": first, it denotes a subject who serves as the autonomous principle of determination of its own actions; and, second, it refers to a subordinate who is subjected to an oppressive power. This is to say that, within hierarchical structures of domination, humans become "functioning" and "free" subjects only by way of subordination.

Interestingly, Althusser's seminal essay provides the concept of ideology, as if almost by accident, with two distinct treatments (Koivisto & Suikkanen 1992, 76). First, ideologies are defined to operate through ideological state apparatuses, which render these ideologies thoroughly material. This can be considered as a step towards the right direction and away from the consciousness discourse, which sees ideology mainly as a phenomenon of consciousness (Haug 1984a, 33; Pietilä 1991, 53–54). By considering the role played by ideological state apparatuses, it is possible to understand ideology as something that somehow constitutes consciousness, in which case ideology is more a feature of social structures and less a simple phenomenon of consciousness (see Koivisto & Pietilä 1996). The study of ideological state apparatuses allows us to understand the history of such apparatuses as well as the ways in which they have interpellated different kinds of ideologies during the course of history.

Yet, Althusser uses the latter half of his seminal essay to treat ideology as an "eternal" instance, as an ahistorical mechanism (Koivisto & Suikkanen 1992, 76). This problematic formulation has been widely criticised for at least two reasons. In the first place, Althusser's eternalisation of the ideological subject-effect takes away the historical specificity of different kinds of social formations. The analysis of the motion of history

is exactly what gives the tradition of historical materialism its *historical* insight. In this regard, Althusser's ahistorical view of ideology goes against the views of Marx (*ThF*, Thesis 8) who emphasises how '[a]ll mysteries that turn theory towards mysticism find their rational solutions in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice'. Althusser's claim that ideological subjection exists in all social systems throughout history is not a practical conclusion but an abstract one.

The second criticism is that Althusser's (1971) advocacy of Lacanian psychoanalysis apparently led him to overstate the one-sidedness of the ideological subject-effect. This is to say that Althusser's formulation does not open the door for exploring how subjects could contest or change the processes by which they are interpellated as subjects. This introduces a "functionalist" undertone into Althusser's thought, which undermines his theory of ideology. (Haug 1983b, 63–64, 92–93.)

Pêcheux, another one of Althusser's students, found it problematic to see ideology as an eternal instance, which caused Pêcheux to try to come up with a discourse theory capable of countering Althusser's functionalism (Koivisto & Suikkanen 1992, 84). Rehmann (2013a, 181) recounts how Pêcheux ended up adopting Althusser's notion of a "proletarian ideology", which led him to distinguish between a bourgeois ideology interpellating its subjects as "autonomous" and a proletarian ideology interpellating its subjects as "militant". However, such a formulation is too one-dimensional, since many non-proletarian ideologies, such as fascism, interpellate their subjects as "militant" as well. This is why Rehmann concludes that,

> '[c]ontinuing the path of what he called the theoretical "triple alliance" between Althusser, Lacan and Saussure, Pêcheux merged Althusser's "theoretical antihumanism" with a "linguistic turn", which, in an over-generalised struggle against any kind of "hermeneutics", "semantics", "socio-" or "psycho-linguistics", abstracted from the body, from experiences, and from history.' (Rehmann 2013a, 184)

Haug identified similar reasons to those of Pêcheux to criticise Althusser. As Haug (1984a, 19) writes, PIT does not agree with Althusser's view of 'the omnihistoricity of the *imaginary*' which stands for 'the imaginary relation of the individuals to their conditions of life'. This is the reason why PIT decided to disregard Althusser's concept of "ideological state apparatuses" and replace it with Marx and Engels' term "ideological powers".[33]

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[33] Although both Pêcheux and Haug criticised Althusser for his functionalist tendencies, I think it is helpful that we distinguish between two versions of functionalism. Sally Haslanger (2019b, 10) defines an

PIT's re-articulation of ideological state apparatuses as ideological powers tackles Althusser's (etiological-)functionalist tendency by concentrating on the manifold, and even contradictory, social practices of which ideological powers consist. PIT's goal is not only to examine how the "ruling ideology" reproduces subordinating social relations but to also find ways to contest the oppressive functioning of the ideological subject-effect. For this reason, Haug (1983b, 74–77) makes use of Sigmund Freud's concept of "condensation", which explains how ideological powers are constructed of manifold and contradictory elements. This is exactly what Rehmann (2018, 222) means when he writes about the capitalist social formation that 'we need to look at for its inner contradictions, just as Marx analyzed the culture of modernity dialectically as a conflicting field of progressive potentials and destructive forces'.

By emphasising the role of social practices, PIT is able to return to a "critical" understanding of ideology, as opposed to the "neutral" one. It is according to the former to argue that Marx and Engels used the concept of ideology to signify phenomena that should be done away with; ideology exists only in class societies. In this regard, PIT highlights the historical nature of the ideological subject-effect by identifying it with class societies established as states (Haug 1983a, 11; Pietilä 1984, 51). PIT's discovery is to conceive of ideology not as mere "false consciousness" but as something critical that somehow constitutes consciousness, that is, as oppressive social practices and hierarchical structures of domination (Rehmann 2013a, 244; see also Koivisto & Pietilä 1996).

PIT adopts Althusser's distinction between the ideological "in general" and ideologies "in particular". However, they do so by historicising the ideological subject-effect (see Pietilä 1984, 43–44), which is carried out according to a "philosophy of praxis" (see section 2.3). That is, society exists because it is being constantly "done" or "practiced" by humans. Although humans are the "makers" of history, their agency is extremely restricted, since alienated forms of praxis face humans as objective states of

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"etiological" conception of function as that function which explains X's existence (or the reproduction of X-type things). Another conception of function is what Haslanger (*ibid*., 10–11) calls the "systems conception", according to which 'things may have different functions relative to different systems and the attribution of a function to a part of a system is relative to a capacity of a system that we are seeking to explain'. In this sense, Pêcheux and Haug can be seen to criticise Althusser for the etiological aspects of his theory. To argue for the ahistorical nature of ideological subjection is to say that it is *the* function of social practices to, first, oppress and, second, produce legitimation. What Pêcheux and Haug – as well as Haslanger (2017; 2018a; 2018b; 2019a; 2019b) – are saying is that, yes, this is indeed one of the current functions of many social practices, but it does not need to be so insofar as we can already identify certain social practices, relations, and horizontal forms of socialisation in contemporary and past societies that seem to contain more emancipatory than oppressive potential.

affairs to which humans are forced to subject themselves. This is what Marx means when he writes that

> '[m]en make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.' (Marx 1975, 15)

It is the goal of Marxist thought in general to try to overcome such alienated forms of praxis and return the agency of human praxis, or of "history", back to humans themselves. PIT separates between alienated/vertical socialisation from above and cultural/horizontal socialisation from below in order to reach this goal. Marx made a similar separation between the spheres of "necessity" and "freedom", on which PIT's conception is, in fact, based. It should be once again repeated that these terms do not refer to ontological categories but to mere analytical tools; and, yet, their analytical nature does not mean that the concepts of ideological and cultural cannot be used to explain social phenomena. (Haug 1983b, 62; 1984a, 22; see also Pietilä 1984, 45; Rehmann 2013a, 248–250.)

Hall set himself a similar task to that of PIT's, which is demonstrated by the fact that Hall and PIT collaborated closely.[34] Against Althusser's understanding of ideological state apparatuses, Hall (1988) used the case of "Thatcherism", a neoliberal ideology named after Margaret Thatcher, to illustrate that the Gramscian separation between the "state" on the one hand and "civil society" on the other was in fact rather useful.[35] Hall (1988, 48) writes that '[i]t is Althusser's functionalism that drives him to give an over-integrative account of ideological reproduction and to collapse the state/civil society distinction as if it were without real or pertinent effects'.

Applying Gramsci's ideas, Hall argued that Thatcherism had to first generate support in "civil society" before being able to obtain enough support to take over the "state" or "political society". In capitalist social formations, the former creates consent,

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[34] For example, Hall wrote a chapter to PIT's first book, *Theorien über Ideologie* (1979).

[35] Antonio Gramsci's terms "civil society" and the "state" should not be understood as mutually exclusive signifiers for two distinct social domains but as two "metaphors" that refer to the two dialectically operating dimensions inherent to the capitalist "integral state" (see Thomas 2009, 50–67). Thomas explains the concept of integral state as follows:

> 'According to this concept, the state (in its integral form) was not to be limited to the machinery of government and legal institutions (the "state" understood in a limited sense). Rather, the concept of the integral state was intended as a dialectical unity of the moments of civil society and political society. Civil society is the terrain upon which social classes compete for social and political leadership or hegemony over other social classes. Such hegemony is guaranteed, however, "in the last instance", by capture of the legal monopoly of violence embodied in the institutions of political society.' (Thomas 2009, 137)

whereas the latter not only creates consent but also carries out coercive measures. In this sense, Thatcherism was never simply a "ruling ideology" in the traditional sense of the term, since it had to go through struggles and transformations inside the ruling bloc before it could become the ruling ideology of the ruling bloc. Althusser's observation that all institutions were essentially state apparatuses appeared as a blinding exaggeration.

In his early book *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (1977), Laclau also criticised the one-sidedness of Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses. This criticism bears a lot of resemblance to the one made by PIT. By his concept of "articulation", Laclau (2011, 99) underlined that all ideologies are constructed of contradictory elements. Laclau's main point was that ideological elements have no necessary class relation, which is to say that ideologies are diverse totalities which consist of manifold, and often contradictory, ideological elements.[36] Laclau held that, by studying the ways in which ideologies are articulated, it is possible to identify and deconstruct the contradictions that constitute different ideologies in order to reconstruct them in more emancipatory ways.

Finally, it seems that Foucault saw Althusser's conception of ideological state apparatuses as overly generalised as well. This could be the reason why Foucault (2003, 250) formulated his own distinction between 'the body–organism–discipline–institution series, and the population–biological processes–regulatory mechanisms–State series'. For Foucault (*ibid.*, 249), this distinction corresponds to the two sides of his theory of power: in the first place, disciplines function on the micro level (i.e. disciplinary power); and, in the second, the techniques whose goal it is to govern the population operate on the macro level (i.e. biopower).

However, Rehmann has put forth an argument about why we should be sceptical of Foucault's theory of power. First, Foucault seemed to have overextended Althusser's original criticism of the young Marx to account for all emancipatory social movements in general. Rehmann writes that,

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[36] However, Hall (1992b, 272) reminds us that, although ideological elements have no necessary class relation, they have a "class history". Hall's remark foreshadowed Laclau's later intellectual development during which Laclau embraced the idea that class has little to none to do with ideology and discourses. This theoretical turn made by Laclau was first embodied by the 1985 book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, which Laclau wrote together with Chantal Mouffe. Laclau and Mouffe (2001, 4–5) called themselves "post-Marxists" and tried to overcome the economic determinism of "vulgar Marxism". Yet, Matti Kortesoja (2016, 123–124) argues that 'the problem of the post-Marxist discourse theorists is the opposite form of reductionism, in which the structure conflates with a discursive field of action'. No longer does society function *like* a language, but society becomes mere language.

> '[i]n comparison to Althusserian "anti-humanism", one can see that Foucault has taken up Althusser's criticism of the young Marx's "humanism" and extended it to both Marx's entire work and to Marxism in general, so that any perspective of emancipation or liberation appears as a naïve anthropology that imagines an originally good and fixed nature of the human to be set free at last. Althusser reacts furiously to this anti-Marxist hijacking and instrumentalisation, calling Foucault's respective interviews on Marx "foolish" (*déconnantes*).' (Rehmann 2013a, 193)

This abstract generalisation made by Foucault about the potential for emancipation or liberation was amplified by his endorsement of Nietzschean and Heideggerian methods about the "death of man", according to which all subjects were mere effects of discourses, structures, and other similar instances. In fact, Foucault's argument seems to be somewhat identical to that of Althusser's in the sense that "ideological subjection" (Althusser) or "power" (Foucault) are present always and everywhere. Yet, the difference is that Foucault is being even more ambiguous than Althusser. Against this theoretical ambiguity, Rehmann argues that,

> '[c]ontrary to such "theoretical anti-humanism", Marx's approach can be characterised as a combination of deconstruction and reconstruction: having deconstructed the SUBJECT as a transcendental figure, he reconstructs the reality of concrete social subjects living under concrete societal conditions and praxis-forms, and does so in the perspective of enhancing their capacities to act. Since Foucault is not interested in such a practical-humanist perspective, his discourse remains stuck in the realm of philosophical abstractions.' (Rehmann 2013a, 194–195)

In order to provide more analytical clarity, PIT proposes that "power" (*Macht*; *pouvoir*) ought to be distinguished from "domination" (*Herrschaft*). Power refers to a feature that is always present, in different forms, in human communities, whereas domination stands for structural oppression typical to class societies. Rehmann explains the difference between these two terms as follows:

> 'Tied to the complex of capacities, *power* might express both reciprocal relationships and unequal ones (such as in a paedagogical constellation), both competences monopolised by elites or a cooperative capacity to act from below in the sense of Spinoza's *potentia agendi*. Whereas power is in principle open to democratisation, the concept of *domination* (German: *Herrschaft*) is formed around the ancient figure of the *dominus* (master), in German *der Herr*, which embodies the intersection of patriarchal and class-rule. It cannot therefore be conceived without its constitutive meanings of hierarchy and verticality.' (Rehmann 2013a, 242)

By distinguishing between power and domination, the critical edge of ideology theory can be reclaimed. It is a highly important task to analyse how the hierarchical structures of domination are traversed, wrapped in, and circulated by different forms of power – that is, how hierarchical practices coalesce with other practices of everyday life. In this regard,

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PIT argues that emancipatory social movements should strive for the "withering away" of domination, of ideological powers (Rehmann 2013a, 242–243). This does not mean the destruction of the whole superstructure but that the superstructure loses its state-like form. The forms of praxis which at present serve as agents of class hierarchy will lose their oppressive functions in society where there is no need for hierarchical structures of domination. Domination withers away, but power stays. This is what Marx (2010b, 168; see also Rehmann 2013a, 242–243) means when he writes that 'only when man has recognised and organised his "*forces propres*" as *social* forces, and consequently no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of *political* power, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished'. As Haug (1983b, 64; see also Pietilä 1984, 52–53) argues, the withering away of domination can only be achieved by participating in the ideological struggles of our time that take place in ideological powers.

Concerning this separation between "political" and "social" powers drawn by Marx, Brecht De Smet (2016, 78–80) argues that we should not discuss two types of revolution but, instead, two *souls* of the revolutionary process. The "political soul" refers to those revolutionary moments which mainly challenge the political apparatus by allowing more groups to reach political representation while consolidating the power position of the ruling faction. The political soul is more related to the "political emancipation" of people, permitting them an organic passage to political institutions, which was the main goal of "bourgeois revolutions". On the other hand, there is also the "social soul", which De Smet sees as springing

> 'not from political exclusion, but from real conditions of exploitation and alienation. […] For Marx, the collective body to which this social soul belongs, is the proletariat. By freeing itself from the exploitative wage-labour relation, the working class emancipates other social groups from capitalism. […] In other words, the administration of people – governance – returns to the administration of things when society as an organic whole regains control over the production, appropriation, and distribution of economic surpluses.' (De Smet 2016, 80)

The social soul manifests itself when a revolutionary movement stems "from below" with the objective of overcoming not only political but also social forms of oppression. Clearly, the social soul is in line with the wider theme of a philosophy of praxis as a tradition trying to figure out how to contest alienation and oppression without relapsing to the exact same forms of alienation and oppression.

Consequently, Althusser deserves undoubted credit for his theory of ideological state apparatuses, while the (etiological-)functionalist tendencies of his theory call for

criticism. It is exactly in this sense that PIT criticises Althusser for understanding interpellation as a mere top-down mechanism. Conversely, PIT emphasises the multiplicity of various kinds of interpellations coming from different sources and directions. The identification of such manifold interpellations is what allows us to see how subjects can actually counter and resist the ideological interpellations from above. This is what Hall (1980) discusses within his theory of encoding/decoding: the ideological hail can be decoded differently from – and even completely oppositely to – how the ideological hail was initially encoded. The decoding process is dependent on the social practices in which subjects take part; for example, an intellectual with an "organic" relation to subaltern groups can decode those encoded interpellations that tell her everything to be already well with society – which is why, the interpellation says, we should only concentrate on technocratic questions of "governance" – as manifestations of elitism.

What is to be done then? PIT argues that we should not abandon the ideological forms of praxis but, instead, ought to try to use them to reclaim the anti-ideological (i.e. "cultural") forms of socialisation overtaken by oppressive interpellations. This argument is based on the Gramscian project of building counter-hegemony; emancipatory social movements cannot, and should not, build their political projects on a mere "war of manoeuvre" (i.e. violent revolution), since class struggle also takes place not only in the political society but in the "trenches" of civil society as well. A major means for steering hegemony towards a more democratic and emancipatory version of common sense is the "war of position", namely, the discovery of places and openings within and amongst ideological forms of praxis for emancipatory practices. Let us next discuss this question in more depth.

3.3.3 Historical Bloc, Hegemony, and Counter-Hegemony

Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses owes much to Gramsci's writings about "historical bloc" and "hegemony", although it is a well-known fact that Althusser criticised Gramsci widely as well (see Thomas 2009, 1–6). The two notions of historical bloc and hegemony serve as important building blocks for PIT insofar as they shed a lot of light on the operation of the ideological.

Let us start with the concept of historical bloc. Derek Boothman (2017, 132–133; see also Thomas 2009, 171) recounts that, while reading and translating Marx's "Preface"

to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Gramsci found in Marx an "ethico-political" aspect of politics, a theory of hegemony and consent, combined with an analysis of the economy. As we remember, in this text Marx refers to the notions of the economic "structure", or "base", and the legal-political "superstructure", whose meanings have been debated ever since. Yet, leaving aside the inherited base-superstructure problematic for now, Marx (2010f, 263) writes that '[i]n the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production'. It is this idea, according to which humans enter into definite relations, independent of individuals' will and determined by the forms acquired by the social and productive metabolisms, that brings about the question of social practices and the relations between such practices.

Gramsci understood the relationship between structure and superstructure less in terms of a dualistic distinction and more as a dynamic. Since 'each individual is the synthesis not only of existing relations', Gramsci (1992, 353; see also Boothman 2017, 136) explains, 'but of the history of these relations', structure and superstructure refer to two aspects of the same *historical bloc*. Accordingly, Gramsci (1992, 137) argues that the historical bloc ought to be grasped as the 'unity between nature and spirit (structure and superstructure), unity of opposites and of distincts'.[37] However, the fact that the historical bloc consists of "opposites" and "distincts" should not be taken as a given, since Gramsci (*ibid*. 168) also writes that '[a]n appropriate political initiative is always necessary to liberate the economic thrust from the dead weight of traditional policies – i.e. to change the political direction of certain forces which have to be absorbed if a new, homogeneous politico-economic historical bloc, without internal contradictions, is to be successfully formed'. The contradictory nature of contemporary historical blocs can thus be viewed, in Gramsci's eyes, as a historically contingent state of affairs.

To further explain the notion of historical bloc, Boothman (2017, 146) uses a metaphor of a house by writing that '[f]our stilts are driven into the ground but sway in the wind until a roof (the superstructure) is put on them; the roof is supported by the struts but at the same time it renders the base more stable'. Whereas the superstructure contains "economic" or productive aspects, the structure contains legal-political features. The

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[37] Here Gramsci is using the terms "nature" and "spirit" metaphorically, which is why they should not be understood literally.

concept of historical bloc refers to this dynamic whole and, by using this concept, we are able to analyse the manifold intricacies inherent to (capitalist) social formations.

Wood discusses this issue quite thoroughly in her book *Democracy Against Capitalism* (2000). As a "political Marxist", Wood highlights the political, or social, dimension of those elements that many Marxists have traditionally seen simply as "economic" – that is, her goal is to look for openings for political agency in capitalism. Wood writes that

> '"[p]olitical Marxism", then, does not present the relation between base and superstructure as an opposition, a "regional" separation, between a basic "objective" economic structure, on the one hand, and social, juridical and political forms, on the other, but rather as a continuous structure of social relations and forms with varying degrees of distance from the immediate processes of production and appropriation, beginning with those relations and forms that constitute the system of production itself. The connections between "base" and "superstructure" can then be traced without great conceptual leaps because they do not represent two essentially different and discontinuous orders of reality.' (Wood 2000, 25–26)

Wood mentions two examples of how the productive structure, or base, already includes definite juridical-political attributes. First, any given system of production is already determined by 'particular modes of organization and domination, and the forms of property in which relations of production are embodied' (Wood 2000, 28). For instance, the historical roots of capitalism can be located in the "so-called primitive accumulation" (see Marx 1976, 873–940), which established the private ownership of the means of production. Therefore, the juridical-political fact of "absolute private property", which is a term used by Wood to refer to private ownership of the means of production, already serves as a constituent part of the capitalist mode of production.

Second, various political institutions, such as village and state, precede the constitution of relations of production, since such political institutions become what they are inside a 'configuration of power that determines the outcome of class conflict' (Wood 2000, 28). The productive features of each social formation obtain their forms with respect to certain pre-existing configurations of power, which is why productive and juridical-political aspects are highly intertwined. In effect, the concepts of structure and superstructure are not dualistic, but they refer to social phenomena that are either closer or further away from the immediate processes of production and appropriation.

Although Wood makes no explicit reference to Gramsci, it is exactly these kinds of complicated interconnections and amalgamations that Gramsci's concept of historical bloc tries to capture. In sum, the historical bloc can be grasped as a dynamic "totality"

that keeps the social, political, and military "moments" of each mode of production and social formation together (Boothman 2017, 142–143); or, as Rehmann (2013b, 7) writes, it 'includes the actual relations of force in the economy, on different levels of politics and even in the military'.

What does the concept of hegemony mean then? Boothman (2017, 139) explains that '[d]ominance over one's adversaries holds the bloc together but so does a hegemonic relationship with one's allies. Hegemony is a "cement" that holds the bloc together'. The dynamic totality of historical bloc, which consists of "structural" and "superstructural" elements, generates a "hegemony" that allows the historical bloc to stay together. By taking part in a definite kind of historical bloc, humans become a part of a definite kind of hegemony. In this sense, Rehmann (2013a, 117) writes that Gramsci understood 'the ideological not in terms of mere ideas, but rather as a material ensemble of hegemonic apparatuses in civil society' in which humans participate in their everyday life.

Thomas sums the four features given to the concept of hegemony by Gramsci as follows:

> '1. it denotes a strategy aiming at the production of consent, as opposed to coercion;
>
> 2. the terrain of its efficacy is civil society, rather than the state;
>
> 3. its field of operation is "the West", the proper terrain of war of position, in its distinction from "the East", suited to a war of movement;
>
> 4. and, finally, it can be applied equally to bourgeois and proletarian leadership strategies, because it is *in nuce* a generic and formal theory of social power.' (Thomas 2009, 160)

The first point refers to the most defining feature of hegemony, its function of consent creation. As was explained above, the concepts of "civil society" and "political society" signify two interconnected aspects of the social formation that stand for the mechanisms of, respectively, "persuasion" and "coercion". As is further underlined by the second point, the civil society persuades and the political society, or the state, coerces. Together these two aspects form what Gramsci calls the "integral state", which creates consent by a sophisticated combination of, indeed, persuasion and coercion. This is why Haug (cited in Rehmann 2013a, 136–137) argues that civil society should be grasped 'as a functional *dimension* inherent in different social fields'. Here we should keep in mind the above analysis of the coercive role of the state as something that is activated only when the "general interest" of society is under threat. Thomas (2009, 179) explains this very same

idea by writing that, '[t]o use terms drawn from different phases of Althusser's development, civil society is a relatively autonomous sphere overdetermined by the social whole (i.e. the state) of which it is an integral component'.

Third, Gramsci identified one of the main differences between "Western" and "Eastern" social formations in the relationship between civil society and political society (see Thomas 2009, 198–213). According to Gramsci, it was the strong political society, which was accompanied by a not-so-strong civil society, that paradoxically made "Eastern" societies, in a sense, weaker than "Western" ones – weaker in the sense that, in "Eastern" societies, economic appropriation functioned together with the coercive state power, which in turn interpellated critical and resisting subjects.[38] Since "Western" social formations included not only coercive measures but also broad means of persuasion typical to civil society, it was this amalgamation that provided Western capitalism with its persistent character. Wood discusses this same question:

> 'It is worth considering, by contrast, that modern revolutions have tended to occur where the capitalist mode of production has been less developed; where it has coexisted with older forms of production, notably peasant production; where "extra-economic" compulsion has played a greater role in the organization of production and the extraction of surplus labour; and where the state has acted not only as a support for appropriating classes but as something like a pre-capitalist appropriator in its own right – in short, where economic struggle has been inseparable from political conflict and where the state, as a more visibly centralized and universal class enemy, has served as a focus for mass struggle.' (Wood 2000, 46)

Wood argues that, due to the centralisation of class and state powers typical to pre-capitalist modes of production, revolutions were more common in social formations where the separation between the "economic" and "political" spheres was not yet realised. Wood's claim is that the concentration of the two "moments" of appropriation and coercion interpellates critical and resisting subjects who rightly recognise this concentration as the instance against which they should organise their social forces. Insofar as capitalism separates the "economic" sphere from the "political" one, comprehensive social movements become less and less frequent.

To be clear, the separation of class power from state power discussed by Wood is not the same phenomenon as the amalgamation of civil and political societies written about by Gramsci. And, yet, these two processes go hand in hand inasmuch as the

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[38] One example of such "Eastern" societies discussed by Gramsci is Russia. It was exactly the overarching strength of the Russian political society that partly explains why revolutionary subjects were able to mobilise forces against the Russian state in the October Revolution.

separation of economic and political spheres makes it possible for the dimension of civil society to reach its maturity and become one of the two poles through which the integral state operates. In other words, the *separation* of the economic and political spheres *unites* the two dimensions of civil and political societies.

Finally, hegemony accounts for both bourgeois and proletarian leadership strategies. That is, despite the current functioning of hegemony as an instance that helps preserve class society, emancipatory social movements can, and should, try to construct their own counter-hegemonic projects. It is by such a project that a historical bloc without inner "opposites" and "distincts" can come about. As Rehmann (2013a, 137) points out, hegemony is a site of social struggle.

Since the relation between "base" and "superstructure" is neither dualistic nor a "one-way street", *economic* crises do not automatically lead to *hegemonic* crises. Instead, the former provide a terrain for the latter, which means that it is up to counter-hegemonic movements to make use of moments of economic crisis in their political activities. Rehmann (2016, 2) understands a hegemonic crisis as a situation where the social formation is no longer able to produce mass support or the ideological integration of the working and middle classes. This means that the ruling class has lost its ability to *lead* and is only *ruling*.

In order to better understand the importance of these Gramscian concepts, let us have a look at two interconnected occupation movements: the first one of these occupations was organised in Cairo's Tahrir Square in early 2011; and the second took place in New York's Zuccotti Park in late 2011. In the former case, De Smet argues that, while the popular masses were fighting against Hosni Mubarak's oppressive regime in and off Tahrir Square, they developed forms of self-emancipation that stemmed from their own democratic practices "from below". De Smet writes as follows:

> 'Apart from the defense of the Square, the participants of the project had to create a daily life routine: securing food and shelter, treating the wounded, washing clothes, setting up stations for mobile charging, et cetera. As Tahrir became a project of life in almost all its facets, it required some form of governance. As the State was forcefully driven away from the space of the Square, practices of self-governing emerged from the developed collaboration of occupation[.] […] What emerged was an ethical and political unit of people who created rules and ethical principles for themselves[.]' (De Smet 2014, 296–297)

This can be understood as a significant event, because spontaneously developed democratic practices are features that could potentially serve as building blocks for a new,

more just regime in the future; '[g]rassroots democracy, self-determination, self-emancipation, et cetera, are not practices and ideals extrinsic to the revolutionary project, but they are developed within the process of revolution' (De Smet 2014, 299). By fighting for their self-emancipation, the Egyptian popular masses had already started to create the democratic seeds from which a new counter-hegemonic historical bloc and society could potentially grow.

In this sense, concentrating on the role of human praxis allows us to understand social emancipation without a vanguard party carrying out the revolution in a top-down manner.[39] This idea can already be found in Marx (2010d, 313; see also Suchting 1979, 12–16), who analysed the self-emancipatory practices of French workers, writing that '[w]hen communist artisans associate with one another, […] they acquire a new need – the need for society – and what appears as a means becomes an end'.

It seems that the revolutionary forms of praxis "from below", in which Egyptian popular masses took part, spontaneously transformed both already existing forms of praxis and the masses themselves (De Smet 2016, 78–79). As the revolutionary subjects created horizontal-democratic social relations amongst themselves in Tahrir, the means to reach the goal were turned into the goal itself.

However, it is now safe to say that the uprising did not lead to a thorough social emancipation of the Egyptian popular masses. That is, the "soft coup" in 2011 was followed by a counter-revolution in 2013, which re-steered the emancipatory demands "from below" towards a *passive* revolution[40] "from above"; the regime, which was created after Mubarak had been overthrown, meant little more than a mere return to the neoliberal status quo and a new set of loans from the IMF (see De Smet 2016, 214).

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[39] Rehmann (2013b, 12–13) discusses the tradition of "economic democracy" and mentions anarcho-syndicalist movements, social-democratic traditions, and communist initiatives for council democracy as examples of this tradition. He then contrasts it to those radical movements who jeopardised economic democracy and thus undermined their own hegemony. Here Rehmann is clearly envisioning radical leftist movements who do not have to follow the same undemocratic road taken by the Soviet Union and the contemporary People's Republic of China. In fact, Rehmann (*ibid*., 13) writes that '[i]t is no exaggeration to argue that whenever radical movements were attractive to broader masses, it was because they were movements for a more encompassing democracy'. One example of such an economic-democratic social formation is discussed by Erik Olin Wright (2000, 151–154) by the principle of "market socialism", which stands for a social system that combines market mechanisms, democratic practices, and socialist ideals. In other words, real socialism does not necessarily require a strong state.

[40] Rehmann (2016, 2; see also 2013b, 2) defines Gramsci's concept of "passive revolution" by writing that, '[b]y means of its ideological apparatuses and organic intellectuals, capitalism is usually capable of producing the ideological subjects who accept and support the system that exploits and oppresses them, or of co-opting the emerging oppositional movements into the system by a modernization from above (what he calls a "passive revolution")'. Therefore, a passive revolution can be understood as a process through which different kinds of oppositional movements are integrated into the system against which they struggle by way of a partial "modernisation" of the social formation.

During the course of this process, horizontal forms of socialisation were again turned into the means of ideological subjection.

Although it can be said that the 2011 revolution "failed" in Egypt, it still serves as an example of horizontal forms of socialisation and of self-emancipatory practices, perhaps even in their "purest" form. Furthermore, the insurgency also opened new possibilities for Egyptian social movements to project their future activities. For instance, the revolutionary anti-Mubarak actions of ordinary people rearticulated the Egyptian field of common sense, which might make it easier for contemporary and future anti-neoliberal social movements to achieve their goal of building counter-hegemony.

Our second example is the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement, which was actually highly influenced by the events of Tahrir Square. Rehmann (2013b, 2–3) analyses OWS by using Althusser's concept of "overdetermination", which 'describes a phenomenon as shaped by multiple determinants'. Some of the many initiatives and dynamics from which OWS resulted were the appeal for an occupation made by a Canadian website "Adbusters", the demonstrations organised by "New Yorkers against Budget Cuts", and social developments such as increasing income polarisation, worsening poverty levels, a growing number of foreclosures, mounting levels of student debt, disillusionment about Barack Obama's campaign promises, and the crises of neoliberalism and political representation in the United States. Ultimately, all these factors resulted in the activists settling in Zuccotti Park on September 17, 2011, described by Rehmann (*ibid.*, 3) as 'a symbolic act of re-appropriation of the commons, and this in the midst of the Wall Street sanctuary of private property'. Much like Tahrir Square, the occupation of Zuccotti Park served as a counter-hegemonic apparatus, which, according to Rehmann,

> 'provided a political domain for debate and decision-making, requiring careful work with both mainstream and movement media (the latter powered by its own generators) and practices of intense education, both by famous "public intellectuals" and in small working groups. […] The activists who actually lived there claimed to practice a new way of living in cooperation and solidarity (a claim which however was threatened by inner tensions and some isolated cases of harassment). Overall, the effective combination and condensation of counter-hegemonic functions and capabilities created an emotional density and made the occupation at once significant for the movement and dangerous for the powers that be. Otherwise the police would not have used so much force and intimidation to prevent new camps from emerging. When Zuccotti Park and the other occupied squares where cleared, the movement lost the spatial centers of its hegemonic apparatus.' (Rehmann 2013b, 5)

Rehmann (2013b, 5–6) highlights that the counter-hegemonic role of Zuccotti Park was enabled by the "rhizomatic network" of OWS, namely, the relationships they built to various groups, initiatives, organisations, communities, and trade unions. For example, OWS's collaboration with trade unions helped their cause insofar as the lower ranks of the New York police were also unionised.

It is Rehmann's (2013b, 7) argument that OWS's biggest accomplishment was its intervention in the "symbolic order" of the neoliberal hegemony in the U.S. – in short, the slogan "We are the 99 %". Rehmann (*ibid*., 8) defends this slogan against criticisms for two reasons: first, it articulates 'the reality that the stagnation of real wages, the precarization of labor, rising debts, and impoverishment harmed different subaltern classes and groups across traditional distinctions'; and, second, the slogan brought back the "unfashionable" idea according to which politics could signify something more than just fractured and postmodern identity politics. In this sense, Rehmann (*ibid*., 9) proposes that OWS was able to emphasise, in line with a philosophy of praxis, the "good sense" of common sense in the U.S. and rearticulate the latter more coherent.

However, Rehmann (2013b, 12–15) identifies the shortcomings of OWS as well, one of which was its ability to alter neither 'the structure of the economy and the state, nor the inner composition of the hegemonic apparatuses'. The practices typical to neoliberal capitalism, the two-party system, and corporate media were still in place in the U.S. after the movement was dispersed. Despite its significant impact on the symbolic order, OWS was incapable of widely transforming the hegemony or the historical bloc. This is why the movement did not reach, in Gramsci's terms, an "ethico-political" level. Although "We are the 99 %" established a counter-hegemonic standpoint in the discursive landscape, it democratised neither the economy nor representational politics. After all was said and done, most media apparatuses spun the meaning of OWS into something negative, which is discussed by Rehmann as follows:

> 'media coverage fell sharply after the clearing of Zuccotti Park and also turned predominantly negative. It seems that this has already had an adverse impact on public opinion. Gramsci once pointed out that the Catholic Church could reiterate its doctrines again and again so that they got firmly anchored in the common sense of its believers. […] Even though leftists might not feel flattered by the comparison with the Catholic Church, they should recognize that Gramsci's observation applies to a progressive counter-hegemony as well. Without some stable positions in civil society which allow us to spell out the critique of capitalism again and again, the "good sense" elements in common sense risk subsiding after a while, drowned out by the prevailing ideologies.' (Rehmann 2013b, 12)

Here Rehmann is applying an observation made by Gramsci, according to which one means for rearticulating hegemony is to relentlessly repeat one's message. In Gramsci's (1992, 340) own words, 'repetition is the best didactic means for working on the popular mentality'.

Another important concept is that of "organic intellectuals", which plays a crucial role in Gramsci's theory of hegemony (see Lahtinen 2019, 76–79). Gramsci believes that these intellectuals hold the power to mobilise masses. Organic intellectuals are in direct contact with and aware of the masses' common sense, which is why they are capable of changing the hegemonic landscape. In Gramsci's eyes, one condition which is necessary for modifying hegemony is

> '[t]o work incessantly to raise the intellectual level of ever-growing strata of the populace, in other words, to give a personality to the amorphous mass element. This means working to produce élites of intellectuals of a new type which arise directly out of the masses, but remains in contact with them to become, as it were, the whalebone in the corset.' (Gramsci 1992, 340; see also Rehmann 2013a, 138)

It was exactly in this sense that the presidential campaign of Bernie Sanders started to operate from his announcement on April 30, 2015, onwards to run for president of the United States. During his campaign, one of Sanders' main statements was the unequal and unjust difference in the way the "top 1 %" and the rest of the "99 %" were treated by the U.S. social formation. Therefore, Sanders tapped into the newly established counter-hegemonic opening in the symbolic order, referring word to word to the OWS slogan. Rehmann explains that

> '[t]his is the message that Sanders was hammering home to his audience, regardless of the concrete questions he was asked by the anchors and journalists of the corporate media. […] Some academics might have been bored by the repetitiveness of Sanders' pronouncements, but this was actually an effective tactic to counteract the diversionary maneuvers of the media industry, to express the broadest popular discontent, to mobilize it relentlessly against a radical minority on the top, and thus to spread the message in a way that sticks.' (Rehmann 2016, 7)

Rehmann sees in Sanders an organic intellectual who made use of the same strategy as the Catholic Church and hegemonic media apparatuses; Sanders was able to rearticulate common sense in the U.S. more coherent with reference to the slogan "We are the 99 %". 'This is much more revolutionary', Rehmann (2016, 7) writes, 'than the many hyper-radical discourses that have no consequences outside narrow academic circles'. And Rehmann's point seems to have been proven by the 2020 Democratic presidential race. Whereas during the 2016 race Sanders was basically mocked for proposing free universal

health care in the U.S., during the 2020 race the debated question amongst the Democratic candidates was not whether such a reform would be possible but how a universal health care reform could be best implemented. It is clear that none of this would have been possible without the symbolic intervention carried out by OWS in 2011.

Furthermore, despite some harsh "leftist" criticisms of Sanders' "democratic socialism", Rehmann (2016, 7) points out that such a move was actually highly strategic in the sense that it allowed Sanders to associate himself with one of the most iconic progressive policies in the U.S., that of Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal". According to Gramsci's ideas, progressive candidates will never succeed if they do not articulate their campaigns in line with people's common sense and the hegemonic conditions of current times. Rehmann explains this wonderfully by writing that

> '[i]f Sanders' platform can be described as economic "populism", it needs to be specified that this has nothing to do with a romanticized notion of a homogeneous "people," but is based on a broad and of course multiracial coalition consisting of multiple social subjects – not *populus*, but *plebs*! It can be described in Gramscian terms as a project to construct a new and broad "historical bloc" of different subaltern classes and groups, and it is particularly aiming at an alliance between working and middle classes.' (Rehmann 2016, 7)

As I am writing this work, the 2020 Democratic presidential race is still taking place, but it is starting to seem more and more likely that the nomination of the Democratic Party will go to Joe Biden. As a former vice president of the U.S. who served in Obama's cabinet (2009–17), two of the most important points of reference for Biden during his 2020 presidential campaign have so far been that he was a member of Obama's cabinet and that he is the "moderate" candidate as opposed to Sanders who is depicted as the "radical" or "authoritarian" one. This latter point has been widely echoed by the U.S. corporate media, especially after Sanders made a positive comment about the literacy program of Fidel Castro's Cuba in an interview on CBS News' "60 Minutes" on February 23, 2020 – one that was similar to the positive remark made by Obama on March 23, 2016, about Cuba's education and health care systems. Although both Obama and Sanders were merely trying to express that even such an oppressive social formation as Castro's Cuba had some positive aspects to it, it was only Sanders who was deemed "authoritarian" by corporate media. Here one can recognise once again the same strategy of hegemonic reiteration analysed by Rehmann, which has without doubt affected

negatively the outcome of Sanders' 2020 presidential campaign.[41] And, yet, although Biden will most likely become the Democratic nominee, Sanders' counter-hegemonic reiterations have poked new holes in the neoliberal bloc. Only the hegemonic crisis, which will most likely be brought about by the contemporary corona pandemic, will show how effectively counter-hegemonic social movements are able to utilise them.

It is now possible to draw the conclusion that ideology cannot be changed by changing mere thought-forms, because ideology does not exist only on the level of consciousness. Ideology has primarily to do with praxis, which is exactly why emancipatory social movements must aim their social and political efforts at changing the operation of *ideological forms of praxis*, understood through the concepts such as "ideological powers", "interpellation", "historical bloc", and "hegemony". The construction of counter-hegemonic historical blocs must operate simultaneously on multiple levels in order to be successful.

3.4   Conclusion

The overall goal of this chapter has been to illustrate how to conceive of *forms* of praxis. I began by discussing specifically capitalist productive practices, including both a definition of the capitalist mode of production as well as an explanation of the concept of objective thought-forms. Then, I moved on to analyse ideological powers and various other concepts relevant to PIT's critical-structural theory of ideology.

I defined the concept of "mode of production" as a unity of competing contradictions which, according to Marx, is determined by the relation between direct producers and owners of the means of production. Yet, one should not forget that Marx also argues that the "same" mode of production can display endless variations which can only be understood by analysing empirically given conditions. What features are typical to each mode of production is a question answered only in practice. Furthermore, we are able to conceive of agency through the principle of class struggle, but it is important to understand that this agency takes place in definite forms of praxis which already

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[41] In fact, even during the current coronavirus pandemic which is once again demonstrating not only the inefficiency of the U.S. health care system in providing the American people with sufficient care and treatment but also the ineptitude of neoliberal employment policies that make it extremely hard for most people to follow the instructions given by national health officials, Biden tried to strengthen the neoliberal hegemony by arguing at the Democratic presidential debate on March 15, 2020, that the problems caused by the pandemic in Italy supposedly illustrate how universal single-payer health care systems do not work. In other words, Biden is currently trying to seize the moment of crisis, brought about by the present coronavirus pandemic, in order to maintain the neoliberal hegemony in the United States.

"channel" the practical activities of humans. Therefore, we should study these forms of praxis.

I proposed that the capitalist mode of production includes fourteen attributes which humans must follow. Marx highlights that, when humans take part in capitalist practices, they do not fully understand what they are themselves doing. This point can be expressed by the term "real appearance", since humans obtain a level of validity by participating in capitalist social practices, which is still invalid insofar as it does not let humans understand why their practical consciousness is valid in the first place.

One example of such invalid validity was the labour market, which gives rise to an intuitive experience of what Marx (1976, 280) calls 'Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham'. That is, when humans participate in the labour market, they are "free" to choose their employers and employees (Freedom), they exchange nothing but commodities, an equivalent for an equivalent (Equality), they only dispose of what is their own (Property), and they do all these acts only for their self-interest (Bentham). However, this group of four often disappears, at least partly, once workers begin their employment; in the process of production, there is no question whether the capitalists are hierarchically above the direct producers.

Marx criticises Smith's and Ricardo's view of human nature as a "natural individual" and locates its origin in such social practices as "free competition". This insight allows us to define the concept of "objective thought-forms" as those elements of practical consciousness that stem from productive practices in which humans participate in their everyday life. The forms of praxis therefore match with objective thought-forms, which are both '"reasonable practice" as well as practical reason' (Rehmann 2013a, 43).

I mentioned Marx's theory of commodity fetishism as an example of objective thought-forms. Commodity fetishism denotes a social system where social relations between persons and material relations between things have swapped places, resulting in material relations between persons and social relations between things. It is important to understand that neither commodity fetishism nor other objective thought-forms are ideologies, per se, as they are elements that stem "automatically" from the capitalist mode of production, especially from the sphere of circulation. Only when objective thought-forms are used in ideological articulations, such as in the "naturalisations" articulated by bourgeois political economists, do they become parts of ideologies. In this sense, objective thought-forms serve as a "sounding-board" for elaborate ideologies.

It is here that the dialectical method shows its significance, since only by looking at phenomena in their historical motion can we identify their "inverted" nature. For instance, when we analyse pre-capitalist social formations, we see that commodity fetishism is not a universal feature of all human communities, which is why we can strive for a social formation where humans could once again hold the *social* role in society.

I began the latter half of the chapter by defining the concept of "ideological powers". Following Marx and Engels, Gramsci understands ideology as a material terrain where humans become conscious of the class antagonism and fight it out. Ideological forms of praxis mediate the ways in which humans become aware of the class antagonism. It is in this sense that Rehmann argues that the strength of Gramsci's notion of ideology is its inner tension between "neutral" and "critical" conceptions of ideology, according to which ideology is a material terrain that subjects humans. This is why critical theorists of ideology should exercise self-criticism when they operate in ideological forms of praxis.

I then read Engels' analysis of ideological powers. His argument is that the patriarchal family (*familia*) and the state are historically tied to the production of excess product. For example, the state was created because society required an apparatus that could organise the social ensemble which was turning more complex as an appropriating class was separated from direct producers, resulting in the class antagonism.

However, the creation of the state led to new kinds of antagonisms. In Ancient Athens, slaves were endowed with the job of policing citizens, which turned the class antagonism between the nobles and common people into a political antagonism between enslaved common people and free common people. In this sense, ideological powers can be understood as forms of praxis that introduce new kinds of antagonisms in society.

When feudalism transitioned to capitalism, class power was distinguished from state power – that is, economic appropriation became relatively independent of political coercion. This turned the "economic" sphere into a sphere defined by private interests, whereas the "political" sphere became an "impersonal" sphere marked by the "general interest". It is for this reason that the ruling bloc must always present itself as a guardian of the general interest – this is the *modus operandi* of the state.

PIT sees the state as an ideological power whose "generality" hides the class antagonism. By detaching social questions from and elevating them above the immediately practical life, ideological powers generate a sense of "alienated consciousness" for those humans who participate in their practices. However, ideological powers also serve as sites for social struggle, which makes it possible for emancipatory

social movements to carry out ideological struggles in ideological powers in order to reclaim the "commons" hijacked by ideological powers.

After analysing ideological powers, I reviewed Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses and the reactions some of Althusser's students had against the (etiological-)functionalist aspects of his notion of ideological subject-effect. Althusser's theory highlights that individuals see themselves as the autonomous principle of determination, although they are mere effects of social structures. I argued that, whereas his strength was to understand ideology as a material instance, Althusser did not see the historical specificity of ideology. It was this latter aspect which was criticised by Pêcheux, PIT, Hall, and Laclau, all of whom tried to find ways for emancipatory social movements to contest ideological interpellations.

I also examined Foucault's theory of power, which was contrasted to a distinction made by PIT between power (*Macht*; *pouvoir*) and domination (*Herrschaft*). Whereas power stands for a feature typical to all human communities, domination refers to hierarchical structures of domination which are inherent to class society. In this sense, we should analyse how domination is intertwined with power in capitalism and strive to get rid of domination.

Finally, I explored the significance of Gramsci's concepts of "historical bloc" and "hegemony". The historical bloc can be understood as a dynamic "totality" that keeps the social, political, and military moments of each mode of production and social formation together. Hegemony, on the other hand, is a sophisticated balance between consent creation and coercion. It is a "cement" that holds the historical bloc together and refers to a ruling bloc's ability to *lead*, as opposed to its ability to merely rule over, the subaltern classes. Hegemony can also be applied to proletarian leadership strategies, which opens the door for theorising about counter-hegemony.

I mentioned two examples of counter-hegemonic movements, the occupations organised first in Cairo's Tahrir Square and later in New York's Zuccotti Park. Both the Egyptian insurgency as well as OWS had similar outcomes in the sense that neither was able to permanently defeat the neoliberal regimes against which they were fighting. And, yet, Tahrir Square and OWS intervened in the symbolic orders of their nations and opened new possibilities for future counter-hegemonic movements. I discussed the two presidential campaigns of Bernie Sanders as examples of how OWS's slogan "We are the 99 %" enabled Sanders, understood as an organic intellectual, to steer common sense in the United States more towards the left.

I hope the reader can now understand the shortcomings of vulgar ideology critique which equates ideology with mere "false consciousness". Against such a crude view, PIT emphasises that ideology is a material instance, a terrain where humans become aware of the class antagonism and fight it out. Concepts such as objective thought-forms, ideological powers, interpellation, historical bloc, and hegemony are necessary for understanding how ideology operates in class society. However, if the reader is not yet completely sure of how ideology should be conceived of, the next chapter will concentrate exclusively on the concept of ideology.

4 THE IDEOLOGICAL AND IDEOLOGIES

4.1 Introduction

Projekt Ideologie-Theorie (PIT) distinguishes between the ideological "in general" and ideologies "in particular". By dividing the single concept of "ideology" in two, PIT tries to protect the analytical lucidity of their theory of ideology. This distinction is meant to differentiate between a theory of the ideological and the applied study of particular ideologies.

I have structured this chapter in accordance with these two parts of PIT's critical-structural theory of ideology. In the first half of the chapter, I examine the ideological in general. I start with defining what is meant by the "vertical" and "horizontal" socialisations and how these concepts could be used in analysing ideologies. It is PIT's argument that separating between these two analytical axes helps us better understand how the ideological operates. Then, I introduce PIT's notions of "proto-ideological" and "ideological values", which are extremely useful for conceiving of the origin of the ideological and how it operates in class society.

In the latter half of the chapter, I will concentrate on the study of ideologies in particular. I propose seven methodological steps that a critical theorist of ideology should follow, after which I apply these methods to the case of neoliberalism. I argue that within PIT's framework we are able to both deconstruct and *reconstruct* neoliberalism.

4.2 The Ideological in General

Let us begin by exploring what PIT means by the "ideological". PIT tries to clarify the concept of ideology by arguing that the ideological ought to be separated from the analysis of particular ideologies: the ideological stands for the social dimension inherent to class society; and ideologies are what results from it. This means that a theory of the

ideological serves as the framework against which specific ideologies are studied. (Pietilä 1984, 43.)

First, I explain PIT's understanding of the ideological as "alienated/vertical socialisation from above" and analyse its relation to "cultural/horizontal socialisation from below". Then, I explore PIT's concepts of "proto-ideological" and "ideological values", after which I move on to discuss ideologies in particular.

4.2.1 "Alienated Socialisation from Above": Vertical and Horizontal Axes

According to Wolfgang Fritz Haug (1983b, 58–63), the historical starting point and political endpoint of PIT is a social formation where social spheres and processes, such as the economy, are under democratic control. This means that production is organised not to maximise profit through exchange but to fulfil the everyday needs of humans.

In order to better understand the operation of the ideological in class society, PIT distinguishes between "alienated/vertical" and "cultural/horizontal" socialisations (*Vergesellschaftung*).[42] Although it is an analytical distinction, Haug (1983a, 17; see also Pietilä 1984, 44) highlights that real-life phenomena corresponding to it can still be found. And as Jan Rehmann (2013a, 250) writes, '[i]t is impossible to identify self-socialization in state-administered class-societies in any pure form […] but rather as a dimension that in empirical reality is necessarily intermingled with both alienated economic forms and ideological practices. […] [A]s a *dimension* […] it is nevertheless *real*'.

Rehmann (1999, 14–15) further explains such methodological distinctions of features that are empirically intertwined by referring to the writings of Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci: Marx juxtaposes 'use-value and exchange-value, useful labor and abstract labor, productive forces and relations of production etc.'; and Gramsci discovers his concept of civil society within the actually existing bourgeois society. Neither Marx nor Gramsci claim these concepts to exist in any supposedly "pure" form as something not intertwined with other features of the social formation. Instead, Marx and Gramsci discover these notions in social relations and practices that consist of a plethora of

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[42] The German term "*Vergesellschaftung*" can be accurately but clumsily translated to "societalisation". As Rehmann (2013a, 248) explains, *Vergesellschaftung* does not stand for mere socialisation in the typical sense of the word, since it 'has the more encompassing and more active meaning of "making society", in the sense of shaping and realising social relationships on all levels'. However, Haug (1983a, 12) argues that a critical theory of ideology ought to rearticulate and reclaim the word "socialisation" to refer to *Vergesellschaftung*, which is what I have decided to do in this work.

features; they are concepts that help us understand these relations and practices. PIT's distinction between vertical and horizontal socialisations operates similarly.

Using the concepts of vertical and horizontal socialisations, Haug (1981, 8; 1983a, 12; 1983b, 61; 1984a, 22) understands the *ideological* as a combination of various instances through which humans are socialised "ideally from above". The ideological moves from top to bottom, creating vertical legitimisations of the hierarchical social formation. This causes the members of class society to voluntarily accept and embrace the forms of their own subjection. The ideological can thus be understood as both a function and a product of hierarchical structures of domination. If there was no class society, which includes patriarchal and racialised modes of oppression as well, the social structure would not necessitate alienated socialisation.

Rehmann (2013a, 248–251) explains that, whereas the ideological refers to vertical socialisation from above, the *anti*-ideological stands for "horizontal self-socialisation from below". Whenever humans orient their actions towards "common-being" (*Gemeinwesen*), features typical to horizontal self-socialisation can be identified. PIT derives this conception of the anti-ideological, which can also be referred to as the "cultural", from Marx's distinction between the "realm of necessity" and the "realm of freedom". The notion of *self*-socialisation pays homage to Gramsci's philosophy of praxis; anti-ideological forms of socialisation stem democratically "from below".

The cultural/anti-ideological dimension refers to the creation of group identities and life-forms in which humans treat themselves as ends in themselves. Such life-forms enable human individuals and groups to see themselves as the beginning and the end of their own life-activities, which allows them to live a "fulfilled life" (Haug 1981, 6; 1983b, 66; Rehmann 2013a, 252). Expressed in Klaus Holzkamp's (1991) terms, action impotence is turned into action potence.

It is in this sense that Veikko Pietilä (1984, 45) interprets the difference between the ideological and the cultural as a difference between, respectively, something "alien" and something "internally created". Whereas ideological powers ascend above society, becoming alien powers that create a sense of (alienated) community, horizontal social relations, on the other hand, are not mediated by an alien power that necessitates subjection.

PIT's formulation of the cultural differs from some other conceptions of "culture", two of which are culture as anthropological worldviews and culture as high culture. Conversely, PIT's notion of the cultural refers to a fundamental dimension inherent to

human praxis; whenever humans act together, the cultural is present. And, yet, PIT's concept of the cultural is not completely separate from these two conceptions, since the cultural serves as a dimension by which humans make sense of the social formation, on top of which high culture is a manifestation of upper-class cultural forms.[43]

Although the ideological stems "from above" in the sense that ideological life-activities are mediated by ideological powers, even ideological life-activities contain the cultural dimension (Haug 1981, 6–8; Rehmann 2019, 124). This is why a critical theory of ideology ought to reclaim the "commons" – namely, the cultural life-forms – which are hijacked by hierarchical structures of domination and the ideological dimension necessitated by such structures.

Rehmann (2013a, 248–250) reads Mikhail Bakhtin's work concerning François Rabelais' carnivalesque writings in order to illustrate this fact. During a carnivalesque event, hierarchies are momentarily overturned: the low are elevated; and the high are degraded. It thus appears that the carnival is a manifestation of horizontal self-socialisation, oriented towards common-being.

However, the Rabelaisian carnival serves as an example of the amalgamation between vertical and horizontal socialisations. Rehmann (2013a, 249) writes that 'the carnival is at the same time a *controlled* reversal of hierarchies, its anti-ideological impulses coexist with elements of containment and accommodation'. The carnival is a legitimising ritual where people can momentarily consume their demands for cultural life-forms. Once it ends, the hierarchical structures of domination are reinstituted, and humans feel a little better about their life under such structures.[44]

In other words, Rehmann (*ibid*., 248–250) argues that carnivalesque practices legitimise hierarchical structures of domination by making use of humans' inclination for cultural life-forms. The ideological dimension is effective because it includes elements typical to the cultural; under hierarchical structures of domination, humans can only relate to one another as social beings if they simultaneously embrace the ideological. This is

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[43] PIT's conception of the cultural prevents us from lapsing to a "thick" version of cultural relativism, which has led some writers, such as Samuel P. Huntington (1996), to argue for an inevitable outcome of the "clash of civilisations" – an idea which is at least as deterministic as "vulgar Marxist" views of history. Moreover, Huntington's argument is unquestionably in line with imperialist, supremacist, and racist premises about human nature, culture, social relations, world politics, and history.

[44] One can without doubt identify similar aspects in the way contemporary protests operate. With the permission of the state, people meet in a specific place at a specific time and, for a moment, express their frustrations against hierarchical structures of domination. Afterwards, however, most protesters return home feeling they have done their part. Although nothing changes, subjects feel good about themselves; their frustrations with domination are defused by a brief carnivalesque moment of common-being.

why ideologies can be understood as alienated promises of emancipation that are nonetheless never realised – or, as Rehmann (*ibid*., 27) states, ideology is not only the "opium" of the people but also the "sigh" of the oppressed creature.

One counterargument against distinguishing between vertical and horizontal socialisations is that this formulation is too "mechanistic" (see Haug 1983a, 16–17). This point is raised by Holzkamp (1983, 21–22) who argues that PIT's approach ends up repeating a vulgar dualism that is similar to the orthodox interpretation of the spatial metaphors of "base" and "superstructure". In Holzkamp's eyes, it is not possible to analyse any real phenomena with PIT's distinction between vertical and horizontal socialisations, since society is always much more complex than PIT's theory can depict. This is why Holzkamp (*ibid*.) calls for a more sophisticated and "organic" description of the social formation, writing that PIT's 'above/below metaphor lacks, as I see it, scientific-analytical quality', which is why PIT should 'make strenuous attempts to reformulate its theoretical conception by abandoning its pseudoconceptual above/below metaphor'.

It is important to realise, however, that PIT's distinction is less ontological and more analytical. This is why Rehmann writes that,

> '[w]hile it is true that on the level of empirical research these dimensions constantly overlap and permeate each other, they must, however, be distinguished analytically. The subjects are therefore not reduced to mere "effects" of ideological interpellations. Following Gramsci, their everyday life and common sense are conceived of being heterogeneous and contradictory.' (Rehmann 2013a, 11)

PIT's goal is not to force class society to comply with the limits of their theory but to allow class society to speak back to their formulations. PIT has always been open to changing their framework if their approach does not seem to prove itself adequate for studying ideologies.

Dénes Némedi presents a second criticism targeted against the distinction between vertical and horizontal socialisations. According to Némedi (1983, 24; see also Wolf 1983, 30–31), PIT's historical starting point – namely, a self-organised and democratically controlled community – never existed, because pre-bourgeois social formation neither controlled their social life-processes nor included equal social statuses. Némedi claims that this causes PIT's conception to lose its historical competence, which provides us with a reason to reject it.

However, it is my argument that Némedi's criticism is not as far-reaching as he himself seems to think. Even if it was the case that none of the pre-bourgeois social formations were capable of completely controlling their social life-processes, it does not mean that all pre-bourgeois social ensembles had a state form, or were as hierarchically organised and as undemocratic, as contemporary capitalist ones. Nor does it mean that we could not try to democratise and "horizontalize" contemporary hierarchical structures of domination. The goal envisioned by PIT means less returning to some type of pre-bourgeois social formation than crossing beyond the existing bourgeois one.

More importantly, whereas Némedi speaks of pre-bourgeois societies, PIT speaks of *class* society. The difference between these two concepts is that, although many pre-bourgeois societies were class societies, not all pre-bourgeois societies were class societies. PIT's goal is to overcome *class domination*, which has not always existed. This is where PIT's differentiation between power and domination comes in handy; they are not claiming to get rid of power, but the goal is to overcome domination (see subsection 3.3.2).

Another important thing to understand is that the ideological does not stand for the conscious manipulation of people. That is, PIT's approach is not only critical but *structural* as well. Hierarchical structures of domination produce both conscious and unconscious factors in the sense that even "conscious" ideas and actions result from hierarchical structures of domination. This is why PIT uses the term socialisation; when the practical activities of humans are "channelled" to ideological powers, humans are socialised into the hierarchical social ensemble of class society.

In order to better understand this point, we can mention what Marx says about the accumulation of wealth. As Marx (1976, 230–231) famously puts it, the accumulation of wealth only becomes plausible after the money-commodity is born. For example, it would not make much sense to hoard 10,000 bananas, but after the "universal equivalent", or money, is instituted, the accumulation of wealth becomes not only possible but also extremely desirable. Gold coins do not rot. The desire to accumulate an unlimited amount of wealth is given rise to by social practices, such as the money-form, and it is therefore inherent to the social formation. It is not difficult to see how the ideological comes to exist in a similar fashion in relation to hierarchical structures of domination.

This line of thought follows Gramsci's (1992, 9; see also Lahtinen 2019, 78–79) philosophy of praxis, according to which each human 'carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a "philosopher", an artist, a man of taste, he participates

in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought'. By participating in definite forms of praxis, the intellectual activities of humans obtain matching forms. Humans become subjects by virtue of being subjected under ideological powers, that is, by virtue of being interpellated by ideological practices.

This idea extends to elites as well, inasmuch as their (intellectual) activities are also channelled to definite forms of praxis. Here one might argue that it does not make sense to understand the ideological as alienated socialisation from above as opposed to cultural self-socialisation from below, since elites "self-socialise" within their own (ruling) bloc as well. However, the concept of self-socialisation does not refer to an individual's immediate social group but to 'the ensemble of social relations' (*ThF*, Thesis 6). It is true that elites are socialised within the ruling bloc, and it is also true that elites are socialised as elites in relation to the whole social formation – that is, elites are elites because they appropriate surplus value produced by direct producers, who are not elites. Yet, this socialisation is not *self*-socialisation, since it is mediated not only by the ruling class but also by ideological powers. As it turns out, elites' socialisation does not embrace the full extent of sociality but undermines it; elites are not related to direct producers as equal human beings. Conversely, self-socialisation from below strives to maximise sociality.

Lauri Lahikainen tackles this issue in his doctoral dissertation which deals with the question of responsibility vis-à-vis climate change. Lahikainen (2018, 31–34) identifies a misleading conception of climate change, one which he terms a "collective action problem". This understanding is held by philosophers such as Christopher Kutz, Dale Jamieson, and John Broome. The collective action problem articulates climate change simultaneously as everyone's fault and no one's responsibility.

In order to correct this problematic description that ultimately derails us from tackling climate change and its disastrous effects, Lahikainen (2018, 13–33) proposes a "social structural" conception that locates different responsibilities to distinct levels of social structures. In this sense, Lahikainen's model strives to take into account the way in which the capitalist mode of production and social formation consists of definite (hierarchical) social structures and practices that cause climate change.

Consequently, Lahikainen (2018, 80) makes an important argument according to which inhabiting an elite position in a hierarchical and oppressive social structure denotes more structural responsibility for the effects caused by such structures. This results from

the fact that elites have more power to change the operation of hierarchical structures, on top of which they benefit more than others because of structural inequalities. Lahikainen's analysis demonstrates that the issue of responsibility is still present within a structural framework and that elites' interests are often opposite to the rest of the social formation.

The existence of hierarchical structures of domination means that the "commons" are hijacked by vertical socialisation from above, mediated by ideological powers. The cultural becomes articulated together with oppressive practices. In effect, humans start to cultivate ideological aspects of their subjectivity whose function it is to institute domination over them. Human subjects take part in hierarchical practices, which is why their intellectual activities obtain forms similar to such practices.

Hannah Arendt's notion of the "banality of evil", which she discusses in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), can be understood in a similar manner. Arendt uses this term in order to refer to the horrible actions of Adolf Eichmann, who was one of the major organisers of the Holocaust. Arendt writes about Eichmann as follows:

> 'when I speak of the banality of evil, I do so only on the strictly factual level, pointing to a phenomenon which stared one in the face at the trial. […] Except for an extraordinary diligence in looking out for his personal advancement, he had no motives at all. […] He merely, to put the matter colloquially, never realized what he was doing. […] It was sheer thoughtlessness – something by no means identical with stupidity – that predisposed him to become one of the greatest criminals of that period.' (Arendt 1994, 287–288)

It is possible to read Arendt's point in the sense that, despite his abhorrent actions, there was nothing "extraordinary" about Eichmann as a person. Eichmann was mostly "just" participating in the everyday practices of Nazi Germany. These practices were without doubt evil and caused him to perform abysmal acts, but the evilness was not located in Eichmann, per se. Instead, the evilness existed in the social practices of Nazi Germany, which is why Arendt calls such evilness "banal".

As Juha Koivisto and Veikko Pietilä (1996, 49) write, 'if ideological interpellation functions properly, people act of their own "free will"'. Haug (1981, 8) argues that PIT's theory has the potential to uncover 'the functions of inner subordination, of voluntary acceptance of domination, of stabilization of the antagonistic social order'. This idea is further demonstrated by Haug when he writes that

> '[o]ne would remain contained within an administrative model, were one to restrict the thesis of ideological socialization-from-above to a kind of hierarchical proceeding, respecting the "official" channels and agencies within the ideological powers. What we are attempting to understand is precisely *how* the social and

political *acteurs* place themselves – "from below" – in relation to "God/King/Fatherland", or "Law & Order", but also to "Freedom and Reason" and so on. We also try to understand the results of such orientations "from below to above".' (Haug 1983a, 15)

PIT's goal is to conceive of the ways in which humans voluntarily accept and become subjected to hierarchical structures of domination, that is, how humans "from below" find their place in ideological practices "from above". This is never simply a question of mere coercion, because hierarchical structures and practices also provide people with something. They are the "opium" of the people *and* the "sigh" of the oppressed creature.

In his book *Learning to Labour* (1977), Paul Willis provides an example of the complex relation between vertical and horizontal socialisations by studying a group of twelve working-class youngsters at a British secondary school. Willis' (1981, 126–130) argument is that the "counter-school culture", practiced by these twelve boys, contains a "healthy" criticism of class society; the counter-school culture allows working-class students to criticise those aspects of the school system through which they, as members of the working class, are subjected.

However, Willis (1981, 145–146) also points out that the way in which the counter-school culture, which is a part of the working-class culture in general, gets intertwined with the class structure causes working-class students to *voluntarily* reproduce the oppression of the working class. For instance, working-class students' preference of physical activities over absorbing cultural capital – which is a "healthy" preference, since cultural capital is useful mostly for upper-class students – causes them to embrace an oppressed position in class society, where they function as mere instruments of capital accumulation. According to Willis (*ibid*., 128), Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron 'argue that it is the exclusive "cultural capital" – knowledge and skill in the symbolic manipulation of language and figures – of the dominant groups in society which ensures the success of their offspring and thus the reproduction of class position and privilege'. Of course, there are some working-class students who are able to make use of cultural capital and rise in the class structure, but such individuals merely legitimise the class division by strengthening the discourse "the talented will always thrive".

When we take into account the second part of Willis' (1981, 145–159) argument, according to which the counter-school culture also reinforces patriarchal and racist divisions within the working class, Willis' study shows how the cultural articulations of working-class subjects lead these subjects to *actively* reproduce class society. And this

happens despite the fact that there is without doubt a "healthy nucleus" in these articulations as well.

As their goal is to understand such sophisticated phenomena, PIT applies Gramsci's ideas in order to grasp the ideological as a social *dimension*, as opposed to Louis Althusser's way of equating ideology with ahistorical *functions* of ideological state apparatuses (Rehmann 2013a, 154, 248). This is why Haug (1983b, 92) underlines the importance of starting "from below", after which the analysis moves upwards towards ideological powers. The point is to see how the practical activities of humans become channelled to hierarchical structures of domination. Such a method allows us to recognise the contradictory constitution of ideological powers and practices in order to deconstruct and reconstruct them (Rehmann 2013a, 54).

Rehmann (2013a, 1–2) mentions the "Tea Party" in the United States as an example of an ideological movement making use of the "commons" in its ideological articulations. The movement was created after the housing market crash of 2007–08, and its goal was to criticise Barack Obama's way of dealing with the financial crisis, especially his sanctioning of the "bank bailouts". In this sense, the Tea Party strived to articulate the economic recession in line with discourses typical to Marco Rubio and other members of the Republican Party, according to which the housing market crash was allegedly caused by the U.S. government's affordable housing policies. Put simply, it was claimed that the "government" had become "too big".[45]

At that moment of economic crisis, which almost turned into a hegemonic one, the Tea Party was able to steer the anger felt against the "Wall Street" towards "Washington". Rehmann (2013a, 2) writes that this movement transformed the 'potentially progressive, anti-corporate populism, which swept Obama to the White House, to a right-wing populism which, instead of taking up the issue of the plight of those foreclosed, mobilised against the possibility that such "losers" might get government-support'.

Although the Tea Party represented itself as a "grassroots" movement organised by mere "concerned" citizens, the movement was nonetheless funded by major political powers of the American Right, such as "Americans for Prosperity", "Freedom Works", the "Murdoch empire", the "Fox News" network, and "Koch brothers" (i.e. Charles Koch

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[45] However, Matti Tuomala (2019, 28) points out that such explanations seem to hold no ground when they are studied by economists. The financial crisis appears to have actually been caused by unregulated financial markets. Furthermore, Tuomala (*ibid*., 57) recalls how the state was asked to bail out financial institutions by those very same people who had argued for the minimal role of the state prior to the events of 2007.

& David Koch). Rehmann (2013a, 1–3) explains the Tea Party's strategy with the concepts of vertical and horizontal socialisations. By articulating its political agenda in the form of a horizontal movement "from below", the Tea Party was able to legitimise the "laissez-faire" way of thinking "from above". This allowed the movement to re-establish the neoliberal hegemony, which had actually led to the economic crisis in the first place.

4.2.2 The Proto-Ideological and Ideological Values

PIT introduces the concept of the "proto-ideological" to account for phenomena that, as it were, precede ideological practices. Proto-ideological phenomena stem from those practical activities of humans which are not yet channelled to ideological powers (Pietilä 1984, 47). Rehmann describes the category of the proto-ideological by writing that

> '[t]he concept signifies the differentiations and specialisations of competence that nourish and support from below the ideologisation from above. In pre-state societies, for example, this can be observed in the form of the elders that stand out against the community and are equipped with particular powers[.] […] The category of the "proto-ideological" could cover, for example, the worship of ancestors, the status of medicine men with secret knowledge or pre-statal sanctuaries, which are then reorganised during the emergence of the state in ideological form. […] From the perspective of this ideology-theory, we are dealing with "religion" or religious ideology only from the moment that the different proto-ideological functions are integrated into the early state-form of a theocracy[.] […] It is also under the conditions of existing state-rule and ideological socialisation that proto-ideological differentiations, practices and world-views develop, and are continually exposed to the reach and further processing of ideological powers.' (Rehmann 2013a, 253)

Therefore, social formations without ideological subjection include various kinds of proto-ideological phenomena, which are articulated into ideological forms after they are born. This means that the existence of the proto-ideological does not signify the presence of the ideological, although ideological powers utilise proto-ideological phenomena in their operation.

Perhaps it is more conceivable to try to grasp the proto-ideological as a mediating category between the ideological and anti-ideological. For example, a social formation without class antagonism could very well still have "medicine men", who operate as spiritual specialists in society. However, when the division of labour and the improvement of forces of production give rise to the state and class antagonism, the social competences and roles of such "medicine men" adopt a new function in relation to the state and other ideological powers. It could be that the former medicine men are turned into priests who

hold both state power and class power in the social formation. These newly created priests then start to produce doctrines "from above" that explain why class society is as it is and why it cannot be changed.

It is now possible to understand "commodity fetishism" as a proto-ideological form of praxis (see subsection 3.2.2). Rehmann (2013a, 253) writes that '*PIT* also counts the fetishised "objective thought-forms" of capitalist commodity-production among these "proto-ideological" forms, because they are on the one hand forms of alienated socialisation, regulated only afterwards and without planning, on the other hand not regulated from above by the state- and other ideological apparatuses'. As we saw above, bourgeois political economists, such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo, used these kinds of objective thought-forms in order to articulate elaborate ideologies. As a proto-ideological form of praxis, commodity fetishism operates similarly, since it becomes ideological only after it has been turned into some ideology's component. Proto-ideological forms are therefore alienated forms of praxis that operate both without planning and without being channelled directly to ideological powers. The channelling takes place only afterwards.

Another important concept used by PIT is "ideological values". They stand for the universal and generalised values to which ideological powers give rise. When the hierarchical structures of domination are born, the symbolic dimension is detached from the horizontal level of immediately practical life. This means that antagonistic groups start to make use of same symbols for advancing their own interests. Such symbols are the same on the "denotative" level but not on the "connotative" one, which is why ideological struggle becomes possible in the first place. (Haug 1983a, 16.)

I discussed above how the state becomes an impersonal and general instance in capitalism due to class power being separated from state power (see subsection 3.3.1). This means that the generality of the state is contrasted to the antagonistic actuality of the social formation; ideological powers represent class society as an interest-free community.

Ideological values operate similarly, since they obtain a universal and interest-free status in society despite the fact that they are connected to definite class interests. For instance, many contemporary societies are marked by at least the general values of "freedom", "equality", "justice", and "democracy". However, the *actual* meaning of such highly *general* values is not at all clear – in fact, they are extremely ambiguous concepts. One group's ability to determine the meaning of ideological values gives that group an

immense amount of influence. This is why ideological values serve as battlegrounds for ideologues, classes, and social movements. Because of their popular and general status as values, their use in ideological articulations is highly effective. (Haug 1983b, 67–68, 73; Pietilä 1984, 47.)

It is my argument that PIT's concepts and formulations turn the question of ideology into a more intricate and sophisticated issue than what many other frameworks allow. The historical perspective and the analytical clarity of PIT's approach allows us to avoid, in the first place, vague expressions such as "everything is ideological" and, in the second, narrow conceptions of ideology that equate ideology plainly with false consciousness. Furthermore, by concentrating on practices and the "relative independence" between different ideological forms of praxis, it is possible to study ideologies, such as racist ones, without reducing them directly back to questions of production.

4.3   Ideologies in Particular

Now that we know the basic concepts of PIT's theory, we can have a look at how they can be used in analysing specific ideologies. It is important to remember that PIT's framework is ultimately a methodological one in the sense that it is intended for applied research. This also means that it can and should be modified if it comes across ideologies that it cannot explain.

I begin by bringing together all the themes that we have discussed so far, which will allow me to propose seven methodological steps for studying ideologies. I argue that a critical theorist of ideology should (1) study the historical bloc, (2) study common sense and good sense, (3) study hegemony and organic ideologies, (4) study how ideologies operate within the hierarchical structures of domination, which are mediated by ideological powers, (5) study the "real appearance" of ideologies, (6) study the emancipatory element inherent to ideologies, and (7) rearticulate the emancipatory element into a counter-hegemonic movement.

Then, I apply these insights in order to study one of the most predominant ideologies of our times, "neoliberalism". In the final subsection, I place neoliberalism into the methodological table, which will help me demonstrate how ideologies could be studied by using PIT's approach.

4.3.1 Seven Methodological Steps

PIT's conception is both critical and structural. This means that the "ideological" is not present in every human community but is typical to class society. The ideological is understood as alienated/vertical socialisation "from above", by which the practical activities of humans, including their intellectual activities, become "channelled" to ideological powers. In class society, ideological powers mediate the ideological.

The ideological has a function. Gramsci's concept of "historical bloc" allows us to analyse different kinds of historical blocs and the distinct types of consent created by such blocs (see subsection 3.3.3). We should take into account the relation between various social, economic, and political forces in each social formation at a particular moment and, by doing so, study the functions different ideologies have in each historical bloc.

Related to the previous point, ideologies must *make sense* to people, that is, they must be articulated in line with *common sense*. There is a reason why the contemporary Finnish society does not contain an ideology articulated around the idea that "Blue plasma balls, hovering in outer space, have told humans that true liberty is having the right to work twenty hours a day seven days a week for one tenth of the minimum wage". (This is a crude example, but it gets the point across.) Since counter-hegemonic movements ought to base themselves on common sense as well, a critical theorist of ideology should aim to identify the good sense in common sense.

Following Gramsci, each historical bloc contains some "hegemony" which is, in one way or another, connected to how that historical bloc is structured. Studying hegemony includes studying the role played by hegemonic apparatuses. An ideology becomes hegemonic when it is able to take possession of common sense, to rearticulate common sense. Regarding such an "organic" ideology, it is necessary to analyse, as Stuart Hall (1988, 46) writes, 'not what is *false* about it but what about it is *true*'. This explains why people subject voluntarily under ideologies; vertical interpellations "from above" are mixed with horizontal self-socialisation "from below". This is undoubtedly a difficult idea to grasp, but it will become clearer when we move on to the theme of neoliberalism.

Ideologies operate within the hierarchical structures of domination, which means that they are mediated by ideological powers. This mediation happens in two ways. First, each social group has its "intellectuals" who articulate the practical elements inherent to the social formation into more elaborate ideologies. As we remember, the ideological dimension is created when the state ascends above society. This event detaches the

symbolical dimension from the immediately practical life and makes it possible for antagonistic social groups to carry out ideological struggle on the connotative level. Each group's intellectuals simply use the practical elements at their disposal. Second, inasmuch as these practical elements, which are moulded by ideologues, stem from ideological forms of practices, it is possible to identify the influence of such practices in ideologies.

Ideologies are partly "false" – or, rather, "inverted" – as well, since they are elaborations of not only the proto-ideological forms but also what can be called "real appearance". The latter term refers to objective thought-forms, which can be understood as existing forms of praxis. Marx's (1976, 280) formulation 'Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham' expresses this point in the sense that such objective thought-forms hide the historical nature of those practices, such as the labour market, from which they themselves stem (see subsection 3.2.1). Although the proto-ideological and objective thought-forms explain why ideologies make sense, a *dialectical* analysis of them has the potential to uncover their inverted nature. Yet, we should avoid overstating the importance of this aspect of ideologies, since it would cause us to lapse to a one-dimensional conception of "false consciousness".

Finally, ideologies are not only oppressive instances but also calls for emancipation. This idea appears in Marx when he writes that

> '[*r*]*eligious* distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and also the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.' (Marx 2010c, 175)

In class society, humans find refuge in alienated forms of praxis. Since they are economically separated – that is, they are organised into distinct classes and hierarchies inherent to such classes –, humans are able to relate to one another socially as humans only by the mediation of ideological powers. And when humans relate to one another by the mediation of the law and the state, for instance, they can only relate to each other as juridical-political subjects. This is the reason why Marx calls for *social* emancipation, as opposed to mere political liberation. And insofar as this is the case, we should aim to identify the emancipatory element inherent to each ideology and rearticulate this element into a counter-hegemonic movement.

Therefore, we can construct the following methodological table based on PIT's approach.

Step 1.   Study the historical bloc.

Step 2.   Study common sense and good sense.

Step 3.   Study hegemony and organic ideologies.

Step 4.   Study how ideologies operate within the hierarchical structures of domination, mediated by ideological forms of praxis, or ideological powers.

Step 5.   Study the "real appearance" of ideologies.

Step 6.   Study the emancipatory element inherent to ideologies.

Step 7.   Rearticulate the emancipatory element into a counter-hegemonic movement.

Now that we have sketched this methodological table, it is time to move on to discuss the theme of neoliberalism. The point is to illustrate the usefulness of these methodological steps by applying them.

4.3.2   Neoliberalism

The concept of "neoliberalism" has served as a reference point for critical theory at least from the 1970s onwards. The origin of the term goes as far back as to the year 1938 and the "Walter Lippmann Colloquium", where Alexander Rüstow, a German sociologist and economist, first used the concept. The Colloquium was organised in order to rehabilitate the tradition of liberalism after the problems caused to it by the Great Depression, but it should be noted that, apart from Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek, other participants were against "laissez-faire" liberalism. It was von Mises and Hayek's position, of course, that became one of the most predominant features of the later neoliberal dogma, further developed in the "Mont Pelerin Society" established in 1947.

Wendy Brown (2015, 21) defines neoliberalism as 'a historically specific economic and political reaction against Keynesianism and democratic socialism, as well as a more generalized practice of "economizing" spheres and activities heretofore governed by other tables of value'. A Marxist way of expressing this same observation would be to say that neoliberal practices have served the cause of enforcing capital accumulation by ways of waging war on labour and commodifying such spheres of society that had previously been de-commodified.

According to David Harvey (2007, 20–21), the neoliberal dogma consists of ideals of personal freedom, adherence to free market principles, and being opposed to state interventionism and centralised state planning. These beliefs lead neoliberals to object any power held by labour unions as well.

Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy (2013, 195; see also Harvey 2007, 15–19) point out that, without considering the unknown incomes hidden within tax havens, the implementation of neoliberal policies caused a sharp rise in upper incomes and wages from the early 1980s until the financial crisis of 2007–08, while most members of the working population saw their wages either stagnate or diminish. The neoliberal version of globalisation also forced workers in different countries to compete against each other, which had devastating effects 'on the purchasing power of popular classes and on their access to health care, retirement, and education' (Duménil & Lévy, 2013, 196). The extent of neoliberal globalisation is indicated by the fact that flows of direct investment abroad were forty-eight times larger during the 2000s than during the 1970s.

In the case of the United Kingdom, Ian Bruff (2014, 115) writes that neoliberal policies resulted in 'a deep recession, an anemic recovery, mass unemployment, widening socioeconomic inequalities, and general societal discontent'. And, as Harvey (2007, 17) shows, this has happened while 'the top 1 per cent of income earners in Britain have doubled their share of the national income from 6.5 per cent to 13 per cent since 1982'.

When it comes to representational politics, the first and most important neoliberal political figures were Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. In the United Kingdom and the United States, respectively, they carried out wide-ranging "reforms" regarding the social and economic policies of the post-Second World War compromise. These social democratic policies had been articulated around a wide class compromise between capital and labour.

How should the rise of neoliberalism be explained then? Immanuel Wallerstein (2013, 11–24) uses the concepts of "Kondratieff cycles" and "hegemonic cycles" to explain not only what took place during the long boom of 1945–73 but also what changed in the 1970s. Whereas Kondratieff cycles refer to shorter-term economic periods, hegemonic cycles stand for longer-term world political cycles in which one power holds the economic, political, and cultural hegemony on a global level. According to Wallerstein, by the 1960s and 70s, the post-Second World War version of the capitalist world-system, which can also be called the "Fordist bloc", had simply exhausted its ability to accumulate capital for the U.S. capitalist class. This had mainly to do with

economic recoveries and advancements made by former "satellite states" of the U.S., such as Germany and Japan. For instance, the auto industry was no longer controlled by the U.S., a shift that undermined the global power structure. The Kondratieff cycle of the time had also finally reached its limits regarding a state of constant economic boom (i.e. A-phase) and moved to an era of stagnation (i.e. B-phase). Due to these economic limits, the U.S. capitalist class obtained an incentive to move away from the Fordist bloc and implement neoliberal policies in order to guarantee the accumulation of their capital.

Yet, the shift from Fordism to neoliberalism was not only about the capitalist class. Brecht De Smet writes that

> '[n]eoliberal restructuring cannot be understood as a blatant counter-revolution against a more "progressive" Fordist bloc. Its practical and ideological success can only be comprehended as an appropriation and reactionary reorientation of genuine subaltern concerns regarding capitalist state power and alienation. The desire for autonomy, freedom, and creativity often expressed by the working class and the so-called new social movements in the wake of the late 1960s was channelled into the new flexible production process. […] Those privileged layers of the labour population that could transform themselves into flexible and highly skilled workers became the new subordinate allies of the capitalist class, for they benefited materially from the dismantlement of trade union and systems of collective bargaining, as their own agility and success was rewarded by individualized systems of payment, bonuses, and prestige. For the wider population, freedom, individuality, and creativity were realized virtually through a differentiation of products, which allowed for the self-creation of identities for which product consumption was but the material mediation.' (De Smet 2016, 64)

De Smet argues that neoliberalism presented something more than mere "false consciousness" – it was a whole new historical bloc with its own organic ideology and hegemony. The neoliberal bloc was the outcome of existing frustrations within the Fordist bloc, which were expressed by the new social movements, such as the civil rights movement and feminism. The demands of these movements for more autonomy and freedom outside corporatist practices were channelled to a new kind of "flexible" production process, marked by swift movements of capital and "effortless" layoffs of workers. Furthermore, the neoliberal bloc was also based on a class compromise between the capitalist class and the privileged layers of the labour population who were seeking more individual freedoms within the economic sphere and society in general.

Thomas Barfuss (2008, 839) sums it well when he writes that '[n]eo-liberal policy in the 1980s assigned the place formerly held by producers or workers and trade unions to a new shining example of colourful and flexible individualism: the consumer'. Barfuss (*ibid.*, 846) sees this strategy as one that is in line with what Gramsci called "passive

revolution", the co-optation of novel emancipatory potentials for the needs of class society; '[f]or this purpose the agility and cunning set free in a historical moment of Fordist society cracking open was absorbed into the new individual forms of neo-liberal policy, designed to keep the flexibility, but to fragment the experience'.

Haug (1983a, 16) makes a valuable point when he reminds us that we should not assume that we know the interests of each social group, since interests are generated in the concrete process of class struggle. This same observation is also underlined by Hall (1988, 45); interests are not stable and unitary entities, but they are fragmentary, contradictory, and mutually exclusive. Moreover, gender and "race" determine one's interests as well. Hall explains this as follows:

> 'interests are themselves constructed, *constituted*, in and through the ideological process. […] Workers in a social system have both the interest of advancing and improving their position and advantages within it *and* of not losing their place. They are both dependent on *and* exploited by the capitalist system. Hence the lines of attachment and interdependence can run counter to and crosscut or interrupt the lines of solidarity and resistance between capital and labor.' (Hall 1988, 45)

Therefore, one does not need to refer to "false consciousness" when explaining the transition from the Fordist bloc to the neoliberal one. A part of the labour population, as well as other people sidelined by corporatist practices, had an interest inside the capitalist system to which neoliberal intellectuals attached their agenda.

Hall uses the term "Thatcherism" to refer to the neoliberal ideology initiated by Thatcher in the United Kingdom. Hall (1988, 36–42) sees Thatcherism as a product of Great Britain losing its imperial power and the British economic system beginning to face severe problems concurrently with the more general crisis of the Fordist bloc. Bruff (2014, 117) explains that the 1970s recession, initiated by the 1973 rise in oil prices, forced the Labour Party into a permanent state of crisis, which further disorganised the working class. This provided an opening for the radical Right who aimed to 'pitch "the people" against "unions", the "nation" against "class"' (*ibid*.) in order to mobilise people against the social democratic government. Thatcherism came to exist during a moment of not only economic but also hegemonic crisis, which is why it was able to become the new hegemonic force in the United Kingdom.

Hall (1988, 42–48) emphasises that, prior to moving to political society, Thatcherism took over civil society. This is how Thatcherism was able to rearticulate common sense and make neoliberal ideas *intuitive* in the United Kingdom; Thatcherism was as an organic ideology. It is exactly the ability to guide the way people interpret social

phenomena that makes ideologies so powerful. For example, the "empirical fact" of high unemployment can be explained both by the dysfunctional nature of laissez-faire capitalism *and* by arguing that the state is not allowing markets to operate freely enough. Another way of legitimising high unemployment would be to argue that "There Is No Alternative" (TINA), a path chosen by various state heads after the financial crisis of 2007–08 (see Blyth 2013, 152–177). It is the power neoliberalism holds over common sense which explains why '[a]ll conduct is economic conduct; all spheres of existence are framed and measured by economic terms and metrics, even when those spheres are not directly monetized' (Brown 2015, 10).

One of Hall's (1988, 49) most central arguments is that ideologies create new "subject positions", which affect subjects unconsciously. This means that social practices and the symbolic order are restructured in such a way that they start to interpellate new kinds of subjects. These new subject positions are created most efficiently by modifying old interpellations. For instance, Hall (*ibid*.) writes that Thatcherism interpellates its subjects as 'the self-reliant, self-interested, self-sufficient taxpayer – Possessive Individual Man (*sic*); or the "concerned patriot"; or the subject passionately attached to individual liberty and passionately opposed to the incursion of liberty that occurs through the state; or the respectable housewife; or the native Briton'. Thatcherite interpellations were based on and tied to existing British interpellations, which rendered Thatcherite interpellations more effective. One example of this would be a "concerned patriot" willing to protect the nation against "antipatriots" who do not wish to "liberate" markets and see Great Britain thrive. This explains why 'sustained rhetorical attacks on the "welfare dependency culture" and the "overloaded state" – combined with appeals for greater self-reliance and family values – resonated with parts of the population that would otherwise lose out under a Thatcherite government' (Bruff 2014, 117).

Barfuss has analysed the new "clever" subject interpellated by the neoliberal bloc. He sees an ironical attitude, which is combined with a degree of intellectual "agility", as its most defining attribute. Barfuss explains this as follows:

> 'agility has also become an essential component of people's professional lives. Job security being dismissed as the alleged cause of social stasis, the individuals need to be agile and flexible, constantly on the lookout, for the possibility of falling out of step with the technical and organizational development has turned into a severe threat posed not only on society as a national structure, but also on the individual who is in charge of maintaining his or her "employability". Thus keeping up with the times has become a constant concern of the new subject. In the realm of work itself, it is irony, which has certainly become an indispensable way of coping with a

situation, where individuals are forced to compete by way of co-operation. Irony allows a team to work together and still cling to individual forms of profit and promotion. Thus a "mainstreaming" of irony and cleverness similar to the new camp sophistication in consumerism can be observed also in work.' (Barfuss 2008, 840)

Barfuss' analysis allows us to understand how social practices interpellate certain kinds of subjectivities. Neoliberal practices, which undermine job security and future prospects, lead humans to embrace irony, accompanied by agility and flexibility, since it enables humans to continue to function successfully within neoliberal social practices.

Rehmann (2013a, 297) explains that the neoliberal bloc functions through the values of individual liberty and "self-activation", as opposed to the collective representations of the Fordist bloc. It is the promise of individual liberation and empowerment that makes neoliberalism so attractive to so many.

But to what extent does neoliberalism realise individual liberty? Here we should have a look at Rehmann's criticism of Hayek, one of the most important intellectuals of neoliberalism. Hayek proposed that the concept of "economy" (*oikonomia*) ought to be replaced by the concept of "catallaxy" (*katallattein*). Whereas the former means managing a household, the latter has two meanings, those of exchanging money and admitting into the community. According to Rehmann (2013a, 277–278), the reason why Hayek promoted the use of "catallaxy", and the displacement of "*nomos*", was to equate communities with market exchange. By reducing all of society to "freely" operating markets, "catallaxy" would thus make it intuitive to see laissez-faire capitalism as an inherent aspect of every community. Furthermore, '[b]y excluding any liberate planning', Rehmann (*ibid*., 278) writes, 'the results of the market-economy become "fate"'.

Rehmann (2013a, 278–279) observes that Hayek equated economic planning with totalitarianism. Although Hayek's fear of totalitarianism was reasonable, defining all economic planning as totalitarianism was not. Rehmann (*ibid*., 280–281) also points out that Hayek's conception of "negative justice" removed all space between justice and juridical state apparatuses; if one follows Hayek's idea of negative justice, subjects have no right to contest laws that the state implements from above. Therefore, Rehmann (*ibid*., 281) writes that '[t]his would mean, for example, that the initial event of the Civil Rights Movement in the US, Rosa Parks's refusal to give up her seat on the segregated bus, would not only be "unlawful", but also "unjust"'. This point demonstrates that Hayek saw no contradiction in arguing simultaneously for the neoliberal value of "free" markets and for the utmost legitimacy of state apparatuses. And when we consider Bruff's (2014, 115) point, according to which '[a]uthoritarianism can also be observed in the reconfiguring

of state and institutional power in an attempt to insulate certain policies and institutional practices from social and political dissent', it seems that, in fact, Hayek's framework neither promotes profound individual liberty nor tackles totalitarianism. Barfuss' (2008, 846) argument, according to which the neoliberal market 'is designed to keep people passively submissive', seems to hold true.

Since the reciprocal relation between "free" markets and the state is already apparent in Hayek's writings, it does not come as a shock that neoliberalism actually assumes and enforces the existence of authoritarian state apparatuses, despite the neoliberal dogma claiming to be for individual liberty and against state intervention.[46] Neoliberalism was never about protecting individuals from the state; neoliberalism makes use of authoritarian state apparatuses in order to guarantee labour's exploitation and capital accumulation. This is what Bruff means when he writes that

> 'neoliberalism's genesis during a period bearing witness to the growing role of social democracy, organized labor, welfare programs, and so on, in capitalist political economies, means that neoliberalism's critique has never been restricted to "the economy". In fact, from the beginning its critique has covered all areas of social life. In consequence, the virtually innumerable aspects of social life that could, in an ideal world, be reformed in the name of "the market" make it relatively simple for neoliberalism to be rhetorically deployed against all manner of intellectual, political, and social enemies. […] This, of course, is despite the fact that many of the "appropriate" reforms demanded by neoliberals have been implemented across the world over the past four decades. Indeed, the critique of existing capitalist societies retains a perpetually dissatisfied tone owing to the fact that the neoliberal utopia has not been realized, at least in the "pure" sense embodied in neoliberalism's rhetorical valorization of the market.' (Bruff 2014, 121)

Against the explicit claims made by the neoliberal dogma, Harvey (2007, 79–81) identifies five instances where neoliberalism assumes the existence of a powerful state. First, although the state is supposed to just let markets operate freely, it is also expected to create a good business environment and compete in global politics. Second, when the state regulates the economy in order to create a good business environment, it undermines individual liberties. The many financial crises, during which states have been asked to rescue banks, also show us that deregulating the market system calls out its opposite, re-regulation. Moreover, while the alleged goal of the neoliberal dogma is to enforce the virtue of equal and just competition, neoliberal policies have led to oligopolistic and

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[46] In fact, the first "test run" of neoliberal policies took place in Chile after the 1973 coup had overthrown Salvador Allende, who was elected president in 1970. The coup was promoted by domestic business elites worried about Allende's socialist tendencies, on top of which it was also supported by U.S. corporations, the CIA, and Henry Kissinger, who was U.S. Secretary of State at the time. (Harvey 2007, 7–9.) Therefore, undemocratic modes of operation have been at the core of neoliberalism from the very start.

monopolistic market structures. And, finally, the implementation of absolute market "freedoms" often reduces the degree of other kinds of freedoms, such as the freedom to have a place to live or, in the worst-case scenario, the freedom to not be enslaved. Rehmann elaborates this last point when writes that

> 'neoliberalism presents itself as liberating agency from a patronising state-bureaucracy, it mobilises its subjects by permanently interpellating them to be active and creative, to show initiative and to believe optimistically in the success of their efforts. At the same time it calls upon the subjects to submit to the fateful order of the market that regularly and increasingly fails and frustrates the efforts of the many. It needs to permanently engender the faith in everyone's success, and at the same time it has to prevent this faith from turning into a moral claim, or even into a fundamental critique of the overall irrationality of capitalism.' (Rehmann 2013a, 287)

By turning the social democratic welfare policies typical to the Fordist bloc into policies meant to discipline labour in favour of capital accumulation, neoliberalism makes use of what Marx (1976, 899; see also Rehmann 2013a, 48–51) calls the 'silent compulsion of economic relations'. Here Marx refers to economic exploitation which takes place inside the economic sphere without extra-economic coercion. By enforcing the authoritarian operation of state apparatuses, which are used to secure the "free" operation of the market, neoliberalism forces subjects to fully subject themselves to the practices of the capitalist mode of production. Brown's (2015, 44) argument, according to which '[n]eoliberalism is the rationality through which capitalism finally swallows humanity', does not seem far off.

Therefore, Bruff calls the post-2007 version of neoliberalism "authoritarian neoliberalism". This is not to argue that neoliberalism only became authoritarian after the financial crisis of 2007–08, but the point is that the more or less implicit authoritarian features of neoliberalism started to operate more explicitly. Bruff (2014, 124) mentions the widespread "constitutionalisation" of austerity measures as an example of such authoritarianism, through which economic laws and practices are de-democratised. In this sense, neoliberalism functions within the hierarchical structures of domination, mediated by the ideological powers of the state and the law.

However, Bruff (2014, 124–125) also argues that the increasing use of de-democratisation and directly coercive measures, such as police brutality against peaceful protesters, indicates that neoliberal hegemony is getting weaker. As we discussed above, hegemony is based on consent creation, by which the existing historical bloc becomes accepted (see subsection 3.3.3). Hegemony is based more on persuasion than it is on

violent measures, from which it follows that the ruling bloc's growing need to use violent measures demonstrates that the bloc is no longer able to produce consent as well as it used to. The authoritarian turn, accompanied by a more sectarian version of politics without wide inclusion, undermines what Ellen Meiksins Wood (2000, 46) describes as the paradoxical effect of capitalism's differentiation between the economic and political spheres, which has caused militancy and political consciousness to become separate issues. As the neoliberal bloc becomes more and more authoritarian, the probability of people beginning to identify the oppressive nature of the bloc increases. This renders resistance more *intuitive*.

Yet, resistance does not happen automatically; history has no predetermined endpoints. Resistance can only be carried out by counter-hegemonic movements who intervene in social practices and the symbolic order and, by doing so, create counter-hegemonic apparatuses. This needs to happen simultaneously on multiple levels without forgetting that counter-hegemony can only be created within ideological forms of praxis.

It can now be said that the point of contradiction between the explicit goal of the neoliberal dogma and the implicit premises, on which the explicit goal is based, is what allows us to *deconstruct* neoliberalism. A critical theorist of ideology ought to emphasise the clash between individual freedoms and empowerment on the one hand and the authoritarian role offered to state apparatuses on the other. This clash is more observable in the case of employees who have been laid off than it is with entrepreneurs and big stakeholders.

Moreover, now that we understand that it is the promise of individual liberation and empowerment which makes neoliberalism so attractive to its subjects, it is possible to make use of this insight in order to articulate a counter-hegemonic movement against the neoliberal bloc, one that promises individual liberation through *social* emancipation. It is Barfuss' (2008, 848) point that '[w]e should start from everyday agility and develop it into a mutual strategy'; irony and intellectual agility should be turned into a new dialectics. It is this moment of *reconstruction* that allows a counter-hegemonic movement to reclaim the "commons".

4.3.3 Understanding Neoliberalism

We can now draw some conclusions about neoliberalism. The reason why neoliberalism came to exist in the first place had to do with the inner contradictions of the Fordist bloc.

Some of these contradictions were the decreasing level of capital accumulation, the subsequent discontent of the capitalist class, the frustrations of privileged layers of the labour population, and the demands for more autonomy and freedom made by the new social movements. These contradictions led to the presidencies of Thatcher and Reagan, who had a major influence on a world-scale.

Neoliberal reforms led to swifter movements of capital, "effortless" layoffs, the strengthening of the "managerial" class, the erosion of labour unions, lesser degrees of political inclusion, and more "market autonomy" for individuals. These reconfigurations of the social formation started to interpellate ironical, clever, and agile subjects. The re-articulation of common sense resulted in people becoming sceptical of collective representations, as opposed to more fragmentary questions such as identity politics. Consumption was deemed the main source of emancipation.

As an organic ideology, neoliberalism promised individual liberation and empowerment, as opposed to the corporatist practices of the Fordist bloc. Mechanisms of the "free" market were supposed to provide people with personal liberties, which *partly* happened in the case of new kinds of production processes and the like. Therefore, the *good sense* of common sense consisted of being opposed to alienated powers operating "from above" and promoting autonomous and democratic movements "from below". Yet, this good sense was channelled to the neoliberal bloc where market "freedoms" were accompanied by the enforcement of authoritarian state apparatuses.

Neoliberalism was first elaborated within think tanks, such as the Walter Lipmann Colloquium and the Mont Pelerin Society, after which it moved to party politics. While various intellectuals worked on the dogma, they based their ideas on the supposedly "democratic" nature of the economy, which was to be guaranteed by de-democratising it. Neoliberal intellectuals never questioned the capitalist separation between the economic and political spheres, but they assumed that enforcing economic freedom, understood narrowly as "free" market mechanisms, would increase the extent of social freedom as well. Therefore, neoliberal intellectuals had little to no trust in popular classes' own ability to organise the social formation, and, for this reason, neoliberalism was an ideological articulation that stemmed from above, from the hierarchical structures of domination. This explains why the neoliberal bloc functions, despite the explicit claims made by neoliberal intellectuals, through the state and the law.

The promise made to the upper layers of the labour population was kept in the sense that managers' wages improved. While it became increasingly commonplace to privatise

state-owned enterprises and outsource production, a wealthy minority was able to reap the benefits of the historically specific moment. Therefore, neoliberalism truly created a (small) group of "successful" individuals, as opposed to spreading wealth more widely in society.

Furthermore, the neoliberal argument that there is no alternative to succumbing to market mechanisms is "true" in the sense that in capitalism humans must follow the movements of commodities – this is what Marx calls commodity fetishism (see subsection 3.2.2). Yet, it is only a "real appearance", since humans could overcome this alienated state of affairs with the help of a strong counter-hegemonic movement.

The neoliberal ideology was initially accepted by people because it promised them freedom and empowerment. Neoliberalism is not only a coercive instance; rather, it is effective because it contains an element of cultural self-socialisation from below. Yet, neoliberalism uses this element in order to guarantee the functioning of "free" market mechanisms and capital accumulation, while it also blocks people from organising themselves into wide-ranging political movements. As Barfuss writes,

> '[t]he new subject is agile and clever, but this agility is confined to personal life and private profits, thus severing the experience of how to bring on technical changes from the struggle for a better life. Neo-liberal market religion continually reinforces the coincidence of the personal benefit of the few with technical rationality, whereas for the many it makes technical progress coincide with losing their jobs and competing with cheaper work forces. The people consequently are not able to make a transition from their new and more active participation in the productive process on a high-tech level to a new and more active role in contemporary politics and economy.' (Barfuss 2008, 847)

A counter-hegemonic social movement should make use of this emancipatory "sigh" and try to articulate their own agenda around the core of personal liberation by *social* emancipation. Such emancipation can only be obtained if economic democracy is realised. This would allow humans to have real power over their own life conditions and activities.

Let us now express these points with reference to each step of the methodological table.

Step 1.   Study the historical bloc.

The inner contradictions of the Fordist bloc caused the transition to the neoliberal one. The latter is marked by "free" market principles, the de-democratisation of the economy,

capital accumulation, globalisation, new kinds of production processes, anti-union practices, and sectarian politics.

Step 2.   Study common sense and good sense.

Neoliberal common sense is based on an "economist" conception of individuality, scepticism towards collective representations and movements, irony, cleverness, agility, and the ideal of a self-sufficient and visionary entrepreneur. The good sense in neoliberal common sense is the call for more autonomy from alienated powers.

Step 3.   Study hegemony and organic ideologies.

The neoliberal ideology combines notions of personal freedom, family values, patriotism, and self-sufficiency (which does not mean that there are no neoliberal "globalists"). This amalgamation results in thinking of those who are in need of assistance as "unsuccessful losers". More importantly, neoliberal practices interpellate ironical, clever, and agile subjects, who function effectively within the new production process without being capable of mobilising wide-ranging social movements.

Step 4.   Study how ideologies operate within the hierarchical structures of domination, mediated by ideological forms of praxis, or ideological powers.

The neoliberal ideology takes for granted the capitalist separation between a de-democratised economic sphere and a "general" political sphere, namely, the "generality" of the state, the law, and other ideological powers. The explicit goal is to diminish the influence the political exercises over the economic sphere by enforcing the power of authoritarian state apparatuses.

Step 5.   Study the "real appearance" of ideologies.

Since neoliberalism created a number of (economic) "success" stories and provided people with partial autonomy and freedom in contrast to Fordist corporatist practices, it was not only about tricking the poor – although it should not be forgotten that neoliberal policies have caused a massive degree of suffering. By arguing for the holy status of free markets, neoliberalism makes use of the *objective thought-form* of commodity fetishism, which tells the "truth" about capitalist society: humans have no agency; all they can do is follow the movements of commodities. Finally, neoliberalism articulates itself around the *ideological value* of "freedom", whose meaning can be contested by other social groups.

Step 6. Study the emancipatory element inherent to ideologies.

Neoliberalism expresses a real emancipatory call for more autonomy, freedom, and empowerment. However, this call against "state bureaucracy" is channelled against the Keynesian notions of state-intervention, which allowed neoliberalism to win ground against social democratic ideals in the 1970s and 80s. Neoliberalism articulates its version of freedom by relying on ideological powers, which gives it its authoritarian features and leads it to de-democratise the economy.

Step 7. Rearticulate the emancipatory element into a counter-hegemonic movement.

A counter-hegemonic movement should emphasise both the contradiction between personal liberation and authoritarian practices, which is inherent to the neoliberal ideology, as well as the "subalternisation" of popular classes. By anchoring a critical social movement to these two ports of anchorage, there is a chance that the neoliberal hegemony can be overcome, especially now that it is getting more and more authoritarian.

4.4 Conclusion

I started this chapter by defining the ideological, which was understood as a social dimension inherent to the hierarchical structures of domination. When humans operate within such structures, they are socialised ideally from above. As opposed to the vertical axis, PIT identifies the anti-ideological (or cultural) axis as well, which denotes horizontal self-socialisation from below.

In class society, the cultural dimension is always intertwined with hierarchical structures of domination, namely, with ideological forms of praxis. Willis' study allowed us to understand how working-class students in the United Kingdom become working-class adults not only because of the class structure but also due to the students' own active role. The counter-school culture is articulated in line with the class system, which means that, even when working-class kids are contesting oppressive practices, they are induced to do so in a way that enforces the class structure as well as male and "racial" domination which divides the working class.

PIT argues that, whenever humans act together, the horizontal level is present. The ideological dimension makes use of this feature, which explains why humans subject themselves voluntarily under the hierarchical structures of domination; humans gain

something from accepting these structures. A critical theory of ideology should aim to reclaim the commons and realise a social formation where humans could relate to one another as equals.

Then, I defined the concepts of "proto-ideological" and "ideological values". PIT uses the proto-ideological to refer to phenomena, such as "medicine men", that exist in non-antagonistic social formations but which are absorbed by ideological powers after the state is born. Therefore, the proto-ideological adds more detail to the analysis of how and why the ideological came to exist in the first place. PIT also argues that commodity fetishism, and other kinds of fetishisms, can be understood as proto-ideological.

Ideological values, on the other hand, signify generalised values whose meanings are an arena of ideological struggle for antagonistic groups. Although ideological values are the same on the denotative level, different groups assign them completely different connotative contents. The origin of ideological values is found in the state ascending above society, which caused the symbolic dimension to detach itself from the immediately practical life.

In the latter half of the chapter, I proposed seven methodological steps for studying ideologies, which were: (1) study the historical bloc, (2) study common sense and good sense, (3) study hegemony and organic ideologies, (4) study how ideologies operate within the hierarchical structures of domination, which are mediated by ideological powers, (5) study the "real appearance" of ideologies, (6) study the emancipatory element inherent to ideologies, and (7) rearticulate the emancipatory element into a counter-hegemonic movement. These steps were based on PIT's critical-structural approach. I then applied these steps to the analysis of neoliberalism, which turned out to be rather successful.

PIT's political objective is a social formation where production is organised not to maximise profit through exchange but to fulfil the everyday needs of humans. In such a society, humans could embrace the horizontal relations of common-being amongst equals without the ideological dimension, since the hierarchical structures of domination would have been reclaimed for the use of society in general, as opposed to the mere enforcement of class domination.

5 CONCLUSION

The objective of this work has been to study the phenomenon of ideology. However, instead of a general perspective, I have done so within Projekt Ideologie-Theorie's (PIT) framework. Therefore, the more specific goal I set in the beginning was to understand how PIT develops the complicated notion of ideology.

I posed one question for each of the three chapters. First, I asked: How to conceive of human praxis? I have argued throughout this thesis that the notion of praxis underlines the intricate relation one has to the social formation at large. The idea is that the *indeterminate* practical activities of humans obtain *determinate* forms, namely, an independent status with respect to humans themselves. This means that the practical activities of humans are always channelled to historically definite forms of praxis, which mediate the social and productive metabolisms. In this sense, being a part of the social formation means practicing the forms of praxis inherent to that social formation. Of course, humans have the power to change these forms, but it requires collective agency.

The question of praxis becomes more difficult in class society, since (re)productive and horizontal activities become intertwined with hierarchical structures of domination. This is why the ideological dimension is born in the first place. As Jan Rehmann argues, Karl Marx understood ideological forms of praxis, such as religion, as the opium of the people *and* the sigh of the oppressed creature. This means that ideological forms play a double function in the sense that in class society humans can only practice their sociality by subjecting themselves to ideological forms. Ideology is not only about oppression.

Antonio Gramsci's philosophy of praxis allows us to better understand how and why the practical activities of humans, including their intellectual activities, obtain definite forms. For instance, Gramsci uses the term "common sense" to refer to the heterogeneous combination of contradictory elements that has become prevalent at some point in time. Common sense is directly connected to past and contemporary practices, which are reflected in common sense. More importantly, Gramsci identifies what he calls "good sense", namely, the healthy nucleus of common sense, which should be made more

coherent. In this sense, Gramsci's critique of oppressive practices is not transcendent but immanent.

Wolfgang Fritz Haug's concept of "social dispositive" underlines Gramsci's insights; social dispositive stands for those social practices which produce thought-forms. By critiquing René Descartes' "*cogito ergo sum*", Haug moves beyond the consciousness discourse and locates the operation of ideology to social practices. Klaus Holzkamp's notion of "(restrictive) action potence" allows us to understand alienation in a similar way, as social practices that do not allow humans to practice the full extent of their sociality.

The second question I asked was: How to look at society as consisting of definite forms of praxis? I used Marx's concept of "mode of production" to refer to a social configuration where the relation between appropriators and direct producers has obtained a definite form. However, Marx highlights that there is a plethora of different versions of the "same" mode of production and that it is only by studying the actual relations of forces that one can understand how the social formation operates. I further argued that the crude dualism of a materialistic "base" and an ideational "superstructure" is not valid; instead, these concepts should be understood as spatial metaphors, which include both kinds of features.

Then, I proposed fourteen attributes of the capitalist mode of production, all of which stand for social practices to which humans must subject themselves if they want to stay alive in capitalism. Another important concept in this regard was "objective thought-forms", which refers to productive forms of praxis inherent to the bourgeois society. According to this idea, there is no real difference between forms of praxis and thought-forms, which is why a critical theory of ideology should analyse how objective thought-forms operate as a "sounding-board" for more elaborate ideologies.

Friedrich Engels' concept of "ideological powers" serves as an important reference point in the sense that it clarifies how ideological forms of praxis result from the class antagonism. This theme is important for Marx and Engels in general, as they discuss it in a number of their works. The main point is that the state, which is born because of an increasing degree of social complexity, ascends above society as an illusory community. Then, the state produces new kinds of antagonisms between different social groups and generates a sense of alienated generality for its subjects. The state denotes the existence of class society and hierarchical structures of domination, which necessitate ideological subjection that functions, as Louis Althusser writes, by way of "interpellation". In

capitalism, the generality of the state advances when class power is detached from state power, which results in the "economic" sphere of appropriation and the "political" sphere of coercion.

Gramsci argues that ideological forms are terrains where humans become aware of class antagonism and fight it out, a point which led us to explore the notions of "historical bloc" and "hegemony" as well as how emancipatory social movements could build counter-hegemony within these ideological powers. Such counter-hegemony would allow common sense to be steered towards a direction where the inner opposites and distincts of the historical bloc could be overcome, rendering common sense more coherent.

The third question I asked was: How to study not only the operation of ideology but also the potential for anti-ideology within an antagonistic social formation? It is clear that the anti-ideological is not only about contents of consciousness, since neither is the ideological. Instead, the anti-ideological concerns taking part in ideological struggles which are carried out in ideological powers. The anti-ideological is a material activity by which the historical bloc and hegemony can be rearticulated in order to embrace common-being, as opposed to hierarchical structures of domination.

Based on PIT's approach, I proposed seven methodological steps for studying ideologies. These steps were: (1) study the historical bloc, (2) study common sense and good sense, (3) study hegemony and organic ideologies, (4) study how ideologies operate within the hierarchical structures of domination, which are mediated by ideological powers, (5) study the "real appearance" of ideologies, (6) study the emancipatory element inherent to ideologies, and (7) rearticulate the emancipatory element into a counter-hegemonic movement. It is my argument that, by following these steps, it is possible to both deconstruct ideologies as well as reconstruct them.

Let us return to the very first question I posed in the beginning of this work: What does ideology mean? We can now say that ideology is a phenomenon that should be divided into the "ideological" in general and ideologies in particular. The ideological is a dimension inherent to class society, and it functions differently in different modes of production. This work has explored how the ideological operates within a capitalist mode of production with an integral state, but it should be underlined that a new kind of social configuration could very well alter the way in which the ideological dimension works.

The ideological dimension necessitates alienated/vertical socialisation from above, which is intertwined with cultural/horizontal self-socialisation from below. A critical theory of ideology should aim to reclaim the elements of common-being hijacked by the

ideological. This task can only be carried out by discovering the good sense of common sense, the healthy nucleus of ideology, which has the potential of serving as a port of anchorage for counter-hegemonic social movements.

As the current study has shown, ideology should be analysed as a dimension inherent to hierarchical structures of domination, which channel humans' practical activities to inverted forms. It is necessary to continue this work in the future by looking at practical examples of how the ideological dimension and ideological powers operate within different social formations and historical blocs. One possible avenue for further research along these lines would be to study the history of Nordic welfare society as well as its contemporary forms. By applying PIT's concepts to the case of Nordic welfare society, it would help us better understand how the amalgamation of emancipation and oppression has been actualised in Nordic countries.

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